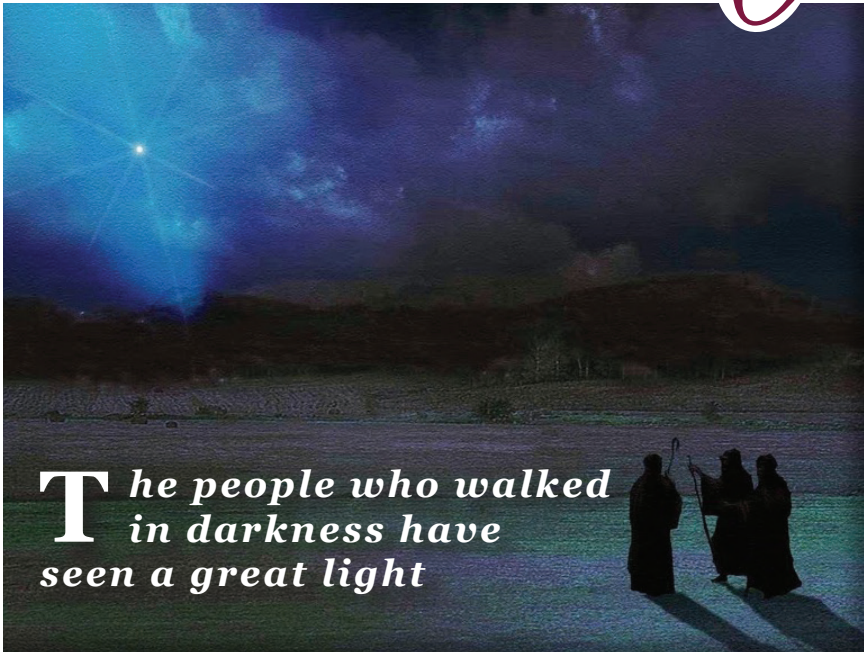


NEW CHURCH *Life*

A bimonthly magazine devoted to the
teachings revealed through Emanuel
Swedenborg, as they apply to life.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023



*At Christmas we celebrate the Lord's
coming as a new light in the world.
That light still shines and
leads us in our own lives.
(Page 449)*

**NEW CHURCH LIFE (USPS 378-180)
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*A bimonthly magazine devoted to the teachings revealed
through Emanuel Swedenborg, as they relate to life.*

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In This Issue

Editorials (page 435) include:

- *Eternal Christmas*: The Christmas story is written in the present tense, as though it is all happening right now. It is. The Lord is born with us every day, with the same promise and hope from 2,000 years ago. The enduring blessing of Christmas is not just the celebration each year but that it is a gift with us every day.
- *Swedenborg's Christmas*: What was Christmas like in Swedenborg's Day? Nothing like what we know today. In fact, he never even mentions Christmas in all of the Writings.

The Greatest Gift, says the Rt. Rev. David H. Lindrooth in a Christmas sermon, is not only the Lord coming on earth to subdue the hells, but that He also humbled us enough to realize that nothing originates within ourselves. "All of our happiness and sense of peace depend on recognizing that all the goodness and truth and all the falsity and evil are from sources outside of self." (Page 443)

In another Christmas sermon, the Rev. Eric H. Carswell says that *The Lord Came to Bring Us From Darkness to Light* – and that this new light still leads us. "In times of trouble in our personal lives, the future looks as bleak as the gloom of an eternal weary night. The Lord gives us promises for the future to help us in times of darkness and to sustain hope." (Page 449)

The Rev. Todd J. Beiswenger finds in the story of Elijah and "the still small voice" a message for Christmas. Amid all the bustle and distractions of the season, "This Christmas listen for that still small voice. That's where you'll find God. That's where you'll find peace, and good tidings for all mankind." (Page 454)

In his Charter Day Cathedral address – *Behold Our Academy!* – the Rev. Christopher A. Barber reflects on why he, the students and faculties are at the Academy, how its Charter reflects what it stands for, and how we are all blessed to be formed by it. "The celebration of our Charter helps us – no matter how much we've grown and developed – to re-orient ourselves to our supreme

purposes. But also, Charter Day is, in many ways, a celebration of us.” (Page 457)

What does it mean to get “Wright,” spiritually? The Rev. Howard A. Thompson finds in the architectural philosophy of Frank Lloyd Wright and his approach to open space within a home or building a blueprint of our regeneration. “In many ways (his) approach to architecture mirrors the concept of repentance and rethinking. It is about re-examining our assumptions and beliefs and approaching our dwelling place from spiritual principles.” (Page 462)

Writing From the Bishop’s Office, the Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs reports on a recent trip to Brazil, which included two ordinations and a church dedication. He and his wife, Cathy, traveled to many parts of the country and quickly developed a deep appreciation for the people of the New Church of Brazil. With this visit he succeeded the Rev. Andrew J. Heilman as supervising pastor in Brazil and praised him for his many years of devoted service. (Page 466)

Extended Church News (page 484) includes:

- Early planning for next June’s General Assembly, including a call for workshops.
- General Church Employees
- An update on Bryn Athyn College
- Charter Day 2023, including a revival of the Glencairn Awards and Distinguished Alumni for Bryn Athyn College and the Academy Secondary Schools
- Highlights from the September meeting of the General Church Board of Directors
- Report on Regional Clergy Meeting in West Africa
- An encouraging initiative in Brisbane, Australia, for a Chinese Swedenborg Study Group
- An update of the “realized dream” of the Old School Village in Kempton, Pennsylvania
- A report on the Living Waters Family Camp in Canada this past summer

This issue also includes the Annual Report of the General Church Secretary (page 503), the Directory of General Church Clergy (page 508), and the 2023 Index for New Church Life (page 531).

Editorials

Bruce M. Henderson and the Rev. Jeremy F. Simons

ETERNAL CHRISTMAS

We love everything about Christmas – the sacredness, the promise, the love, the sphere. And when the tree comes down, the lights flicker out, and our paths retreat to normal, there is a wistfulness. Can't we make this feeling last? Can't we keep that spirit of kindness and goodwill all year? We can.

One thing we love about the Christmas story, ingrained in *Matthew* and *Luke*, is that it is all in the present tense, as though it is all happening right now. It is.

*For unto you **is** born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.*

He was born on this earth more than 2,000 years ago to save us from the hells and show us the way to heaven, through repentance and regeneration, by loving Him and our neighbor, and living His commandments. He is born a constant and patient presence in our hearts every day, offering meaning and direction, with the same abiding love and promise born in that stable.

Mary comes alive with us too each Christmas. We feel her innocence, her trust, the innate understanding of her calling.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.

She did not feel exalted but humbled. She sets the example for all of us.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word.

This is the trust, the willingness to serve and follow, that we are asked to emulate, with that same acceptance and commitment.

*My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God
my Savior. For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden.
... and holy is His name.*

It is a pledge that resonates in the aspiring hymn:

Lord, make me a dwelling place for You.

The gift of the Lord's coming was announced to the shepherds – as it is to us each Christmas:

*Fear not. For behold I **bring** you good tidings of great joy, which
shall be to all people. And suddenly there was with the angel a
multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: Glory to
God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

Those good tidings never cease. Neither does our prayer for “peace on earth, good will toward men” – but first must be “glory to God.” We don't hear enough of that glory in the cacophony of this troubled world. That is why we need Christmas – every year, every day.

Zacharias knew. He praised the Lord for giving light

*to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide
our feet into the way of peace.*

That light ever probes darkened hearts – then and now – to be guided by Simeon's transcendent faith:

*Lord, now let Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word,
for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared
before the face of all people – a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the
glory of Thy people Israel.*

And there were the Wise Men who saw His star “*in the East and **are** come to worship Him.*” And when that star “*came and stood over where the young child was . . . they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*” This is an invitation still for us to see the wisdom in following His star throughout our lives and feeling the joy of being led by the Lord.

With the gifts of hope and peace from the Lord come obligations and responsibilities, which is why Herod and John the Baptist are important elements of the Christmas story. Yes, heaven is our promise – but only if we recognize and shun evil.

*And he (John) came into all the country about Jordan, preaching
the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. The voice of one,
crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord.*

Christmas is transforming each year with its gifts of peace and hope – what

they mean in our lives and what we do with them. The Lord is not only born anew each year throughout the world, but within each of us as we see His star and are led by that new light in the world. We are asked to seek first the kingdom of heaven – every day. And we are called to keep His presence within us each day – through reading, prayer, reflection and gratitude. And we are called to reflect the Lord’s gifts in the loving way we live our lives.

| *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men.*

That was not just a promise to the shepherds. It echoes through the ages, calling us to remember and be thankful. The enduring blessing of Christmas is not just that we celebrate each year but that it is a gift to us every day.

He **is** born.

He **is** risen.

He **is**.

(BMH)

SWEDENBORG’S CHRISTMAS

One thing that readers of the Heavenly Doctrine sometimes notice at this time of year is that the word “Christmas,” or any of its equivalents, is not mentioned anywhere in the books of the Writings. Even entries in *Spiritual Experiences* for December 24th and 25th, of which there are several, never note the occasion. By contrast, both the Jewish Passover and the Christian Easter, which use the same word in Latin, are noted several times.

While there is probably more than one reason for this, one of them is that the widespread cultural celebration of Christmas is not something that happened in the 18th century the way that it does today. Not that Christmas was not observed at all. It has been observed in Western Christianity on December 25th since the fourth century. But it was merely one of dozens of dates marked by the church with special masses and church services. Countries and regions developed their own traditions around it, as they did for many other occasions, but the celebrations were mostly minor and localized. It was not until the 1800s that Christmas began to be seen as the singular cultural event that it is today.

Surprisingly, Christmas not only received little emphasis before the 1800s, but it was also actually banned in some places, specifically in Puritan England and New England. The reason is that from early on Christmas was associated across Europe with the time of year when the harvest was in and the weather was cold enough for butchering domestic animals. It was the only time of year when food was truly plentiful and there was not much work to be done. The

overindulgence, drunkenness and immorality that resulted were frowned on in the church.

Worse than that, Christmas in many places was a time of a specific form of hooliganism often called “wassailing.” This was part of a long and widespread tradition in which the lords of the manors would open their larders and give food and drink to the townspeople – the rich serving the poor on that day. As time went on it was increasingly a case of people making merry processions through the streets demanding food and wine from every house they came to – with consequences for any home that would not or could not provide them. Social and legal norms were widely ignored during that season, roles were reversed, and the underclasses acted out in a way that is often called “*misrule*.”

These things gave Christmas a bad name and they were serious problems in the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe and America. So, while there may have been old Swedish Christmas traditions kept in Bishop Swedberg’s home in Emanuel’s childhood, there was nothing like the universal reverence for Christmas that developed later. It was never a day off of work, presents were not commonly distributed, Christmas services were held in some but not most churches. In Sweden it was likely overshadowed by Santa Lucia, the festival of lights, which took place on December 13th, the winter solstice according to the old calendar (Sweden changed from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar in 1753).

The major publications of the day, such as the *Gentleman’s Magazine* or *Gentleman’s Quarterly*, which was published in London throughout the 1700s, make virtually no mention at all of Christmas, other than noting that the king and queen attended Christmas services on December 25th. When George Washington crossed the Delaware River on Christmas Eve 1776 – a critical turning point in the Revolutionary War – he was taking advantage of the fact that Americans paid little attention to Christmas, whereas for the Hessians it was a day of eating and drinking. It was often seen in Europe as a Catholic holiday.

It is no wonder that Swedenborg does not mention Christmas in any of his writing. He does note in two letters when he was a young man, in 1717 and 1718, that he would be in Brunsbo, his father’s home, for Christmas.

It is surely providential that the Writings do not speak in any detail about religious festivals. Even though Easter is mentioned it is associated more with Passover and Holy Supper than anything else. There is probably more said about Thanksgiving than any other kind of festival, and this is about the practice itself, not any specific way of celebrating or any date. Nothing is said about any of the traditional days and festivals that are part of the Catholic, Lutheran or other Christian calendars, such as Lent, Epiphany, Whitsunday and the days associated with the various saints. We actually know very little

about any religious holiday that Swedenborg might have enjoyed or what he did on them. So, any inclination that we might have to follow his example has nothing to go on.

The result is that we are free to celebrate religious holidays as we see fit. The Doctrines do speak favorably about celebrating religious festivals, just as they do about attending services of worship and other religious practices. But they do not burden us with details about how we might celebrate them, other than what we can glean from the Word itself.

The New Church in America, organized in 1816, typically followed the traditional Protestant liturgical year. But the Academy movement, which became the General Church, decided to limit the festivals to those actually mentioned in the Word, such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and the events of Easter week. They also added June 19th. In the pages of *New Church Life* we can see that the observance and mention of such things as Epiphany, Lent and Pentecost or Whitsunday faded away in the General Church by the early 1900s.

Yet even though the word “Christmas” never appears in the Writings, and even though there is no reason to believe that December 25th is the actual day of the Lord’s birth, there is every reason in the world to celebrate the event, and December 25th is a perfectly appropriate day. *Conjugal Love* 81 describes a stunning glorification of the Lord’s Advent that took place in heaven. There is so much doctrine about the absolute necessity and pivotal impact of the Lord’s Coming that there is plenty of justification for Christmas being celebrated as “*the most wonderful time of the year.*”

Given the peculiar and uneven history that Christmas has had over the centuries, it is remarkable how it changed since Swedenborg’s time into the cultural phenomenon that it is today. Although some beautiful Christmas hymns, such as “*Silent Night*,” “*Hark the Herald Angels Sing*” and “*Joy to the World*” were known in the 18th century, and Handel’s “*Messiah*” was first performed in 1742, most of the cultural trappings and traditions that we know came into form in the early 1800s.

Some have suggested that this may have been a result of the Last Judgment. According to secular scholars, the major change that happened in the popular approach was a shift from a communal to a domestic celebration that mainly took place in people’s homes. There was a shift in emphasis away from the community interactions between the rich and poor, replaced by the interactions between parents and children. The new emphasis on children and family which was taking place throughout Europe and America made Christmas into an entirely new kind of event.

The rapid changes that were beginning to take place with the industrial revolution also brought a nostalgia for old traditions associated with a

more rural past or with the old country for many immigrant communities. Traditions from various parts of Europe were amalgamated and reformulated, especially in the United States, in literature and practices that brought a special magic to Christmas – with children in mind. Stories such as Washington Irving's Sketchbook, Charles Dickens' "*A Christmas Carol*," E.T.A. Hoffman's "*The Nutcracker*" and Clement Clarke Moore's wonderful poem "*'Twas the Night Before Christmas*," helped to create a Christmas culture that included Christmas trees, Santa Claus, Christmas gifts, with goodwill to all, that centered on happy families, happy children and help for those in need. The new tools of the industrial revolution spread these ideas and brought them into the reach of families throughout Europe and America over the next two centuries. With the Gospel story at its very heart, churches are filled to bursting year after year on Christmas Eve.

The version of Christmas that we know, and that is known worldwide, is a far cry from the one that Swedenborg knew. It is surely often lacking in spirituality, as commercialism edges out a true understanding of the significance of the Lord's coming. But that true understanding can nest itself very comfortably in the happiness and appreciation of the promise of Christmas that has spread worldwide and continues to grow year after year. There is no doubt that the Lord will infill that spirit with the truths of the New Church as the world becomes ready to hear the message.

(JFS)

Letters to the Editors

Letters to the Editors may be sent to: Editors of New Church Life
Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009
or email Bruce.Henderson@newchurch.org

Enlightened Wisdom

To The Editors:

Henry Ward Beecher was a Christian minister who lived from 1813 until 1887. (His sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, wrote the novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.) And he is listed on the Internet (The Swedenborg Project) as being a well-known person who was influenced by Emanuel Swedenborg.

Let us take a look at some of his arresting and refreshing thoughts:

- “No man ever learned to love God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself, in a day.”
- “Everyone has influence, for good or bad, upon others.”
- “Every charitable act is a stepping stone toward heaven.”
- “We are always on the anvil; God is shaping us for higher things.”
- “I never knew how to worship until I learned how to love.”

It seems to me that Beecher saw the worship of the Lord as being much more than just reciting a set of religious beliefs and going through prescribed rituals, in a church building on Sundays. In fact, he wrote: “The Church is not a gallery for the exhibition of eminent Christians, but a school for the education of imperfect ones.”

I do not know the nature of Beecher's relationship to the truths contained in Swedenborg's Writings. However, on the Internet I learned that he is known for “his emphasis on God's love.” And I feel confident that Beecher would agree wholeheartedly with these words written by Emanuel Swedenborg in *Arcana Coelestia* 7038:

The very worship of the Lord consists in performing uses; and during man's life in the world uses consist in everyone discharging aright his duty in his station, thus from the heart being of service to his country, to societies, and to his neighbor.

Richard Linquist
Huntingdon Valley
Pennsylvania

*Class of '73 50th Reunion**

Our class was blessed with many friends,
Created by God for higher ends
Than just this world and memories,
But for joy in uses eternally.

"Thy kingdom come," we pray each day
And come it did in unexpected way
For Dana and Mark and Kim and Bill
While we keep praying to do God's will.

Heather sang well our dear Lord's Prayer,
And now with angels sings it there.
Kurt was called in prime of life,
Leaving behind young kids and wife.

Barry, too, just starting out,
Might make us wonder, "What's this about?"
Terry and Donna had a few years more
When they passed through eternity's door.

Denise, Reade, Edie, Steve and Don,
Were hurried up to move along
T'ward mansions in our Father's house--
Three of these, a classmate's spouse.

They and Mark had kids all grown
When gathered in to heaven's home.
On th' other side we'll see them all
When our time comes to get the call.

"Only th'good die young," some folks say
But as we age, there's another way.
Let's follow our Savior, wise and mild,
To walk in His way like a little child.

We miss the ones who've gone too soon
In this life's morning or afternoon.
Our thoughts go with them high above,
And glimpse the realm alive with love.

Let us with A N C mem'ries fond
Know our lot's in the great beyond.
The Lord has a place for our class to be
Blessed once again, to eternity.

Heaven is near as a thought or prayer.
Our Lord stands ready to greet us there.
Take freely His Word, its wisdom and truth--
The water of life that brings true youth.

May He and His kingdom ever be
What binds the class of '73.

Rev. Kenneth J. Alden
Huntingdon Valley
Pennsylvania

*Artistic license: My aim was to mention classmates from our high school years who entered the next life: Dana Bostock, Mark Nicholson, Kim Gunther, Bill Posey, Heather Childs, Kurt Gyllenhaal, Barry Scott, Terry Horigan Bier, Donna Zuber Klein, Denise Alden Hendricks, Reade Genzlinger, Edie Fuller Norman, Steve Bruser, Don McQueen, Mark Junge.

Affectionate mention goes also to BA Elementary school classmates Chuck Simons, Patty Echols; Immanuel Church School classmate Lee Barry; classmates added in college: Dean Carley, Barrett Fiske.

The Greatest Gift

A Christmas Sermon by the Rt. Rev. David H. Lindrooth

Lessons: Luke 2:1-20; John 1:1-14; Arcana Coelestia 4180 [5]

[Jehovah] bowed the heavens also, and came down (Psalm 18:9)

What would it be like to witness the Lord's birth from the perspective of an angel in heaven? We have the story of the host of angels celebrating the good news with the shepherds. There had to be tremendous rejoicing in heaven. On that desert night, the angels articulated their excitement of the Lord's birth with a joy far deeper than any joy we could comprehend on earth.

But there was more to it than simple joy. The angels' expression of happiness isn't just an inconsequential detail of the story; their interaction with the Lord is a key part of the advent with its universal system that the Lord put in place supporting the salvation of the human race.

For the Lord to accomplish His mission of saving humanity, heaven had to change, and with it, the angels needed to change too. With these changes, the relationship between the Lord, heaven and the human race was altered for all time. This shift is spoken of in the Heavenly Doctrines:

[Jehovah] came down in the form of Divine Truth, which is the Word and which was God with God, and took upon Himself the human form, so as to reduce to order everything in heaven, in hell and in the church. For at that time, the power of hell was stronger than the power of heaven, and on earth the power of evil was stronger than the power of good, so that utter damnation stood threatening at the gates. This impending damnation was removed by Jehovah God by means of His Human, which was Divine Truth, and thus angels and men were redeemed. (True Christian Religion 3)

The Lord's reordering was a dramatic event that altered everything in the spiritual world. At the time of the advent, the angels didn't know the full nature of the changes that would be asked of them. While we can completely understand that hell needed reordering and subjugation; and we could say

the same about the world which was, at the time of the Lord's advent, filled with cruelty as a product of deeply ingrained selfishness; but it might seem surprising that the angels in heaven also needed to change their ways of interacting with both the Lord and the human race.

We see this reflected in *Psalm 18:9*, which prophesies of the advent saying: "*Jehovah bowed the heavens and came down.*" One would think this reference to the angels would be joyful and filled with happiness, but it is actually pretty dark. The Psalm makes clear reference to the conflict that was to take place with the Lord's coming even in the heavens. We read: "*He came down with darkness under His feet;*" that "*He made darkness His secret place;*" and that "*His thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire.*"

We see something of the gravity of Lord's purposes with the angels with the reference to "bowing the heavens" which here means to prostrate, stretch out or to humble – none of which sounds particularly easy or light-hearted.

The Heavenly Doctrines build on this by noting that even the angels were challenged by the Lord's coming; that while they certainly rejoiced and welcomed His Advent, part of the Lord's purposes involved serious temptations on their part. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4295, 4287, 4307)

The state of heaven, by the time the Lord was born on earth, was that angels had assumed responsibility and ownership for tasks that really were the Lord's. They were inserting themselves in the work of saving people in efforts that reflected their own proprium or self-interest. They also wanted to "help" the Lord in His process of glorification by showing Him what **they** thought He should be doing.

This was a boundary that had been crossed by angels, who had moved from supporting, protecting and inspiring with the Lord's goods and truths, crossing into a place where they were attempting to meddle with the outcome by inserting themselves inappropriately into the process.

The Lord, through His life on earth was able to reestablish this boundary. He showed them through His becoming the Divine Human (God present in perfect Human form) that while it is the role of angels to cooperate with the Lord, they in NO WAY were to contribute anything from their own self-interest into the Divine work of salvation. This was unnecessary.

Consider this teaching about the Lord and His interaction with the angels:

When the Lord made the Human within Himself Divine, He too had communities of spirits and angels around Him; for it was His will that everything should be accomplished in keeping with order. But He chose for Himself the kind of communities that would be of service and changed them as seemed good to Him. Yet, He did not

take any good or truth at all from them and apply it to Himself, but only from the Divine. (Arcana Coelestia 4075 and 4073)

The indication is that the angels themselves tried to supply goods and truths to the Lord thinking that they could change Him. But, of course, even the angels could not do this, for no finite being can teach the infinite anything.

What is implied here is that the angels had something selfish embedded in their desire to teach out of an effort to manage the Lord's Divine purposes in life. This mistaken notion had to be dealt with and laid aside. So the Lord bowed the heavens – meaning that He humbled the heavens. Then He was able to differentiate His Divine work from the angels' genuine abilities of introducing His goods and truths and using them to bring light to situations that are evil.

He clarified that His Divine role for the angels is to simply act as messengers to the human race – nothing more. After all, the name “angel” is an ancient word meaning nothing other than “messenger” or “messenger of God.” You could say that an angel's job is to share the Lord's messages. And with the Lord's advent the angels were warned not to attempt to author the messages themselves, leaving any trace of their own proprial (selfish) nature.

The Lord's coming in Human form allowed the angels to redirect their focus on what they were permitted to do to help. And while there was **nothing** from their selfish nature that they could do for the Lord, they could serve Him by communicating about the states they were experiencing – states that they themselves experienced, and states that they observed by interacting with others. This shared information about these states allowed the Lord to respond to those states from Himself with His Divine Love and Wisdom.

This might be considered deep theology, because from our earthly perspective it is difficult to fully comprehend. But this is important information for us from the perspective that the angels and the kingdom of heaven continue to play a critical role in our lives today in helping to prepare us for life in heaven. Not only does this explain how we are influenced by angelic communities that are subconsciously around us every moment of every day, but this example of the angels teaches us how we too should be interacting with others.

If we boil down the reasons for the Lord's Advent into the simplest of terms it would be this: the Lord came to provide the antidote to selfishness at all levels of human spiritual existence – including heaven!

The Lord came to bring awareness that self-centered living was destroying the universe, threatening all human life. To take that a step deeper, He came to re-establish the notion that selfishness comes from the false belief that the life we are living is our own – a notion that is the origin of all evil. Then,

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we (falsely) believe that we are the origin of our own happiness; and in consequence we believe we generate our own pleasures; that we manufacture our own insights and world view; and that we are responsible for our own success and progress in life.

The fact is that all of this is an appearance. We do not own any of it and therefore we cannot claim true responsibility for our thoughts, our wisdom, the uses we perform, or anything that might be considered successful.

This was perhaps the most stunning news that the Lord brought with His birth. It was news to heaven, to the human race, and certainly to the spirits in hell. One might also say that this news was the greatest gift that the Lord could bring into the world – the concept that

we, as human beings, do not actually own anything. Everything that contributes toward our ability to be truly human in the Lord's image and likeness flows into us from above.

Consider this earthshaking passage from *Arcana Coelestia* 6324:

If a person were to believe as things really are, which is that everything good and true comes from the Lord and everything evil and false from hell, he could not have been found guilty of any offence or had evil ascribed to himself. But because he believes that it begins in himself he takes evil as his own; for his belief causes this to happen. Thus, evil clings and cannot be separated from him. Indeed, the person's nature is such that he would be indignant if anyone told him that his thoughts and desires came from others and did not begin in himself.

This teaching unlocks the key to what it means to be a human being! In order to be human, one must come to realize that nothing originates in self; that everything of conscious human life originates outside of self. Human beings are receivers or vessels of life. Knowing that and living according to this knowledge allows us to become human and be saved.

To put it another way, the Lord came into the world to make clear to all

human life that no finite being is the origin of his or her own life. The Lord grants us the ability to experience life “as if of ourselves” but that is only a feeling generated by the experience of receiving life from the infinite; it is not the reality.

Scripture teaches this. We read from the Sermon on the Mount Jesus’ words: “Let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes’ and your ‘no’ be ‘no’, whatever is more than these is from the evil one.” (Matthew 5:37) And this was echoed in the message to the rich young ruler when Jesus said: “Go and sell all that you have and give to the poor and you will have riches in heaven.” (Matthew 19:21)

The passages are not suggesting that we divest ourselves of all material possessions; rather they teach that all aspects of our lives are entrusted to our care, allowing us to interact with and to serve others. All of our abilities, insights and possessions are simply means for us to serve the Lord and His kingdom; they are not ends in themselves and as such offer no intrinsic happiness on their own.

We are taught that realizing this is ‘the origin of true [human] happiness!’ (Arcana Coelestia 4220) And that “when this is a person’s state, peace can be granted to him, for he trusts solely in the Lord. Nor can peace be granted to anyone else but those who have that faith springing from charity; for others constantly plunge themselves into anxious cares and evil desires that give rise to feelings of unease.” (Arcana Coelestia 6225)

These are powerful teachings! All of our happiness and sense of peace depend on recognizing that all goodness and truth and all falsity and evil are from sources outside of self.

When the Infinite Lord who was Divine Love, Divine Wisdom and Life itself was born on earth as a Human Being, He showed humankind that He was the origin of all life, all wisdom and all happiness. His greatest gift to the human race is letting us know that He alone, through His Divine Humanity, gives us the ability to be human – to live and love others. He alone brings the power to overcome evil – evils that we of ourselves can be convinced we cannot live without.

True Christianity describes the Lord’s birth as having caused the spiritual sun to shine seven times more brightly than before He was born on earth. (*True Christian Religion* 109; *Arcana Coelestia*

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1530, *Isaiah 30:26*) The angels bowed, (humbled themselves) to let this Divine power shine anew into the world. And with this miraculous event, the human race is offered the ability to receive the power of the Lord's love and wisdom, enabling us to live and serve and bring the message of the Lord's gentle healing love for all the world to see.



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The Lord Came to Bring Us From Darkness to Light

A Christmas Sermon by the Rev. Eric H. Carswell

Lessons: Genesis 21:14 19, Isaiah 7:14 16, 9:2, True Christian Religion 766

The people who have walked in darkness have seen a great light. (Isaiah 9:2)

A story involving a last-minute rescue often catches and holds our attention. Seeing someone face a major problem or serious danger and then be saved is gratifying. The spiritual history of the human race includes events of this very nature, and the spiritual development of each individual also carries this theme.

One story of a last-minute rescue is about Hagar and Ishmael stranded in the wilderness with no water to drink. It seemed like a hopeless situation but then an angel gave Hagar words of hope and God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water that would sustain their lives.

The teachings for the New Church describe this story as one many of us may experience. Each of us can be like Hagar wandering in the wilderness when our minds don't focus on what is true and good but are distracted by ideas that are illusions of what will bring us happiness and fulfillment. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 2679) When Hagar and Ishmael ran out of water this pictures times when we sense that we don't know what it will take to bring us happiness and consequently we feel like our future will be grey and empty. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 2680, 2682) We are taught:

It is well known that all distress and grief happen when we are deprived of the things for which we have affection, that is, which we love. Those whose affection is solely for bodily and worldly things, that is, who love solely these, grieve when deprived of them, whereas those whose affection is for spiritual good loves and true ideas, and who love these, grieve when deprived of them. (Arcana Coelestia 2689:2)

As Hagar wept in despair an angel brought her comfort and hope. God opening her eyes to recognize a nearby well of water is like our minds going from a time of darkness, doubt and despair to recognizing that the Lord can bring us light and direction when we seek to be guided by what He has revealed. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2702:1)

Hagar and Ishmael's rescue reflects the state of the human race when the Lord was born into the world. Before the first Christmas, the human race gradually but continually turned itself away from the Lord, away from the true light. If the spiritual quality of human life had shown itself then, it would have appeared like the increasing gloom of an apparently endless night. If this was the only thing you saw it would be a very discomfoting image. The gathering darkness of evening would be horrible if we were not confident that a new day would follow the night.

We are not so confident in states of mental darkness. In times of trouble in our personal lives, the future looks as bleak as the gloom of an eternal weary night. The Lord gives us promises for the future to help us in times of darkness and to sustain hope. He gives us prophecies that He will never leave us comfortless. If we listen to them it will help us hold onto at least a glimmer of hope, no matter what doubts fill our minds.

Throughout history prophecy from the Lord has served many purposes.

Primarily they support a sense of hope.

Over and over again the Lord gave promises of His coming. Without the prophecies of His birth as a newborn infant – a child born with a Divine calling – hope could never have been sustained throughout the centuries of growing spiritual darkness that preceded the Lord's advent.

If the Lord had not given a prophecy of His birth as soon as the first golden age of the His Church on earth began to lose its sparkle, it would have been necessary for Him to be born immediately into the world. (See *Arcana Coelestia* 2523:1) When the people of the Most Ancient Church first lost something of their innocence and began to trust in their senses and natural intelligence rather than the Word of God, the tragedy of this

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choice was all too clear to the angels.

The wisdom of the angels allowed them to see in a general way that once the human race began to turn away from the Lord, nothing other than the Lord Himself could stop this degeneration. The more we trust our senses and natural intelligence, the less we can recognize our need for the Lord and the less we will see the wisdom of God. The angels could foresee that God would gradually become more remote or invisible to

all people until His real existence would be entirely denied and heaven and its happiness would be closed to the human race. Both spiritual and then natural life would cease to exist on this earth.

The possibility of such utter darkness and destruction was more than the angels could have endured. Without immediate prophecy they would have been without hope. The angels feel great sadness at the spiritual misery of the human race. Their happiness is so connected to the happiness of others that they would do anything, even willingly undergo the misery of hell themselves, if it would help another person get to heaven.

To give the angels a solid basis of hope, the Lord promised that He, Himself, the Infinite God of the universe, would be born as an infant, clothing His infinite soul with a natural human body like that of any other man. If mankind was going to place their trust in their senses, the Creator would manifest Himself before their eyes. The Word would be made flesh and dwell among human beings and they would behold His glory. He would come as a light in the world of darkness.

The angels needed a sense of hope. So did all good people before the time of the Lord's advent. Prophecy sustained this hope and allowed for their salvation. As they were needed, new prophecies were given:

- The seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head and the serpent would bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:15)
- The scepter would not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes. (Genesis 49:10)
- A star would come out of Jacob and a scepter would rise out of Israel and would smite the corners of Moab and destroy the children of Sheth. (Numbers 24:17)
- A virgin would conceive and bear a son, and would call His name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

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There were many more specific prophecies and the teachings for the New Church assert that all of the Old Testament from *Genesis* to the last prophet, *Malachi*, served as a prophecy for the angels, presenting before them in minute detail all the events of the Lord's life, even to His very thoughts. The promise of the Lord's coming sustained hope.

We, too, need hope. The prophet Isaiah foretold: "*A virgin shall conceive and shall call His name Immanuel.*" The name "Immanuel" means "God with us." Without the presence and infinitely wise leading of the Lord, any hope would be futile. If we were not free to consciously turn our thoughts to the Lord and His commandments, the delusive light of our natural intelligence would lead us into eternal darkness and misery. We need the son named Immanuel. We need God with us.

Where will the Lord's active presence in our thoughts and choices come from? In the prophecy of *Isaiah*, the son was to be born of a virgin. Here the virgin represents our consciously chosen concern for living according to what is true from the Lord. The virgin represents the affection for truth. We can receive true ideas as mere facts in our memories at any time we read the Word or are taught, such as in church or adult classes. But, as we know, unless we, as individuals, in the privacy of our own thoughts choose to use this knowledge in living each part of our lives, the Lord will not enter into those parts.

We can choose to let the knowledge of what is true affect us and we can choose to ignore it. Self-examination can help us see which of our thoughts and acts are affected by the truth the Lord has revealed. Each of us as individuals must foster an affection for truth. And from this affection a new understanding of truth and a sense of the Lord's presence will come, at first like a newborn child. Though still tender and in need of protection, God will be with us.

For the Lord's advent to take place in our lives, we must acknowledge our dependence on Him. True wisdom includes the recognition that without the Lord's help we cannot lead useful lives and without His help we will not be happy or peaceful. We can look to the Lord and seek His birth and life in all that we love, think and do.

The sacrament of the Holy Supper is a divinely perfect symbol to represent a person's desire to receive the Lord's life ever more fully. It is called the holiest act of worship because it represents our personal reception of the Lord's life. The bread represents our reception from the Lord of the desire to do what is good and the wine represents our reception of the wisdom necessary to bring this good about. We need Immanuel, God with us, and taking the Holy Supper is the perfect symbol to represent this need and our prayer and hope that the Lord may come ever more fully into our lives.

One of the primary purposes of the Lord's prophecies of His coming was to give a sense of hope; hope for angels, hope for all people who awaited

THE LORD CAME TO BRING...

His advent, and hope for each of us. In times of spiritual darkness we need the sense of hope that will turn us with renewed dedication to reading and personal prayer. We need the hope of a promised Savior who will come into our lives and fill the darkness of our minds with a new light. We need the Lord's presence as a visible Divine man in all parts of our life. We, too, need the prophecies that the Lord Himself will be born.

Amen.



The Rev. Eric H. Carswell has come out of retirement to serve as President of Bryn Athyn College. In his long career as a pastor and educator, he has served as Dean of the Theological school, President of the Academy of the New Church, and most recently as Pastor of Bryn Athyn Society. He and his wife, Donna (Zeitz), live in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania. Contact: Eric.Carswell@brynathyn.edu

God's Christmas Message to Elijah

The Rev. Todd J. Beiswenger

When we're at our darkest moments, where does God show up in our life? You have to look at the Christmas story and you'll find the answer. Simply, God shows up in a small way, announcing Himself only to a select few, operating in the background during our darkest moments.

I've been thinking about a parallel story in the first book of *Kings*. After Elijah's victory at Mount Carmel, Jezebel threatens his life and he flees to Mount Horeb. He's confused, he's afraid, and God calls him out of the cave. The Lord asks him a simple question: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

He doesn't get a pat on the back for his recent victory, nor a little pep talk to wash the internal demons over with sunshine and rainbows. After Elijah rants to the Lord about how things aren't working out, the Lord says:

"Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a still, small voice. (1 Kings 19:11-12)

The meaning of this story is very simple. The wind, earthquake and fire are all external events, and the Lord was telling Elijah – and us – that His salvation and happiness don't come from external events. True happiness comes from within. It's that still, small voice of God.

A while back, I came across a story of a person who sounds like he needs to hear that still, small voice. Matthew Perry, famous for his role of Chandler Bing in the sitcom "Friends," wrote a memoir that one reviewer said "is less a tale of a glittering showbiz career than a fitfully gruesome account of his efforts to keep the show on the road." He reckons to have attended 6,000 AA meetings, detoxed 65 times, and spent close to \$7 million to get sober.

I find the numbers staggering. That's a lot of money to spend on getting sober, which shows the difficulty of the task. I also see on one hand that is a lot of failure, but I also see that he had a lot of personal perseverance to keep trying despite all the failure.

What comes to mind is the basic teaching that without God we cannot be saved, which makes sense when we consider the teaching that without God we can do *nothing*. It's not that without God we can do some things, or without God we can get by; it's that without God, we can do nothing. One of the big components of AA's program is giving yourself over to a higher power. Why? Because God isn't in the wind, the earthquake or the fire.

"What are those things?" you might be wondering. The wind in the story breaks rocks, which is about changing foundational teachings/truths in our lives. The earthquake is about shaking things up – changing your job, getting a new spouse, maybe moving. Finally, the fire is some new love – maybe a hobby or a new business, but something we can put our effort into. God is saying that you won't find Him – that is, you won't find salvation or true happiness there. Those are really part of Herod's kingdom, or in this case, Jezebel's.

The problem is that those are usually the places we look for salvation and happiness first; after all, they're the ones who are in charge! Perry is clear he had a "relentless quest for fame," which he believed would solve his problems. "I think you actually have to have all of your dreams come true to realize they are the wrong dreams," he writes.

The problem is that no matter where we go, no matter how well the external events may go for us, the same God-less us is still there. Maybe we're not actually completely God-less, since Elijah wasn't, but Elijah clearly was not thinking the way God is asking us to, which is to be happy with living the life of an angel like God tells us, regardless of the results. We've got to listen for that still, small voice.

I think this story of Elijah is also a picture of the Christmas story. Jesus didn't show up and change the situation in which the Israelites lived. He didn't give them new external circumstances, and He didn't arrive in a flashy way. Instead, He showed up as a baby in a manger. My experience is that babies don't usually arrive quietly, so maybe not a "still" voice, but certainly a small one.

The Writings tell us He had to be born here, otherwise the earth would have perished. More than that though, He was born as a Man because we are so bodily minded that the Lord needed to unite our bodily orientation with spiritual interiors. There's nothing wrong with having a good set of external events, but salvation isn't there because Herod is in charge. For the people of this world, it seems that a special effort has to be made to unite our higher self to our worldly body, and that process requires the Lord to be born into our

lives.

Matthew Perry seems to be waking up to the fact that he needs a personal Christmas story as he looks around at his life at age 53, noticing that he's "sitting in a huge house, overlooking the ocean, with no one to share it with, save a sober companion, a nurse, and a gardener twice a week."

*This Christmas,
listen for that still
small voice. That's
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I think for us, as we approach Christmas, we have to remember this lesson well. Whatever we're frustrated with, know that Jesus showed up to give us hope for a better tomorrow. And that hope won't be found in the wind, in an earthquake, or the fire. Instead, this Christmas, listen for that still small voice. That's where you'll find God. That's where you'll find peace, and good tidings for all mankind.



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CHARTER DAY CATHEDRAL ADDRESS

Behold Our Academy!

The Rev. Christopher A. Barber

Lessons: Psalm 139:1-18; John 15:4-11; Arcana Coelestia 6482

My fellow Academicians:

My name is Chris Barber, and I am a graduate of the Academy's College and Theological School, an honorary graduate of the Boys School, and a faculty member in both the Boys and Girls Schools. I've been a part of the system here without interruption since I was 18 years old and it's my honor to be speaking with you this morning.

That you are all sitting in this room today indicates that you are among the relative few to know of this treasure: the Academy of the New Church. To be sure, many know its name, whether from conferences hosted here, sports that have garnered us recognition, or even the enigma that is Bryn Athyn that has time and time again piqued the curiosity of journalists, scholars and authors alike. But how many appreciate what this institution truly is?

At the beginning of our Academy, there was a dream for a place where people could study the world, its origin and workings, and the part we each play in it bathed in the light of the Word as it could be understood through the universal theology presented in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Why? It's simple: they wanted to share the blessings that they themselves experienced in the reading and fellowship they had around this worldview.

But I think I need to tell you plainly, that dream is not why I, as a freshman in 2006, came to Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Though the Academy's mission moves me today, I initially came here because I liked the town, I liked the people, I liked my family here, and, if I can put it even more directly – I attended this institution because I got in (While it might come as a surprise to my students and colleagues, my former teachers and classmates might remember that I did not start college as the strongest student.)

Why are you here? It's a cosmic question if you let it be. Some in this room are attending because it's affordable compared to other small liberal

arts institutions and private schools that you looked at. Others because it's tradition, and your family name is on walls, halls and alumni registers of old. There are those of you who are here because there's room for you on a team or you craved the intimacy of small classes. And, of course, some of you are here because you want to learn and grow in an environment where the Doctrines are given the benefit of the doubt and are embedded in curricula, policy and culture. Whatever it is that brought you here, you are here for a reason, and not one totally of your design.

But I suppose I'm not one to believe in accidents. The Scriptures provide us with too many stories of apparent surprise blessings and courses foreseen from the dawn of the universe for me to buy that mere coincidence can withstand serious interrogation. As we read in the first chapter of the prophet Jeremiah:

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;

Before you were born I sanctified you.

What the Lord knew, He has always known. So again I ask: Why are you here? Why are we here?

Technically speaking, the Academy of the New Church is here to serve its purpose set forth in the Charter – the reason for which we gather here in reflection and celebration.

If you look up here, you'll see that I have in my hand from my personal collection an original advertising pamphlet for the Academy from 1880. Just on the inside cover printed opposite a copy of the Charter is a prospectus declaring who we were and what we stood for. I'd like to share a selection with you:

The objects of the Academy are to promote the knowledge of the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem, and the acknowledgment of the Lord in His Second Coming in the Revelations given by Him in the Writings of Swedenborg, and the Establishment of the New Church as the Lord's Kingdom on the earth.

At the time, the Academy's uses included a Theological School and a College, a Library, and a publishing outfit. The Boys School would not be established until 1881 and then the Girls School in 1884. And believe it or not, the first chapter of the Academy had sister locations in the United States and England! It's remarkable how much this school has morphed since then. Not yet a university, as was once the audacious dream, but certainly more robust and populated than what we were.

The celebration of our Charter helps us – no matter how much we've grown and developed – to re-orient ourselves to our supreme purposes. But also, Charter Day is, in so many ways, a celebration of us. In this room right now sits the real Academy. The people on the rolls, rosters and books. Whether

we will be members for 4 years, 8 years, 11 years, 30 years, our whole careers, or will leave before this year is out, at this moment, right now, this room IS the Academy. And however long you are a part of it, it will be indelibly a part of you, of us. I know it's a part of me.

Our lesson from the New Testament this morning included these words:

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.

(John 15:16)

The celebration of our Charter helps us – no matter how much we've grown and developed – to re-orient ourselves to our supreme purposes. But also, Charter Day is, in so many ways, a celebration of us.

There might be aspects of this Academy and its mission that you did not actively choose, but it's that mission that made it an option to be chosen in the first place. Now that you're here – now that we're here – how can we make the most of it? How can it be a seedbed for fruitful exploration of the dynamics of humanity, the secrets of the universe, and the mysteries of faith? And how can that fruit remain throughout our lives so we move forward in the spirit of the best of what this place can inspire?

A useful approach could be to look for where the Academy's values already overlap with yours and where they can strengthen each other. Because whatever brought you here, you are not here by accident. Even if you're enrolled by what felt like the inevitable momentum of your family story, you had to apply at the very least, maybe you interviewed, and then choose to attend and get yourselves here. There's agency in that, even if you learned of this school by what appeared to be chance. What of your choice connects you with the essence of this school? It's amazing how our values as individuals and those of the Academy can become bound.

Do you believe that love is the fire of a life? Do you believe that talk is cheap and it's how we live that makes the difference – that faith and works matter? Do you believe the love in marriage can last forever? Do you believe there is more to the Scriptures than what you see in the literal of the printed page? Do you believe that the Lord is not the God of the dead, but of the living? This Academy also values that and so much more.

This Academy does not exist merely because there is a paper saying that it does, even though there is a curious clause in our original Charter saying that “this corporation shall have perpetual existence.” This Academy exists because of human beings, in how they organize, how they order themselves, and how they subordinate, and contribute, in how they sacrifice and bring their talents – their expertise and their questions – to the table and embody the school.

The true life of this institution is not to be found in its history: our founders are dead! But it is to be found in the partnership forged in current year after current year between teachers and students and the Board and Corporation and staff and crews. It’s found in how we, like so many disparate parts, form a unity and, for all our disagreements and strife, our anxieties and diversities, put enough of ourselves aside to be part of something: this Academy, which provides both foundational natural knowledge and freeing spiritual truths.

The doctrines which give this school life help us to grasp, for instance, that science and religion can be good bedfellows. That the kidneys (of all things) can speak of heaven and even the scariest of Bible stories could tell of Divine love. And the doctrines for the New Church help us to see how these connect, and not in a superficial way but by unlocking for us the ability to see heaven and earth while losing sight of neither heavenly joy nor the disordered mess that is our world.

These seemingly disparate ideas within our minds are woven into a distinct cosmology: an Academy perspective. And we too, like Jacob when he saw the link between heaven and earth -- the angels ascending and descending from the Lord above to the strife of this world – can have a vision of blessings never ending and declare that surely, the Lord is in this, yes, even this place, and we did not know it.

Our lesson from the Heavenly Doctrines this morning revealed that there is no such thing as maintenance, but there is only perpetual creation. This institution, which stands ready to enrich your spirit and grant you the accredited diplomas, degrees and certificates that will launch you into your careers and passions, only exists because time and time again its members show up and perpetuate its creation, sometimes through hard work and tough decisions, other times in joyous service and lovingkindness.

Without being hyperbolic, it is true that this institution has given me my life: its classes shaped my worldview; its worship my faith; its community my family; its curricula my education; its faculty my discipline; its degrees my credentials; its society my marriage. (I met my wife, Annika, while we were students here.) The Academy has given me my life, and it’s an honor for me to lend my talents and my passions to its uses as it seeks, person by person, particular by particular, to advance its universal chartered purposes. What a blessing this Academy has been. What a blessing this Academy is.

BEHOLD OUR ACADEMY!

If you have learned to think more deeply in this place, you also have been blessed. If you have developed friendships in this place, you also have been blessed. If you have found purpose in this place, you also have been blessed. If you have developed your voice, if you've found love, if you've found a calling, if you have come to a more meaningful understanding of and relationship with the Lord, you too have been blessed by the Academy.

And through these blessings, the Academy becomes a part of you. It's why so many people come back at Charter Day and volunteer and serve. They don't come back just to see some buildings or games – they certainly don't come to read the Charter – but to gather, to form, and to re-form some semblance of the corporation that had existence when they were on the rosters and on the payroll – when they were the Academy.

That's why I hope that the Academy can hold a special place in your heart – because it is and always will be a part of you. For all the challenges that a natural organization led by flawed humans can bring, I hope that we can count the blessings it also helps the Lord deliver. The Lord has been knitting together the community in this room for longer than we can fathom. But, from the standpoint of now, all of that has passed. From this legacy, your future.

May its blessings be constantly created and re-created within you, and may this Academy find perpetual existence for generations through the creation of those who benefit from and opt into and extend the life of its Charter, a document which lives and breathes only so long as this institution has members.

Thank you for showing up. Thank you for being our Academy.



The Rev. Christopher A. Barber teaches Religion in the Academy Boys and Girls Schools. He enjoys writing on matters of doctrine, church history and current events. He and his wife, Annika (Fitzpatrick) live at Peeble Hall in Trenton, New Jersey. Contact: chris.barber@ancss.org

Getting Wright, Spiritually

The Rev. Howard A. Thompson

Though not exclusive to Christianity, repentance is a central theme in the Christian faith. As Christians, we are called to turn away from sin and return to God. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for “repent” is “*shub*,” which means “to turn back” or “to return.” In the New Testament, the Greek word for “repent” is “*metanoeō*,” which means “to change one’s mind” or “to think differently.” Both words convey the idea of a change in thinking, a rethinking of one’s previous ways, and a turning toward God.

When we reflect on the concept of repentance, it is important to remember the words of *Psalm 51:10*: “*Create in me a new heart, O Lord, and renew within me a right spirit.*” This verse is a reminder that true repentance involves a change of heart and a renewal of the spirit. It is not just about saying we’re sorry for our actions, but it is also about making a conscious effort to change and improve ourselves.

One way to approach repentance is to rethink our beliefs and assumptions. Sometimes, we hold onto ideas that are not in line with our faith, are based on misconceptions, or simply have not evolved from our early (childish) understanding of the Word. This evolution in our thinking and understanding is wonderfully expressed in this passage from *1 Corinthians 6*: “*When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.*”

Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. It is important to re-examine our beliefs and be open to new perspectives. This can lead to a deeper understanding of our faith and a stronger relationship with God.

One way that I realized the Lord has led me to “rethink” was triggered by a presentation given by Martin Pennington during our Virtual Retreat earlier this year. Martin was discussing *John 14*, specifically the passage: “*In my Father’s house are many mansions.*” For many years, I had heard this passage and pictured a grand, opulent mansion in heaven. During Martin’s presentation, however, I realized that the use of the word “mansions” in this

context does not make sense. How can God's house be filled with mansions?

It may capture the attention of those who see themselves going to heaven because they have "been good" and deserve a "mansion." It may also capture the attention of those like the disciples who desired to sit on thrones on either side of the Lord. The proper understanding of this passage has nothing to do with mansions or houses, but dwelling places. In other words, it is about the nature of God and the fact that there is more than enough room for all of God's children in heaven. This simple rethinking of a commonly misunderstood passage had a profound impact on me.

As I meditated on this idea of rethinking, I was reminded of my own experience with purchasing a home. When my wife and I bought our first house, much of our thinking was around how much house we could afford. I'm certain there were other considerations but the question of how much we could afford seemed to dominate the conversations with the realtors and mortgage brokers we consulted.

Today, at nearly 60 years old, I am more focused on how much house we need, what aspects of a house would be useful – what truly makes a house a home. Today I am more focused on having a home that is "Spiritually Wright."

This shift in thinking reminded me of the American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959). He is known for his iconic designs, including the Fallingwater house (in Western Pennsylvania), the Guggenheim Museum (in New York City) and Temple Beth Shalom (near Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania).

Over the years I have developed a particular affection for his series of "Usonian Homes;" typically small, single-story dwellings without a garage or much storage. They are often L-shaped to fit around a garden terrace on unusual and inexpensive sites. They are characterized by native materials; flat roofs and large cantilevered overhangs for passive solar heating and natural cooling; natural lighting with clerestory windows; and radiant-floor heating. A strong visual connection between the interior and exterior spaces is an important characteristic of all Usonian homes.

What I find most interesting about Wright's designs is his approach to space. He believed that the room within is the most important aspect of a building. The space within becomes the reality of the building, in much the same way that our inner (spiritual) life should shine through and manifest as our outer (natural) life. This spiritual approach to architecture is reflected in his commentary on the idea that form follows function. Wright notes that "this idea that 'form follows function' has been misunderstood. Form and function should be one, joined in a spiritual union."

Wright was heavily influenced by Japanese architecture, particularly its subtlety, harmony and the manner in which it merges indoor and outdoor spaces. Traditional Japanese houses, with their sliding doors and emphasis

Frank Lloyd Wright's spiritual approach to architecture is reflected in his commentary on the idea that form follows function. He says this has been misunderstood – that form and function should be one, joined in a spiritual union.

on transitional spaces, left a lasting impression on him, one that clearly resonated with his own sense of spirituality.

One distinguishing characteristic of Wright designs, particularly his series of Usonian Homes, was the “compression and release technique” whereby the entrance to a Wright house is often into a confining (compressed) space with lower ceiling and closer walls leading to the rest of the house. Not only does this feature represent a “transitional space,” it also gives the visitor a sense of release when emerging into the living space of the house, often leading a person to feel that the home is much larger than it is.

Though Wright does not specifically make the connection, I can see a connection with the Lord's words in *Matthew*: “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that

leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” (*Matthew 7:13, 14*)

I see the confining or compressed entryway in Wright's design as the “narrow gate.” It is the path less taken, a little more challenging, calling one to be more introspective. Upon entering the larger space, there's a sense of enlightenment and freedom, akin to the “way which leads to life” as described in the Gospel.

Though raised in a family of Unitarians, Wright's beliefs cannot be easily classified as belonging to any particular religious tradition. It is clear, however, that he had a deep and complex spirituality that informed his work as an architect.

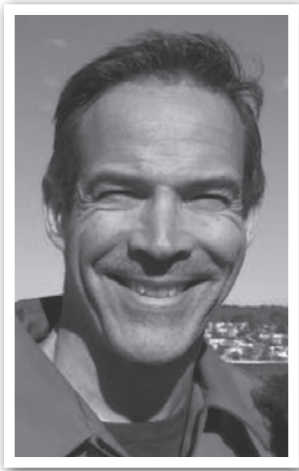
One last thought on the importance of our dwelling place and its connection to our spiritual dwelling place. Many of my Jewish friends have a “mezuzah” affixed to the door posts (door jambs) of their homes. These small boxes contain a piece of parchment on which specific verses from the Torah (*Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21*) are handwritten. These verses include: “Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one.”

Traditionally, when passing through the door, one touches the mezuzah

and then kisses the fingers that touched it, as a sign of respect and a reminder of the commandments. The mezuzah serves as a daily affirmation of a Jewish household's faith and commitment to God's commandments. Now, imagine if your entire house, as Frank Lloyd Wright envisioned it, was an expression of your spirituality.

In many ways, Wright's approach to architecture mirrors the concept of repentance and rethinking. It is about re-examining our assumptions and beliefs and approaching our dwelling place from spiritual principles.

*How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord.
(Psalm 84:1)*



The Rev. Howard A. Thompson is pastor of the Society for the New Church in Australasia in Sydney, Australia, where he lives with his wife, Debra. He was previously pastor of the Colchester, England, Society and served in the Bryn Athyn Society.

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FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

New Church Happenings in Brazil

The Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs

In the month of July, I had the privilege of visiting Brazil for the first time and seeing some of the various New Church congregations there. My wife Cathy and I first flew into Curitiba, which is about 275 miles Southeast of Sao Paulo, the largest city in Brazil. We were met at the airport by the Rev. Andy Heilman, a former Pastor in Brazil, and the Rev. Eduardo Beirith. Eduardo is the Pastor of the small group in Curitiba and generously allows for church services to be held in the art gallery and bookstore which he manages. His wife Patricia speaks fluent English, which was a great help to us, and they have a very cute little girl name Stefani.

I was in Curitiba to ordain the Rev. Daniel Rodrigues into the first degree of the priesthood. Daniel will be serving there as an Assistant to the Pastor. He is married to Ketelin and they have a daughter, Rebeca, and one more child on the way. Eduardo and Daniel work on spreading the good news of the Second Coming through the YouTube channel for the New Church in Brazil. If you are able to understand Portuguese you can sample some of their videos here: <https://www.youtube.com/@ANovaJerusalem/videos>.

From Curitiba we flew to Rio de Janeiro and then headed north to Campo Grande. It is about one hour's drive and we got to see various parts of the city on the way. Recently a property was purchased there, which has two houses on it. The house at the back of the property serves as the manse for the Rev. Johnny Villanueva and his wife, Luciana. The house at the front of

the property now serves as the Church for Campo Grande, and while we were there I dedicated the building to the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ. There were about 30 people in attendance, and it was great to sense their excitement and optimism about the future.

Afterwards we drove back to Rio de Janeiro and Cathy and I got to see the famous Rio beaches for the first time. It was wonderful to experience the culture and music at night, all in the scenic setting of the rolling tides crashing onto the white sand, with majestic mountains serving as an epic backdrop.

The next day we went to the New Church in Fatima, the oldest New Church congregation in Brazil, in existence for more than 100 years. I know that back in the late 1950s and early 1960s, my father, the Rev. Daniel Heinrichs, would stop and visit there when he would fly from Durban, South Africa, to Philadelphia on the way to Clergy Meetings in Bryn Athyn. The church itself is beautiful both inside and out.

During the worship service, I ordained Marcos Marquez da Silva into the first degree of the priesthood. He will serve as the Assistant to the Pastor in both Campo Grande and Fatima, working under the supervision of the Rev. Johnny Villanueva. Marcos is married to Maria da Gloria, and they have two adult children, Marcio and Michele. There were more than 40 people in attendance to celebrate this wonderful occasion.

After church, Cathy and I had enough time to visit the famous Christ the Redeemer statue that overlooks the city of Rio de Janeiro. It is truly spectacular to witness the scale of the statue up close, and there is something very comforting and beautiful about seeing an image of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, look down from the mountain compassionately on the people in the city below.

Finally, it was time to head home after a whirlwind tour of Brazil. We left with newfound friends and a deep appreciation for the people of the New Church in Brazil. Unfortunately, I did not have time to visit the Rev. Cristóvão Nobre, the retired pastor from Rio, who now lives with his wife, Cleia, in Alcobaca, Bahia, about 1,000 kilometers up the coast from Rio. Hopefully, next time I will get a chance to visit there.

I would be remiss if I concluded this report without a sincere expression of appreciation for all that the Rev. Andy Heilman has done to serve the people in Brazil over the years. During this trip, Andy was turning over the reins of supervising the pastors of the New Church in Brazil to me. He was the pastor in Rio for a time back in the late '70s and early '80s and has been serving in a supervisory role for decades since. His pastoral care for the people there was evident in every interaction, and I could tell he was much loved in return.

Andy has also done so much to help get the Heavenly Doctrine translated into Portuguese and to train the ministers there in the teachings of the New

Church. He will certainly be missed, but he has promised to continue doing classes and teaching from afar and to help me whenever I need it.

If you are ever headed to Brazil, reach out to me, and I can put you in touch with the awesome people there.

(See photos on page 479.)

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Life Lines

Bruce M. Henderson and the Rev. Jeremy F. Simons

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

As this is written, the wanton terrorist attack on Israel on October 7 is still fresh and haunting, unknown consequences are set in motion, results are very much in doubt. What should not be in doubt – for all the peripheral issues – is that we are dealing here with abject evil.

The history of Israel and Palestine – now hostage to regional terrorism – is steeped in grievance and accusation. Strong opinions and emotion erupt on both sides. It is not our job here to judge conflicting passions – to criticize or condemn. But we need to be clear about what is at stake. There were “two sides,” after all, in World War II, but one was clearly evil. That’s why it was called “the good war.” And let us remember what we are all called to do: “*Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Seek peace and pursue it.*” (Psalm 34:14)

It is essential to our freedom that we live in a world between good and evil – free to choose. We must know evil to shun it. And the world is ever testing us.

Within the church and our schools we have clear teachings about the insidious nature of evil, and how our lives and regeneration are all about making informed choices. Knowing evil means recognizing the moral depravity of the sadistic orgy of slaughtering babies, children, women and the elderly. That means calling it by its name – evil – not equivocating over “moral equivalence” and “proportionality.” (See *Arcana Coelestia* 1594 for teachings about the love of self – so chillingly on display here – as diametrically contrary to heavenly love.)

It is distressing that so many of our academic institutions particularly – where educated people should know better – reacted first to the attack on Israel with appeals for tolerance and understanding, and “creating a safe place” for “differences of opinion” – and disturbing antisemitism. There were “differences of opinion” about the Holocaust, the 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States, even the Lord’s crucifixion. But there was clarity about the underlying evil.

For our perspective within the church, the Rev. Christopher Barber said in his Charter Day Cathedral address (page 457): “The celebration of our Charter helps us to reorient ourselves to our supreme purposes.” The timing was serendipitous, for this international crisis calls us to the clear-eyed moral compass of all that we understand about good and evil – our “supreme purposes” – especially in such a confused world.

What is going on in Israel – a determined effort to completely eradicate the country and its people – is particularly sobering for a group of New Church ministers and theologs who traveled there last year. (*Pilgrims in Israel: Feeling the Presence of the Lord* – Rev. Dr. Andrew Dibb, *New Church Life*, May/June 2023) They were indelibly moved just being where Jesus walked, feeling His presence throughout this holy land of the Word. That is all threatened.

A Northwestern University professor recently wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* about iconic Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky’s reaction 150 years ago to similar atrocities committed by the Ottomans against their Slavic subjects. The depravity was the same as we witness today – and repeated throughout history.

It’s worth noting that Dostoevsky was a reader of Swedenborg and his classic *Crime and Punishment* is said to have been inspired by reading *Heaven and Hell*. Reflecting on the terror of the Ottomans, he said: “Believe me, the most complete aberration of human hearts and minds is always possible.” History, unfortunately, is replete with examples.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who devoted much of his life to studying the long decline of his native Russia, said: “No one thinks of himself as evil.” Indeed, every terrorist and sympathizer rationalizes and justifies the righteousness of his cause.

Another commentator laments that what plagues us today is that our young people are not taught about evil anymore – and that “nothing is more important than the study of good and evil.” That study is still true in New Church schools, but many schools are teaching about racism, sexism, homophobia, climate change, diversity, equity and inclusiveness – not good and evil. So, most of today’s students do not know about the Holocaust (six million killed), the Gulag Archipelago (20 million), the forced famine in Ukraine (six million), or Mao’s Great Leap Forward (60 million). They do not know the history and consequences of evil. We are witnessing those consequences.

“If you want to make a moral world,” he says, “you must begin with the study of evil.” And that begins with being honest about it.

Nick Heier, one of the Distinguished Alumni for the Academy Boys School this Charter Day, who served with the U.S. Marines in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other hostile areas, told the senior boys what a defining experience it was for him to live so acutely between good and evil – to have to choose – and how

much his New Church education helped him to be clear. On less of a life-and-death scale, that is what we all do. We have all the benefits our education and what the teachings of our church have done to guide us. For instance:

If we believe that particular evils are permissible, then they become part of us even though we do not do them, since the permission we grant them in our thought comes from our intent. (Divine Providence 81)

Yes, we want “safe places” for learning and discussing such vital issues, but the ultimate safety is in the Lord – knowing right from wrong, good from evil – and living that faith.

And so our prayer echoes from our souls each day:
*Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
 as in heaven so upon the earth.
 Deliver us from evil.*

(BMH)

WHY ARE YOU HERE?

That’s the provocative question the Rev. Christopher Barber asked Bryn Athyn College and Academy Secondary Schools students in his profound Charter Day Cathedral Address, *Behold Our Academy!* (Page 457)

It is a question that goes to the core of why the Academy exists, and its impact – along with the church – in our lives.

It is also a question that echoes through our lives – sometimes in anguish and doubt, sometimes in reflection and revelation – as we search for purpose and meaning in life,

Chris quoted the familiar and comforting verse from *Jeremiah*: “*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you.*” He knows us and He leads us, even when we stray, and always within the boundaries of His greatest gifts: love and freedom.

At the Academy, students are educated in the light of the Word and the Writings. It is an “education for use” – both in this world and the next. It promotes a spiritual worldview and spiritual conscience – both unique in the world. That is why, he says, its students are blessed.

We are all a part of the Academy – this Church – because of the Lord. He created each one of us for a reason and is always leading us to purpose and meaning if we follow in His way.

Throughout our education – throughout our lives – we have the opportunity to use what we have learned and to apply it to making us better

people and this a better world.

New Church education – within our schools and churches – helps us to find that meaning, and thus to make it all meaningful.

Why are we here? To find purpose and meaning in all that we do. To show up and be accountable. To “seek first the kingdom of God” in everything we do, guided by our love, our faith, our values.

Then we don’t need to wonder: why am I here? We know. And are grateful.

(BMH)

THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND SHIELD

How often do we hear people say – almost as a badge of self-righteousness: “I’m not religious, but . . .”? They want us to know that they don’t need religion in their lives. They are strong enough to take care of themselves. Or so they think.

They glibly imply that to believe in God, to trust in Him and to live a religious life, is a sign of weakness. It is just the opposite.

God gives power to the weak. And to those who have no might, He increases strength.

I shall renew my strength. I shall receive God’s strength as I wait upon Him. I shall mount up with wings like eagles. I shall run and not be weary. I shall walk and not faint. All of this shall happen because I wait on the Lord. (Isaiah 40:29, 31)

The Lord will give strength to His people, the Lord will bless His people with peace. (Psalm 29:11)

Polls consistently show that people with faith, married with families, purpose in their lives, and who live with hope and trust, tend to be happy and content.

Those who are not religious – who don’t believe in the Lord but trust their own power – are often frustrated, searching and unfulfilled.

The reason why faith which looks away from the Lord toward self is a loser is that then the person does all the fighting alone. (Arcana Coelestia 8606)

All the troubles that stalk us – from global calamity to our own private demons – weigh most on us when we are not trusting in the Lord and walking in His way. He wants us simply to love Him and our neighbor – to “feed My sheep” and wait on Him. He will give us all the strength we need.

God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:2)

(BMH)

THE NORDEN BOMBSIGHT*Carl Lukas Norden and the New Church*

During World War II my father flew 30 bombing missions over France and Germany from November 1943 to July 1944. Below him in his B-24 Liberator, of which he was the co-pilot, was a bombardier operating the plane's Norden bombsight. My father was not aware that the inventor of that bombsight was a fellow Swedenborgian, nor did he know that the purpose behind it was a religious one.

Aerial bombing from heights of 25,000 feet and more is so difficult that without some means of increasing its accuracy targets would invariably be missed by thousands of feet. Because of this difficulty, and because of the dangers of daylight bombing, most nations involved in the conflict bombed at night, aiming at large population centers that were hard to miss. But the American forces had a different philosophy, and that philosophy was enabled by Carl Norden and his revolutionary bombsight.

The purpose of the bombsight was to make war more humane. The theory behind it was that accurately bombing military targets could deprive the enemy of the means of making war, making it possible to end a war with a greatly reduced loss of life and destruction of property. If, for example, ball-bearing plants could be shut down, or sources of oil and fuel cut off, then the enemy would be unable to pursue its military objectives.

The dream that the airplane could revolutionize warfare was based on a massive untested and unproven assumption: that somehow, someone at some point would figure out how to aim a bomb from high in the sky with something close to accuracy.¹

This was the dream and the goal that Carl Norden pursued. He was born to Dutch-naturalized German parents in Java, educated in the Netherlands and Switzerland, and came to work in the United States in the field of engineering. According to one biography:

Carl Lukas Norden fit nearly all of the stereotypes associated with genius, though Norden preferred to think of himself as a person who worked harder than anyone else. Sixteen-hour days were typical. Self-centered, impatient, domineering, driven, abrasive and perfectionist, he was also a man of the highest ethical standards. . . . This rough and exacting exterior, however, clashed dramatically with his inner self: "always religious, but never a churchgoer" and puritanical. He opposed established churches, especially the Catholic Church. Norden hated for anyone to speak

of his “inventions,” believing that only God could be responsible for inventions. Norden’s achievements were “designs.” A devotee of the Christian theologian Emanuel Swedenborg, Norden committed himself to “being of use.” His Swedenborgian Christianity allowed him to have all these characteristics, while being dedicated to charity and compassion for the disadvantaged. This philosophy left no room for self-aggrandizement.²

Strategic bombing from aircraft first took place in World War I, but its role and effectiveness were not great due to technological limitations. Immediately after the war engineers began to work on improved bombsights, and as the speed and altitude of the planes increased, the complexity of the issue of accuracy was greatly magnified.

Working for the United States Navy throughout the 1920s, Norden developed his first prototype by 1923 and the first model was in production by 1927. He worked continuously to produce new and improved models, all of which were closely guarded secrets. The device was used to drop bombs from high-altitude aircraft. The claim was made that it enabled them to “*drop a bomb in a pickle barrel from 18,000 feet*” but this was an exaggeration. In truth it performed accurately enough in practice to hit a 100-foot circle from an altitude of 21,000 feet, but this accuracy was never achieved in combat.

The Norden bombsight was one of the most important technological efforts of the war, and it was its third most expensive single undertaking, exceeded only by the Manhattan Project and the development of the B-29 Bomber, the Superfortress.³ While its promise was never fully achieved during the war, which was dominated by bombing on a massive scale, continued progress toward that goal has been amazingly successful since that time, albeit using different technologies than those Norden employed. Despite this, the dream of making war more humane is not even close to fulfillment, nor is the far more important goal of ending war altogether.

Although the United States government spent a great deal of money on the bombsight, Carl Norden himself did not profit from it. He did, however, make a fortune in the production of precision ball bearings. In his will Norden left one-third of his wealth to the Swedenborg Foundation to finance the publication of the Heavenly Doctrine. He was never a member of any church, nor did he attend services, but he was devoted to the goals of the Swedenborg Foundation. The records of the Foundation describe his connection and their gratitude for his generosity:

The generosity of Carl Lukas Norden to the Foundation deserves special recognition. Norden served on the Foundation’s Board of Directors from 1944 until his death in 1965. A resident of Zurich,

Switzerland, for many of those years, he attended few board meetings. When Norden became a Swedenborgian or how he was recruited to serve as Foundation director is not fully known. His contact with the Foundation may have come through John F. Seekamp, of Brooklyn, New York, who became president in 1953. Seekamp and Norden later developed a close correspondence that discussed issues ranging from board actions and doctrinal matters to estate planning.⁴

It may seem ironic to think that Norden was acting from New Church principles in developing a method for aiming bombs. In some ways it is like Alfred Nobel's establishment of the Nobel Peace Prize with a fortune made in the production of dynamite. But the Writings make it very clear that the defense of one's country against an enemy's aggression is not only legitimate but an act of love and charity.

My father knew nothing about Carl Norden or his motivations for developing the complicated contraption riding a few feet from him as he flew over Europe 80 years ago. He also most likely did not see himself as part of an effort to minimize the destructiveness of war. He was trying to do his job, defend his country, and survive the experience, along with thousands, and even millions of others. But Carl Norden played an important role in all of this, for the benefit of humanity, and in his contributions to the publication of the Heavenly Doctrine he has done even more.

1 The Bomber Mafia, by Malcolm Gladwell; Little, Brown and Company; 2021; p. 20

2 America's Pursuit of Precision Bombing 1910-1945, by Stephen L. McFarland, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995, pp. 49, 52

3 Malcolm Gladwell, chapter 1

4 Illuminating the World of Spirit, by David B. Eller, Swedenborg Foundation, 1999, p. 36

(JFS)

SALVATION FROM JEOPARDY!

Ken Jennings, all-time champion and current host of the popular TV quiz show *Jeopardy!* has written a provocatively titled book: *100 Places to See After You Die – A Travel Guide to the Afterlife*.

The book speaks to the universal longing to know what happens after we die. But while the subject is serious the approach is light-hearted. It explores everything claimed and imagined about the afterlife from ancient Egypt and Dante's *Inferno* to the popular TV series *The Good Place* and even current pop

songs. Tucked within all its irreverence and whimsy is a three-page summary of Emanuel Swedenborg and *Heaven and Hell*, which is fair and well-written.

The book covers 5,000 years of prophets and poets, mystics and script writers, with every concept of life after death you've ever heard of – and many you haven't. It treats a serious subject in a nonserious way, which is probably why it is a best-seller. It is written as a typical travel guide, including such features as: Top Attractions, Day Trips, Where to Stay, What to See, and What to Pack. Many readers – judging from Amazon reviews – hunger for more.

The fact that the book is already a best-seller is good news – that for those seeking serious answers about the afterlife beyond this lighthearted approach, there is more to explore and ready-made opportunities for outreach.

In his Introduction Jennings writes: “When Shakespeare called the afterlife ‘the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns,’ he was echoing a tradition as old as recorded history. Death, our stories have always said, isn't a condition. It's a place, a journey.”

He acknowledges that, “We live in a time of unprecedented religious skepticism, but the afterlife is as lively a topic as ever.” A poll in 2016 found that “even though the number of Americans who believe in God, pray, or attend religious services has declined steeply since the 1970s, the number of us who believe in an afterlife has actually risen.” (Jennings is a devout Mormon who says that years of working on this book got him thinking more and more about the afterlife – and the meaning of life.)

He may not realize it but the most significant and insightful chapter of this whole collection is: *The Spiritual World – Swedenborgianism*. It begins:

“In 1758, the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg published *Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell, From Things Seen and Heard*, based on his visions of the afterlife. Though Swedenborg never formed a church, his theology was influential – particularly in America, where famous fans from Johnny Appleseed to Helen Keller spread the good word about his teachings.

“In Swedenborg's visions, he saw that the ‘spiritual world’ consists of heaven, hell, and a third realm, the World of Spirits, which will be the first step of your journey.”

Jennings goes into an informed description of the process of awakening into spiritual life – “a world of introspection and instruction, as you gradually get a clearer-eyed view of eternity.”

“Gradually you'll move into a deeper state of awareness as you remember your mortal weaknesses more clearly and become aware of the real intention behind your acts. See, your assignment to heaven or hell is a judgment, but it comes from you, not the Lord.”

Hopefully this bit of “revelation” will lift Jennings' introduction beyond travel guide to something special and unique among these fantasies –

something from God, not man, and worth learning more about.

Jennings may not have been paying that much attention himself because he talks of the “mystic” Swedenborg’s visions -- as though this all sprang from his imagination, like an inspired Dante, not as direct revelation from God. In his Introduction, he returns to Hamlet’s observation that no one has ever come back from the spiritual world to tell us what it is like – although that is exactly what Swedenborg has done, not as author but as servant.

Over the years, New Church viewers of *Jeopardy!* have been pleasantly surprised to find a number of questions about Swedenborg – often answered correctly by contestants. This spreading awareness, now heightened by Jennings “travel guide” to heaven and hell, presents a serendipitous opportunity to lead readers of this travel guide to a real eye-witness account – in *Heaven and Hell*, collateral literature and videos.

In this life when we travel to foreign lands we learn all we can so that we will be prepared. Well, we all know we will die and leave this world – and readers of Jennings’ book say they want to know more. We have that ultimate “travel guide.” It is our job to share it.

(BMH)

HOPE FOR THE NEW YEAR

Every new year begins with hope – hope for ourselves and our families; hope for our communities and country; hope for the world; hope for the church. But we approach the new year under an ominous cloud: fallout from war in the Middle East; deep division within nations counted on to lead the world; moral confusion undermining what once were common values.

It is reassuring that each new year comes in the wake of Christmas and the enduring promise:

Fear not, for I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord.

He came on earth in a dark time for humanity – so dark that His coming was the only way to subdue the hells and offer salvation.

There is nothing new in the vision of a world of doom and gloom. History is drenched in blood and atrocities, evil and wantonness. So is the Word. From the “original sin” of Adam and Eve, the wicked kings of Israel, the children of Israel stumbling through the wilderness for 40 years, the crucifixion of the Lord, and the dire images of *Revelation*, there seems little hope.

But hope is what guides and motivates us. It is what we cling to when

we are worried or afraid. And the Word is really all about deliverance and salvation – and hope:

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters. (Jeremiah 17:7-8)

It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. (Lamentations 3:26)

Let Your mercy be upon us, according as we hope in Thee (Psalm 33:22)

When we place our hope in the Lord, and are guided by that faith, we change the way we look at life, the way we live.

Those who allow themselves to be filled with hope remain steadfast in an affirmative outlook. (Arcana Coelestia 2338)

When fear is removed, hope is present. (Ibid. 2694)

When we look at our world, it is easy to despair and be discouraged. We feel powerless of ourselves to make a difference. But to trust in the Lord, as New Church men and women, means being supremely confident that it is His love, His leading, His providence that give us hope.

Happy, hopeful New Year.

(BMH)

OUR DAILY BREAD

One good resolution for the new year, for those not yet on board, is to read *Our Daily Bread* by the Rev. Derek Elphick – every day. This paperback book offers “365 readings and inspirations for living well.” It’s a reward and an inspiration every day – for just about five minutes of reading and reflection.

Many New Church men and women are already in the habit – and are grateful every day. There is always something that applies to life, gently stated, and powerfully applicable to our lives. And when you finish the year, you just start over again. I’m in my fourth year and it’s always new.

Try it. You will be rewarded – and grateful – every day of the year.

(BMH)

THE NEW CHURCH IN BRAZIL



The Rt. Rev. Brad Heinrichs ordains the Rev. Daniel Rodrigues in Curitiba



Bishop Brad Heinrichs and the Revs. Daniel Rodrigues and Andy Heilman



Luciana Villanueva and Cathy Heinrichs at the dedication of the Church Building in Campo Grande, Brazil



The Rev. Daniel Rodrigues and his wife, Ketelin



Nunc Licet Chapel in Fatima. Left to right, Gloria and Rev. Marcos Marques da Silva, Rev. Andy Heilman, Rt. Rev. Brad and Cathy Heinrichs, Rev. Eduardo Beirith, Rev. Johnny and Luciana Villanueva



Bishop Brad Heinrichs ordains the Rev. Marcos Marquez da Silva in Fatima



Clergy wives at the Nunc Licet Chapel in Fatima. Left to right, Patricia Beirith, Cathy Heinrichs, Luciana Villanueva, Gloria da Silva

CHARTER DAY 2023 – BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE



Field Day



Students lining up for the procession



Dean Jonathan Kline watching soccer in the rain



Pat and Martin Klein with the Mascot



President Eric Carswell with the Mascot



Left top right: Halfdan, Marijke and Nicole Bau-Madsen and Kaylene Glenn



Chancellor Peter Buss and President Eric Carswell walking up the aisle in the Cathedral

CHARTER DAY 2023 – ACADEMY SECONDARY SCHOOLS



Procession at the Cathedral



Procession to the Cathedral



Football team
heads out for a
rainy game
– and victory



Field hockey fans



Girls School and Boys
Schools banners

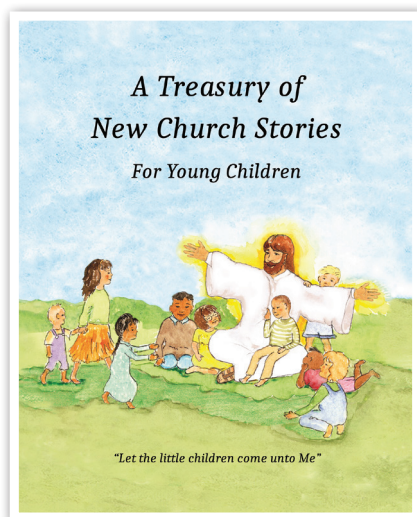


Seniors on the steps of Benade Hall



Boys School singing with enthusiasm

A New Book for Children from General Church Education



A Treasury of New Church Stories for Young Children features favorite stories for children 0-6, selected for their tender messages and colorful illustrations. Many of these stories were originally published as small individual books via desktop publishing, and others were from the Early Childhood Religion Program. All have been reformatted with enhanced pictures.

Fourteen New Church authors and artists are represented in the book. Titles include: *What Is Heaven?*, *The Little Lost Lamb*, *The Lord's Prayer* and *Becoming an Angel*.

With 258 pages there is so much for parents and grandparents to explore with children as they grow. Questions and prompts in many stories provide abundant ideas for introducing children to simple spiritual concepts about the Lord, His creation, the wonders of heaven, and His love and care for all people.

This delightful hardcover book is an ideal Christmas gift for new babies and toddlers and a keepsake to be treasured for years to come. It is available from the General Church Bookstore for \$21.95. Visit www.newchurchbooks.com, email bookstore@newchurch.org or call 215-947-0266, ext 4922.

The Lord, God With Us
A collection of 36 sermons
to encourage and support a truly Christian faith

By the Rev. Michael D. Gladish

Not long ago we encountered the author's first collection of sermons, *Prayer and Providence*, and found it to be an excellent resource for a series of discussion group meetings at Bryn Athyn Cathedral. Mike's direct style, combined with practical wisdom, stimulated excellent conversation and satisfying understanding.

Now, in this sermon collection devoted to the most important of all New Church doctrines, the doctrine concerning the Lord, Mike is indeed treading on sacred ground. Undoubtedly, he is seeking to stir further conversation. But, more deeply we believe this new work will help readers to open a more interior view of the Divine so that the revealed wisdom within the Heavenly Doctrines can strengthen our bonds with the visible God who is Our Lord Jesus Christ. – *Rev. Phil and Terry Schnarr*

This book constitutes a remarkably fresh retelling of the most important doctrine of the New Church – the Lord's glorification. Using language and imagery that is both contemporary and incisive, Mike clearly demonstrates how the Lord glorified His human, subjugated the hells, and established a new church on earth. Among our many fine collateral works, this one is bound to become a classic. – *Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman*

It has been nearly 80 years since a book on the doctrine of the Lord has been published by the General Church. This attractive new paperback of some 250 pages should be available on Amazon.com, from the General Church Book Center, or from the Cathedral Book Store in time for Christmas. It will be priced at \$20 USD.

Church News

Compiled by Bruce Henderson

ASSEMBLY WORKSHOPS

Would you like to lead a workshop in next June's General Assembly in Bryn Athyn? A wide variety of workshops is critical to a successful Assembly. We are eager to help find ways for your talents and experience to help create enriching experiences for people attending from throughout the world.

Click this link for information and an application form:

<https://bit.ly/3pgbe3>

Registration for members and friends for the Assembly begins in February 2024. If you have questions please reach out to **Emily Hasen**, gcassembly2024@newchurch.org.

Pictured below is the team planning the Assembly. Left to right, back row: the Rev. Derek Elphick, Nicole Bau-Madsen, Marijke Bau-Madsen. Front row: Kelly Treacy, Nina Dewees, Emily Hasen, The Rt. Rev. Peter Buss Jr., Lana Tang.



GENERAL CHURCH EMPLOYEE UPDATE

New assignments for ministers include:

- **The Rev. Mark Pendleton**, pastor of Glenview New Church, is also serving as regional pastor for Oak Arbor, Michigan, and the New Church of Boulder Valley, Colorado.
- **The Rev. Jean Atta**, pastor of the New Church of Phoenix, Arizona, has taken on the role as regional pastor to California.

New employees of the General Church in Bryn Athyn include:

- **Brooke Brown** – Career network coordinator
- **Terryn Glunz** – Bookstore fulfillment
- **Emily Hasen** – Assembly planning team
- **Lana Tang** – Assembly planning team

The Rev. Solomon Keal has accepted a position as a minister with The Lord's New Church in Bryn Athyn. He left Bryn Athyn Church after 11 years as a teacher and school pastor for Bryn Athyn Church School and as lead pastor for the informal family service in Bryn Athyn. A search process is underway for a new pastor on the Bryn Athyn Church staff, with the **Rev. Jeff Smith** serving as interim school pastor.

BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE UPDATE

The Rev. Eric H. Carswell, President

If you haven't been on the Bryn Athyn College campus in the last 15 years, you will find it a very different place. Significant investments were made toward campus improvements and additional buildings to support the college programs. In the early 2000s the future of Bryn Athyn College did not look bright if it continued to exist primarily as a two-year program as it had for most of its existence. If it was going to be a healthy four-year program, welcoming students who were new to the New Church was important. Five months into his role as Chief Executive Officer, **T. Dudley Davis** wrote in the *Academy Journal*.

In my estimation, our primary focus must be on growth initiatives in all schools, but particularly in the College. The College has inadequate facilities for attracting and retaining students. The College faculty is capable and committed to excellence and is supportive of growth

initiatives. They are willing to make adjustments that can help produce results in growth and retention.

Bryn Athyn College should be the center of intellectual and spiritual thought for the General Church. We plan to provide the College with the resources necessary to accomplish its mission. (*Academy Journal* 2006-2007, p. 8)

The impetus behind these ideas has resulted in quite a different college experience than when I attended more than 50 years ago. Then there were 115 students, with 90 of them in their first two years. There were two majors, Education plus Religion/Philosophy. Bryn Athyn College started this fall with 270 students and more than half of them are student athletes on our Division III sports teams.

Students are looking at a college education differently today from a few decades ago. They are distinctly more career oriented. Bryn Athyn College's top two majors by enrollment are Business and Biology. Many Biology majors have gone on to careers in medicine with 11 graduates becoming doctors, three physician assistants, and 21 nursing degrees. More than 60% of the recent Biology major graduates were student athletes.

As some of you are aware, Bryn Athyn College has been operating with a budget deficit since 2008. Some of this deficit is the result of building a campus to serve 450-500 students. Some is the result of working to achieve that enrollment. All involved with Bryn Athyn College including the Academy of the New Church Board of Trustees recognize that this deficit spending is not sustainable. Simply cutting expenses to end the deficit would result in a college that would likely have significantly shrinking enrollment.

The financial support of alumni and friends has never been so important. It will help us maintain the core elements of collegiate New Church education at Bryn Athyn College. Your support will make a significant difference. You can donate at our website, www.brynathyn.edu/give, or checks can be sent to Sue Wright, Advancement Office, PO Box 708, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009 with the notation that it is for Bryn Athyn College.

CHARTER DAY 2023

This year's Charter Day celebration (October 12-15) included:

- A Cathedral address by the **Rev. Chris Barber** – *Behold Our Academy!* (See page 457)
- The Theta Alpha luncheon, featuring a talk on *Awe* by Bryn Athyn

Church School Vice Principal **Kristen Huff**

- Many happy class reunions
- Revived Glencairn Awards and Distinguished Alumni for Bryn Athyn College and the Academy Secondary Schools (see below)
- Updates on the College and Secondary Schools
- Reunion classes art exhibit
- Many social and sporting events, including a football game in pouring rain
- The 29th annual Student Scholarship Golf Outing, which has raised more than \$700,000 in scholarship funds for the College and Secondary Schools

Glencairn Awards

The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

As Chancellor, it is my privilege to announce and deliver the Glencairn Awards. Since 2004 the awards have been in hiatus, so a few words of introduction. In 1955 **Raymond and Mildred Pitcairn** gave stock to the Academy to establish a Glencairn Award Fund. The income was to be awarded to “outstanding teachers or members of the community,” for past heroic or exemplary service to the Academy or General Church, or as New Church people in religious, charitable, scientific, educational, artistic, literary or civic fields.

My part was to form an anonymous Special Awards Committee and then absent myself from the process until that team shared with me their list of awardees. Then I have the honor of announcing and presenting these awards. I would like to add my appreciation and excitement for the return to this special way of honoring people who have stepped forward over the course of their lifetimes. Each will receive a letter, a pendant, and a financial gift.

Here are the awardees for 2023, together with comments from the Special Awards Committee as to why each person was selected:

Sarah Bruell Odhner

Sarah is a super-star hostess to New Church guests, a long time accompanist at Bryn Athyn Church School, a diligent employee of General Church Education who taught and trained parents and teachers on Sunday school lessons throughout the world as well as creating “unit boxes” that could be sent to anyone or school; but these were specifically helpful for homeschoolers and New Church people not near a church. Sarah currently lives in the United Kingdom, where she is tremendously supportive of the church there, with her husband, the **Rev. Grant Odhner**.

She is also contributing to ongoing New Church thought with doctoral studies in the origins of New Church education in the UK.

Janice Acton Roscoe

Janice has shared a can-do good attitude for generations of Academy students and others. She is an all-round supporter of the church and its schools. She ran and prepared Friday suppers for years. She gave up her job for another when there was downsizing. She has been a tried-and-true crossing guard for countless years.

Bruce Henderson

Bruce's current heroic role is that of Editor for *New Church Life* – a position he has held for the past 12 years, and by means of which he has greatly enhanced the *Life* and expanded its readership. He has also researched and written influential and needed books for the New Church and outreach seekers without financial gain. He served as Advancement Officer and Director of Communication for the Academy and General Church for 10 years. He brings invaluable communications expertise to this day.

Carroll Odhner

Carroll consistently saw ways to improve the Swedenborg Library and did them. She is a shining example of putting in much more work than she was compensated for, including systemizing and standardizing the Swedenborg collections so that the world could easily access them. She connected with other private Swedenborg collections, and had their resources made available to the New Church. She also led fundraising, including writing grants so that the library could have more tangible displays and attract people of all ages.

Bradley and Andrea Cranch

These two are excellent volunteers in supporting the church and schools. They have, for example, served as June 19th champions, hosted doctrinal classes that attract young people, and provided leadership for Boy Scouts. The thing they do that others have not been able to do is find the “manpower” needed to get odd jobs done around Bryn Athyn Church School. Some of these jobs are not things that you can easily hire someone to do. The Cranches often volunteer to do these jobs or get paid a minimal amount.

Hannah Cranch

Hannah kept the Palo Alto Church in California alive (with her late

husband, Jonathan) by continually showing up to help with the service, provide meals and a place for visitors to stay. What took her beyond an exceptional volunteer was her and Jonathan's creation of "FabMo," a non-profit that benefits the community by re-using and re-purposing textiles.

Brannon Smith

Brannon volunteers for countless things in his home congregation of Glenview. He hosts and runs many events, including fundraising, overseeing church work days, and running men's weekends. He is also the "911 guy" when the school needs maintenance and does it all unpaid. He also teaches an elective for the school without being paid.

Cecy Umberger

Cecy is a beloved and ever-present "Mom and Grandma" within the Boulder (Colorado) Society, doing whatever needs to be done from the smallest detail to hosting classes and events. She is a mentor and beloved friend to so many, exuding warmth and connecting people in countless ways.

Jane Edmonds

Jane was selected for her extraordinary role at Principal of Kainon School in South Africa. She has been an educator of students and teachers alike. She was an outstanding principal, who was a major force behind the growth and excellence of Kainon. She is a champion of New Church education. She is a graceful and wonderful person who continually exudes positivity and love.

Kate Pitcairn

Kate has an incredible ability to bring New Church teachings into the classroom within the Kempton New Church School. She has created a 7th and 8th grade human body course that is doctrinally based, along with a Latin curriculum that shows how your mind is preparing to understand doctrine by learning Latin. She is also a volunteer who participates in every detail of keeping the Kempton Church running.

Geraldo (and Scarrain) Gomes

Scarrain is mentioned in memory, having passed away last year. She and her husband Geraldo were a wonderful team in all they supported. Geraldo has been a Board member of the San Diego Society, to whom the community turns for counsel. He served as Treasurer of San Diego who helped many New Church societies learn to manage their money. He

also was a huge part of the success of the New Church in the Philippines and Brazil, which involved significant travel. He and Scarrain welcomed anyone, not just ministers, to stay in their home when traveling or establishing themselves in the San Diego area and hosted many events. Scarrain was a champion Sunday School teacher.

Distinguished Alumni

Bryn Athyn College

This award recognizes alumni of the College who have given back to their communities, alma mater, or church, especially by applying the values and perspectives garnered from a New Church liberal arts education.

Stephen L. David



Stephen graduated from the Academy Boys School in 1978 and attended Bryn Athyn College 1979-1981. He graduated *magna cum laude* from Yale University in 1983 with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Political Science and received a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Pittsburgh in 1991.

He is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of a website development company, SkyMark, with wide experience leading the development of software systems to support teamwork, data analysis and decision-making.

He is also co-founder of the New Christian Bible Study Project, now the leading website for the New Church worldwide. It emphasizes the interconnections between the Old and New Testaments and the Writings, showing the internal sense to Bible readers from all over the world. It is multi-lingual, with more than 80 translations of the Word in 40+ languages, and 52 of Swedenborg's Latin texts, plus 480 translations of them in 22 languages, all cross-linked.

The site also includes much of New Church collateral literature, and more than 1,000 videos, plus hubs for spiritual topics, word/phrase significations, classes, courses, audio, sermons, reading plans, and more. It features a revival and extension of the 1990's Neo-Search Latin search tool, and advanced

searching for all the texts in all the languages, plus links to Bible study pages in Hebrew and Greek.

Steve is also a board member of the Institute for Swedenborg Studies and a member of the Academy Corporation.

From the Faculty Council: Steve David has lived the spiritual mission of Bryn Athyn College, developing the website, *newchristianbiblestudy.com*, which is a highly successful online resource for Bible study, used by New Church and non-New Church people seeking to understand the broad and deeper meanings of the Bible.

Jay Volcy



Since graduating from Bryn Athyn College in 2017, Jay has worked as a dedicated public servant. Starting as an intern in the office of State Senator Shirley Kitchen, he was later hired as a staffer for State Senator Sharif Street. After one year, he became a Deputy Scheduler and Assistant to then-Executive Director, Jim Harrity.

He has served people in North Philadelphia through constituent services and community events.

He has worked closely with Councilmember at-Large Jim Harrity, as the youngest Chief of Staff in Philadelphia City Council History and considers him one of his mentors. As Chief of Staff, Jay serves all Philadelphians by writing legislation, negotiating with the other city departments, and facilitating community events.

Jay hopes to use his degree from Bryn Athyn College to serve his community and continue his career in public service.

From the Faculty Council: While a student at the College, Joel (Jay) Volcy was a Resident Assistant, a shift manager in the dining hall, and the first African-American president of the Student Government Association (two terms). He graduated with a Human Society BA in 2017, then worked for State Senator Street, from receptionist to Assistant to the Executive Director. In November 2022, he became Chief of Staff for Philadelphia City Councilman Jim Harrity. He has pursued graduate studies at Temple, and has volunteered at the Tioga Nursing Home, Parent Power and the BAC Young Alumni Advisory Council.

Frank and Louise Rose



Louise Barry Rose was born in 1929 in Glenview, Illinois, to Katherine (Fuller) and Frank Barry. She attended the Immanuel Church School through eighth grade, then to the Academy Girls School, rooming with her sister, Ruth (Zuber), in Glenn Hall.

The Barry sisters had a lively, happy time at the Academy. Louise later attended Bryn Athyn College, earning a degree in education. There she exhausted the undergraduate language offerings and, seeking further study in Greek and Hebrew, found herself across the table from theolog Frank Rose. After graduation, she returned to Glenview to teach, all the while corresponding with Frank, their letters sprinkled with Hebrew.

Frank Rose was born in Bryn Athyn in 1927, the ninth child of Marjorie Wells and Donald Rose. Frank attended the church schools and graduated from Theological School in 1952, then taking up the pastorate in Colchester, England. Three years later, he returned to the states to marry Louise, and they returned to Colchester, where they raised five children and also served New Church groups in Scotland, Wales, France, Holland, Germany and Austria. In 1968 the family relocated to the Caryndale Society in Canada, then Bryn Athyn for five years, and ultimately Tucson, Arizona, where Frank and Louise served Sunrise Chapel and nurtured its outreach to surrounding communities.

Frank also loved painting, photography, botany and hiking the Catalina Mountains. He passed away in 2020 at 93, but devotees of his guided nature walks and many books on the flora and fauna of Arizona still get misty-eyed when they recognize one of his offspring on the mountain trails that he brought to life for so many.

In addition to her great love of mothering, Louise has devoted her long life to supporting worship services, women's retreats, marriage enrichment groups, and Frank's pastorates. She played organ and arranged flowers for worship services in three countries, ran women's groups for more than 30 years, and served as wedding coordinator for Sunrise Chapel. Now in her 90s, Louise continues to carry on aspects of the work that she and Frank fostered through a lifetime, especially the commitment to support people in connecting with others and growing spiritually.

Frank and Louise found endless joy in collaborating with each other and

giving unstintingly to others: thousands of strokes of paint and pen, open invitations to prayer and community building, warm benedictions and organ notes, ready smiles and listening ears, painted flowers framed on canvas and cut flowers framing the open Word. Their legacy can perhaps be captured by Louise's favorite phrase: "*Let everything you do be done with love.*" (*I Corinthians 16:14*)

From the Faculty Council: Frank and Louise met at Bryn Athyn College and spent more than 50 years of shared ministry, deeply affecting people's lives in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. They started many New Church camps for young people, including Maple Leaf Academy, and through their work in planting a church in Tucson – Sunrise Chapel – they led the way in New Church outreach on all levels. Frank has graduated to the other world. Louise still lives in Tucson, Arizona.

Academy Secondary Schools

The Girls School and the Boys School continued their tradition – now in its 31st year – of honoring Distinguished Alumni, often chosen from reunion classes. These women and men are invited to talk to the seniors of both schools about how their Academy experience has influenced their lives and careers.

Academy Girls School

Diane Morey Fehon



Diane, Class of 1973, grew up in Texas and came to the Girls School for her junior and senior years. She participated in theater and served as Factores president in her senior year. She attended Bryn Athyn College until March 1974, when she married **Bill Fehon** and moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, where they completed their college degrees – a Bachelor's in American History for her, a Master's in Microbiology for him.

They moved back to Bryn Athyn in 1977, first living in Stuart Hall as house parents for five years, then building a home in the borough. Bill taught science and math in the Boys School and Diane worked at Glencairn Museum, first in photography, then as Education Coordinator. They were blessed with five sons and a bustling household.

Diane retired from the museum world in 2015 to launch an organic BBQ sauce business with her son, Jason, which then grew into a brewery in 2019, located in nearby Glenside. The business is named Bill's Best BBQ and Bill's Best Brewery after Bill, who died in 2020, after 16 years with a rare form of dementia – Fronto-Temporal Dementia (FTD).

Diane was given a second chance at happiness when she met Steve Ozer. They like watching Indie films, going to concerts and traveling. A wedding is planned in May of 2024. In her spare time Diane enjoys rock wall climbing and watercolor painting.

Bria Hawkins



Bria, Class of 2013, is a Philadelphia native and full time Fine Arts educator. She began attending the Girls School in 2009 as a rare freshman in Glenn Hall. As the oldest of five siblings, she quickly adjusted to life as a dorm girl and created many lifelong friendships.

Throughout her time at the Academy, she participated in many different clubs, sports and activities, including the 2011 Oratorical Event, writing and illustrating a children's book for Senior Project, and serving as the 2012-13 Deka president.

She studied English Literature and Fine Arts at Saint Joseph's University, graduating in 2017 and pursuing a career in Art Education. She is teaching art to future leaders while also pursuing a career in illustration. Her work can be found on all social media @SpellboundSketches.

Academy Boys School

Nick Heier

Nick, Class of 2003, grew up in and around Philadelphia. He was headed to the Air Force Academy after graduation, but when the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States happened, he and several teammates from the ANC football team were at the Marine Corps recruiting station the first day it reopened. He left for basic training three days after graduation. He didn't feel right



seeking a commission and having to lead without first being led. No one thought the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan would last so long back then.

Nick became a combat engineer and spent his first enlistment in Japan, but most of his military time was with the 1st Marine Raider Battalion. He was deployed to the Helmand Province Afghanistan, the Philippines and throughout Southeast Asia. He finished his career at Special Operations Command-North in Colorado Springs.

Nick enrolled in an undergraduate program while in a tent in Fallujah, Iraq. He graduated from Colorado State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business while in the Southern Philippines. He then completed a double Master's at Arizona State University, graduating with distinction in December 2022 with Masters of Science degrees in Biomimicry and Construction Management and Technology. He is headed to Australia for a PhD position at Griffith University in Queensland. He will be researching evolutionary and innovation system dynamics in the context of infrastructure and development projects.

Nick and his wife have been married for 16 years and have four children. He says all he wants to do next is keep solving hard problems for the right reasons. "Hopefully it amounts to something that helps the guys coming up behind me."

Stephen Hendricks

Steve, (Class of 1973) was born in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada, and has made his family's home in Kempton, Pennsylvania. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in History and Philosophy from Bryn Athyn College in 1977, where he was a legend on the hockey team.

After several years of working as a carpenter, he formed his own company, Hendricks Woodworking. He specialized in work that other carpenters were hesitant to take on, such as stairways, curved moldings and architectural doors. He soon realized that entryways and challenging joinery were a niche he could study and perfect. The company name was changed to Historic Doors.

As Historic Doors grew, the complexity of the projects increased as he sought answers and insights from precedents in traditional architecture. As his knowledge increased, he sought to share it with others. Through the years he



taught professional woodworking and college and high school courses.

The company was established 42 years ago and has become a thriving family business. Historic Doors designs and creates wood doors and traditional joinery for universities, prominent building and residences throughout the country. Examples of his craft are seen in Bryn Athyn Cathedral and the College's Brickman Center.

Steve's belief that beauty is objective and can manifest in the structural environment has inspired his business and continued learning about the nature of Order. He believes through the study of traditional architecture, proportion and quadrivial geometry that Order in nature can be reflected in what is built and can then inspire the noblest ambitions of the human spirit. The company recognizes the sweet spot of a project is found in the harmonious union of design and craftsmanship, contributing to the timeless tradition of beauty. His passion and purpose were expressed in a profound address – *Sacred Geometry* – at Bryn Athyn College in 2009.

GENERAL CHURCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Highlights from the September 2023 meeting

President's Report

The Rt. Rev. Peter Buss Jr. encouraged a back-to-basics mindset to help us center on our covenant with the Lord as the basis for the Church. He emphasized the need for intentional fostering of a broad middle where heavenly variety can thrive. To move in a positive direction, he suggested parallel paths of serving together with a forward-looking attitude and problem solving as we seek to resolve challenges.

Vice Presidents' Report

Bishop Brad Heinrichs noted successful ministers' meetings and society visits over the summer. He reported that General Church book sales have shifted from the Cathedral to the General Church.

Bishop David Lindrooth summarized the goal of better aligning love and wisdom in the work of Outreach. If our members have trouble connecting to the loving essence of the Lord, Outreach needs to address this potential barrier to growth.

Executive Director

David Frazier provided financial results for the end of FY 23. He discussed strategic projects and new infrastructure goals:

- Top priorities involve attracting and development of personnel, focusing on ministers and teachers in New Church education.
- We are looking toward investing in accountability structures for sophisticated training, accounting systems, governance and reporting for West Africa societies and schools.

General Church Education

Charlotte Gyllenhaal said the department is working to foster affection for learning and openness to understanding the Lord.

Rachel Glenn reported that a refresh of the New Church Vineyard website includes new organization and an improved search function. The family gift program is in its 10th year and the New Church Treasury story collection was scheduled for release on November 6.

Greg Henderson reported on the successful GCED Conference in June in Bryn Athyn. He noted the opening of eight North American schools, highlighting the administrative team leading each. He and Brad Heinrichs updated a recent exploration of ways GCED might increase professional support for schools in West Africa.

General Church Outreach

Chuck Ebert noted two primary goals as Outreach pursues a refresh of the website newchurch.org: a more friendly interface and calls for action when contact information is requested. Such contact implies consent, a benefit not available on social media.

The new homepage design prioritizes simplicity and focus. Money invested in ads remains low until the website is optimized to welcome newcomer traffic.

Advancement

Mark Wyncoll said FY 23 results exceeded goals for planned giving and restricted gifts, but the annual fund total missed its goal by about 1%. Donor retention rate is high but some society fundraising campaigns have affected General Church contributions. Giving patterns during the pandemic showed fewer donors making bigger gifts, so total dollars raised was somewhat stable.

He noted the recent schedule of General Church communications,

including the open rate of email campaigns, which approximates how many recipients read the emails.

Engagement Coordinator **Freya Williams** has helped to generate membership, especially among those locally engaged with the church but unaware of the joining process.

Statement of Relationship

David Frazier reported that a Statement of Relationship has been developed to describe the relationship between the General Church and affiliates regarding episcopal, legal, financial, employment and policy matters. The draft is under final review by the administration and Legal Advisory Council, then will be circulated to most of the previously visited U.S. school congregations for approval.

The goal is to have one statement with enough common ground to move forward, with substance possibly varying according to signing entities. An accompanying document has been drafted to define services offered by the General Church to congregations, groups and circles.

WEST AFRICA SUB-REGIONAL MEETING IN GHANA

The Rev. Ekow Eshun

The meeting began August 14 with arrival of guests from outside Ghana. The actual meeting started on August 15 and ended on August 20. It was held in a hilly town called Aburi in the Eastern Region, with 29 ministers from Benin, Togo, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana attending.

Bishops David Lindrooth and Bradley Heinrichs attended the meeting. Ten ministers presented papers for discussion including the bishops. National pastors of each country presented reports of activities that have taken place in each country.

AN ENCOURAGING INITIATIVE

In the September/October Newsletter for the Hurstville (Australia) Society, the **Rev. Todd Beiswenger** reported on a meeting of ministers in Brisbane where the **Rev. Ian Arnold** told about his involvement with a Chinese Swedenborg Study Group based in Brisbane.

The group began meeting five years ago and now 137 people are involved. Meetings are live-streamed, with 40 to 50 of the people based in Brisbane but people participating throughout the world and many viewing later.

They have studied *Heaven and Hell*, *True Christian Religion*, *Divine Providence*, Basil Lazer's book, *Temptations*, and the **Rev. John Odhner's** series of articles on *What the Bible Says*. "It's worth noting that they've had to translate all of these materials first in order to study them, so it is a lot of hard work and really shows their dedication to the study."

"However," Todd says, "what I found is that this group is really just the tip of the iceberg. Beyond this group there are nine others, totaling 800-900 people. Among this larger group is a woman who left a high-paying job three years ago and has used the time to translate nearly every volume of the Writings herself!

"I think this is really impressive. I've heard over the years that there is great hope for the growth of the church in Africa and Asia, because the people there haven't been exposed to and taken on the teachings of the old Christian Church. As such, my belief is that they will be more amenable to New Church teachings. These groups show the validity of such thinking. It also shows me that the church is growing, even if we're not seeing it in the traditional ways."

OLD SCHOOL VILLAGE: A DREAM REALIZED

Tom Kerr



(Photos: Old School Village from above and the lounge)



Old School Village (OSV) is a residential facility in Kempton, Pennsylvania, which caters principally to New Church seniors able to live independently. The building was a public elementary school that was mothballed in 2012. (In

Kempton's early years as a New Church Circle – the 1970s – several youngsters from church families attended school there.) In 2012, several from the Kempton New Church Society formed an independent 501(c)(3) not-for-profit entity and began seeking a location for a residential facility. In 2017, we purchased this seven-acre property and began planning for a massive reconfiguration of the building.

Our first residents moved in during the spring of 2021. After a long, pandemic-complicated wait, it was a happy time for everyone connected to this brave undertaking. Now, more than two years in, we have 11 of the 12 apartments rented, six to “permanent” residents and five to “short-termers.” Permanent residents are those 60 years of age or older who have paid an entry fee. Short-termers just need a place to live until their circumstances change. They may rent (no entry fee required) as long as a fully qualified candidate doesn't request their apartment.

There is a cheerful sphere in the facility with a couple of young children and adults of various ages mixing easily with our active seniors. There are even multiple generations of the same families present.

Neighbors in the village of Kempton regularly report their delight that the former school that served this small rural community is being put to such a positive, unobtrusive use. One neighbor – the Wessner family, who owns the nearby Albright's Mill – generously gave us a strip of land that separated OSV from a small parcel we purchased from another neighbor. The open fields, woods and stream which abut OSV on two sides are protected from development by a conservation easement held by the federal government for wildlife-habitat protection. This is a lovely sight for all to behold that will remain forever thus.

Generous support from the Glencairn Foundation and a number of other donors has made this project possible. We are so grateful to those who believed this could be done – Bob Jungé having been foremost among them.

Financially, we have been able to keep pace with two mortgages, a few unexpected start-up costs, and some storm damage not covered by insurance. Our mortgages – one from the General Church and one from the Kempton New Church – are set to be retired in just a few years, after which we can begin to build an endowment to carry OSV forward with security.

While paying off our mortgages remains our primary financial goal, we are also looking at some beautification projects to enhance the facility. One is the design and installation of substantial landscaping in the front of the building to mask the view of the parking lot from the apartments. A long, staggered wall intermixed with shrubbery would make a significant aesthetic and functional improvement to the property.

We are thankful this dream came to fruition, and that our Old School

Villagers so often express happiness in being here.

“(We) love the many uses OSV provides, both for our residents and for our church society.” - Hugh & Margaret

To obtain more information about Old School Village, contact Tom Kerr at PO Box 162, Kempton, PA 19529, or tjkerr3@gmail.com, or 484-436-1014.

LIVING WATERS FAMILY CAMP 2023

The Rev. Justin and Denali Schorran

Living Waters Family Camp is located in Paisley, Ontario, Canada, where young and old come together to learn about the Lord and His Church. Our theme this year was: “What does it mean to be New Church?”

This theme was divided into three separate doctrinal classes and discussions. The first class focused on what the Heavenly Doctrine calls the two essentials of the New Church. The first is the acknowledgement of the Lord in His Divine Human and the second is a life according to the Ten Commandments.

The second class was on the distinctiveness of the New Church. We highlighted the fact that the New Church is indeed something different, distinct and special because it has the Heavenly Doctrine. We also emphasized the fact that while the New Church is something special and precious, having these teachings does not make us better than other people.

The third class centered on the idea of the Church Specific and the Church Universal. We discussed what the focus of the church should be given the fact that we have something very special to offer the world. Something that other churches do not have – access to the Lord’s Second Coming!

In addition to classes, daily camp life is filled with many fun and meaningful traditions. This year it was especially amazing to see the next generation of teens play and care for the little ones at camp. We also loved seeing people from different church communities connect in new ways. The children who have attended camp for a long time mingled with those new to camp. We hope this is just the beginning of new friendships.

Thursday evening as the majority of people arrived we enjoyed an exciting welcome game organized by one of our new campers. Every day of camp includes worship as an entire group. It is the focus and purpose of camp to gather together in worship to the Lord.

In the morning after worship, the children break off to enjoy crafts and games provided by volunteers, while the adults stay and enjoy a presentation and discussion pertaining to the camp theme. A favorite tradition is the little

children in worship lighting the candles at the beginning and snuffing them at the end, helped by the older girls.

During afternoon free-time there was a slip-n'-slide where the older kids and teens did an amazing job protecting the little ones from grass burn and collisions, making it both fun and safe. On Friday evening we enjoyed the annual events night where young and old participated in competing for the great honor of bragging rights. Every evening the whole camp gathers for a campfire to enjoy conversation, laughter, many roasted marshmallows and s'mores.

A favorite tradition of many of the adults at camp is the Saturday evening Holy Supper. Once again the teens and older children helped support the life of camp by caring for the children. The service was beautiful with music and candles, an intimate gathering of people coming together before the Lord.

Camp concluded with a final worship service and a slideshow to reflect on all the fun that was had and connections made. Throughout camp we were provided with wonderful home-cooked meals by the staff at the Hidden Valley Christian Camp. We feel so blessed to be part of this wonderful tradition and hope to continue seeing the communities coming together to learn about the Lord in a fun and nurturing environment.

Mark your calendars for July 11-14, 2024, as we will be celebrating our 10th anniversary as a camp. We hope to see you there!

Annual Report of the Secretary of the General Church of the New Jerusalem

Anita F. Halterman

Between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, 64 new members were received into the General Church, and 3 members resigned. During the year, the Secretary's office received notice of the deaths of 52 members.

Membership July 1, 2022	5360
New Members	64
Resignations	3
Deceased Members	52
Membership June 30, 2023	5369

GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

NEW MEMBERS

CANADA

Heinrichs, David Andrew
James-Locke, Vanessa Siobhan
Pushkar, Andrei
Morley, Nicholas Keith
Moyo, Nothemba June
Moyo, Whitney Amanda
Schlager, Jeff
Strupinska, Agnes (Agnieszka)

CÔTE d'IVOIRE

Bosson, Abouho Kan Nicolas
Kouame, Kouhui Ahou Paul Evelyne
Sahou, Monah Charlie

SOUTH AFRICA

Buthelezi, Lizwi Musawenkosi M.
Cele, Yvonne Thandeka
Nonhlanhla

Mdladla, Qeuda Vincent
Mdladla, Themjiwe Lorna Sizile
Mthiya, Nompumelelo
Mweli, Thembeke Fortunate
Ngcobo, Andisiwe Amanda Cele
Vukani, Beautus Sibusiso

SOUTH KOREA

Won-Cho, Soon
Jeong, Jin O

UNITED KINGDOM

Wiltshire, Cheryl
Wiltshire, Mark

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Arizona

Coffelt, Karen Elaine
Valenzuela, Bernardino Martinez

California

Trejo, Neva Dione Sparks-Kasimoff

Georgia

Baehr, Elizabeth
Baehr, Sean
Carr, Alerica

Iowa

Painter, Jamison E.

Illinois

Acton, Abigail

Maryland

Radcliffe, Charlotte Elizabeth

Michigan

de Chazal, Evelyn Beth
Elder, Amy Beth Siemen
McCardell, Kelsey A.
Ollennu, Nicole

Missouri

Klippenstein, Hannah

Pennsylvania

Allen, Kimberly
Arcadia, Ebo Neo
Asplundh, Duncan
Bush, Matthew
Clauser, Jack Victor
Cowley, Kera Friesen
Cranch, Karl Edward
Deibert, Jade
Elphick, Rachel
Funk, Ivan
Gallagher, Katrina Rose
Greer, Brian Kirk
Grubb, Elsa Ann Acton
Heinrichs, Schuyler W.
Heldon, Alan
Hershberger, Charles J.
Lermite, Brittany Walter
McCurdy, Shane
O'Brien, Meegan
Smith, Barrett Nathaniel
van Zyverden, Gerald Dirk II
van Zyverden, Jenna
Walbert, Alexander Peter
Yoder, Nancy L.

Texas

Valentine, Mary Linelle

Utah

Mackley, Allen

Virginia

King, Reyana Heinrichs

DEATHS

Anato, Rev. Guillaume Joseph
Kouassivi, February 16, 2023, of
Cotonou, Benin, 52

Andrews, James Stuart, December
29, 2022, of Corbett, Oregon, 77

Archer, Janice Louise, August 29,
2022, of Augusta, Georgia, 76

Asplundh, Mary “Mimi” Martin,
September 12, 2022, of Huntingdon
Valley, Pennsylvania, 91

Baekstrom, Marianne, July 15,
2022, of Cherry Hill, New Jersey, 97

Baltazar, Hocson Dizon, January 12,
2023, of San Jose, California, 85

Bevan, Gwynne, February 12, 2023,
of Huntingdon Valley,
Pennsylvania, 42

Bostock, Jacqueline Mary
Synnestvedt, January 30, 2023, of
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, 97

Boyce, Dean Rutherford, January 4,
2023, of Boynton Beach, Florida, 85

Carswell, Corona Sophia Graeme,
November 1, 2022, of Etobicoke,
Ontario, Canada, 94

Carter, Christopher Manson, June 9,
2023, of Bryn Athyn,
Pennsylvania, 71

Cook, Stephen Eustice, April 15,
2023, of Bryn Athyn,
Pennsylvania, 76

Cox, Karin Jo Schiffer, December
21, 2022, of Riegelsville,
Pennsylvania, 69

David, Michael Vincent, October 2,
2022, of Wai’anae, Hawaii, 64

de Chazal, Dean Gaston, October
4, 2022, of Dargle, KwaZulu-Natal,
South Africa, 60

Ebert, Rachel, June 15, 2023, of
Boynton Beach, Florida, 86

Echols, Martin MacDaniel, June 28,
2023, of Stroudsburg,
Pennsylvania, 70

Evans, Merrily Alden, April 8, 2023,
of Kempton, Pennsylvania, 76

Farrell, Cheryl Anne Packer,
January 3, 2023, of North Wales,
Pennsylvania, 76

Friend, Taney Faith Frazier,
September 9, 2022, of Huntingdon
Valley, Pennsylvania, 48

Gholson, Gwladys “Hank” Hicks,
October 5, 2022, of Huntingdon
Valley, Pennsylvania, 92

Gladish, Claudia Cranch, June 22, 2023, of Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, 75

Gomes, Sally Scarrain Pitcairn, October 18, 2022, of San Diego, California, 69

Gunther, Dolores Hess, September 13, 2022, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, 92

Hansen, Ketty Mejer, March 18, 2023, of Hårlev, Denmark, 95

Henderson, Rebecca Deanne Rogers, August 10, 2022, of Hatboro, Pennsylvania, 52

Houghton, Kathleen Ann Anderson, July 30, 2022, of Port Orchard, Washington, 72

Jungé, Rev. Robert Schill, May 26, 2023, of Kempton, Pennsylvania, 92

Kuhl, Denis Major, March 12, 2023, of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, 88

Kuhl, Theodore Edward, May 7, 2023, of Stratford, Ontario, Canada, 86

Lanyon, Virginia Dena Margaret, November 6, 2022, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 80

Lepofsky, Margaret Schiffer, November 10, 2022, of Toms River, New Jersey, 75

Lewis, Anne Kathleen Zena, August 27, 2022, of Parktown, Gauteng, South Africa

Loding, Joyce Barger, November 12, 2022, of Sun City West, Arizona, 89

Mayer, Patrick Andrew Percy, November 18, 2022, of Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, 75

Parker, Karl, May 4, 2023, of Calistoga, California, 69

Odhner, Anne Noelle Heinrichs Alden, October 25, 2022, of Buckingham, Pennsylvania, 94

Odhner, Greta Alden, November 10, 2022, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, 94

Oliver, Thomas Albert, October 22, 2022, of Spring Valley, California, 79

Pearson, Barbara Elaine Ernst, August 5, 2022, of Edina, Minnesota, 70

Robertson, Susan Ryan, December 1, 2022, of Kempton, Pennsylvania, 94

Sadow, John, January 1, 2023, of North Tamborine, Queensland, Australia, 97

Schnarr, Gary Robert, January 13, 2023, of Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, 77

Sellner, Elizabeth “Bussy” Hasen, August 8, 2022, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, 89

Simons, Julia Edgerton, November 7, 2022, of Kempton, Pennsylvania, 67

Smith, Evangeline Jane Wright, August 27, 2022, of Rockledge, Pennsylvania, 95

Smith, Gale Windram, February 24, 2023, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, 84

Stewart, Roy Paul, July 4, 2022, of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, 75

Synnestvedt, Gretchen Anne Timmins, May 7, 2023, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, 88

Waters, Gabrielle Mansfield, June 2, 2023, of Westville, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 86

Waters, Rev. Gerald Gilbert, January 6, 2023, of Westville, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 85

Weaver, Theresa Georgette Taragna, May 18, 2023, of San Diego, California, 92

RESIGNATIONS

Mansbach, Richard

Rose, Leonard

Name Withheld by request

Directory

GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM 2023-2024

OFFICIALS

Bishop: The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

Assistant Bishops: The Rt. Revs. Bradley D. Heinrichs and David H. Lindrooth

Secretary: Mrs. Anita F. Halterman

GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM (A Corporation of Pennsylvania)

OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION

President: The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

Vice Presidents: The Rt. Revs. Bradley D. Heinrichs and David H. Lindrooth

Secretary: Mrs. Rene H. Johnson

Executive Director: Mr. David O. Frazier

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION

Wendy Baker, Annette Baltz, Darren Bau-Madsen, John Berridge, Craig Bostock, Beth Brock, Rhett Brown, Wade Buick, Brynna Carswell-Smith, Greg Clay, Jesse Cole, Charles Ebert, Charlotte Gyllenhaal, Kirk Hasen, Bob Heinrichs, Grant Heinrichs, Barbara Horigan, Keith Hyatt, Rene Johnson, Ethan King, Stephanie Klippenstein, Catherine McQueen, Erik Odhner, Torrance Pitcairn, David Radcliffe, James Uber, Ned Uber, Wayne Wadsworth, Tanya Woker

Ex-officio Members: The Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss Jr.

The Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs

The Rt. Rev. David H. Lindrooth

Mr. David O. Frazier

BISHOPS

Buss, Peter Martin Jr. Ordained June 6, 1993; 2nd degree June 18, 1995; 3rd degree June 9, 2013. Serves as Executive Bishop of the General Church, General Pastor of the General Church, Chancellor of the Academy of the New Church, President of the General Church in Canada, and President of

the General Church International, Incorporated. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Heinrichs, Bradley Daniel. Ordained May 23, 1999; 2nd degree November 19, 2000; 3rd degree January 13, 2019. Serves as Assistant Bishop of the General Church, Vice President of the General Church International, Incorporated, President of the General Church in South Africa, and Head of the General Church Education Department. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Lindrooth, David Hutchinson. Ordained June 10, 1990; 2nd degree April 19, 1992; 3rd degree January 20, 2019. Serves as Assistant Bishop of the General Church, Vice President of the General Church International, Incorporated, and Head of the General Church Outreach Department. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

PASTORS

Acton, Elmo Kenneth. Ordained May 28, 2017; 2nd degree December 2, 2019. Serves as Assistant Pastor of the Glenview Society. Address: 74 Park Drive, Glenview, IL 60025

Aggro, Hennock. Ordained July 13, 2008; 2nd degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Assistant Pastor for the Asakraka New Church. Address: The New Church, PO Box AS 10, Asakraka-Kwahu, E/R, Ghana

Agnes, Sylvain Apoh. Ordained May 23, 2004; 2nd degree June 25, 2006. Serves as National Pastor of the General Church in the Ivory Coast, President of and Instructor in Theology at the New Jerusalem Theological Institute in Abidjan, and Senior Pastor of the Sinai Chapel, Bobby. Address: 01 BP 12161 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Aka, Honoré Amahin. Ordained July 11, 2010; 2nd degree August 12, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Bouake Group in Côte d'Ivoire. Address: 01 BP 12161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Akotey, Edward. Ordained July 4, 2010; 2nd degree October 21, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Nteso Group of the New Church in Nteso, Ghana. Address: PO, Box 4, Nteso-Kwahu, E/R Ghana

Alden, Glenn Graham. Ordained June 19, 1974; 2nd degree June 6, 1976. Serves as Pastor of New Church Buccleuch, South Africa. Address: PO Box 816, Kelvin, Gauteng 2054, South Africa

Alden, Kenneth James. Ordained June 7, 1980; 2nd degree May 16, 1982. Serves as a translator for the General Church and curriculum consultant for General Church Education. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Allais, Mark Barry. Ordained May 24, 2009; 2nd degree November 21, 2010. Serves as Pastor of the Carmel Church in Kitchener. Address: 40 Chapel Hill Drive, Kitchener, ON N2R 1N2, Canada

Amoako, Kwadwo Adu. Ordained July 13, 2008; 2nd degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Pastor of Pankrono-Kumasi New Church in Kumasi, Ghana. Address: PO Box RY 143, Railways, Kumasi-Ashanti, Ghana

Ampem-Darko, Israel Gyan. Ordained July 13, 2008; 2nd degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of the Asakraka New Church. Address: The New Church, PO Box AS 10, Asakraka-Kwahu, E/R, Ghana

Appelgren, Göran Reinhold. Ordained June 7, 1992; 2nd degree July 3, 1994. Serves as Pastor of the Stockholm Society and Visiting Pastor to Copenhagen, Denmark; Regional Pastor for Europe and India. Address: Tegnérslunden 7, 111 61 Stockholm, Sweden

Assiobo, Yaovi Kouglo Leopold. Ordained April 9, 2017; 2nd degree January 26, 2020. Serves as Pastor, Chapelle le Puits de Jacob, Vogan, Togo. Address: 06 B.P. 61202 Lome 06, Lome, Togo

Atta, Jean Aime. Ordained May 27, 2012; 2nd degree September 21, 2014. Serves as Pastor of The New Church of Phoenix, and Visiting Pastor, Western US Regional Pastor. Secretary of the Council of the Clergy. Address: 5631 Shea Boulevard, Scottsdale, AZ 85254

Ayi, Segno-Kodjo. Ordained May 27, 2001; 2nd degree July 20, 2008. Serves as National Pastor for the Church in Togo, and Pastor in Togoville. Address: La Nouvelle Eglise du Togo, B.P. 61202, Tomé, Togo

Bab, Moise O. Ordained August 25, 2013; 2nd degree August 9, 2015. Serves as Pastor of the Yamoussoukro congregation, Côte d'Ivoire. Address: BP 1574 Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire

Barber, Christopher Augustus. Ordained May 26, 2013; 2nd degree October 17, 2014. Serves as an Instructor of Religion in the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 707, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Beirith, Eduardo. Ordained August 16, 2012; 2nd degree October 16, 2015. Serves as Pastor of the New Church Group in Curitiba, Parana, Brazil. Address: Nestor de Castro 223, Loja 2 Centro, Curitiba, PR 80.020-120, Brazil

Beiswenger, Todd Jeffrey. Ordained May 22, 2011; 2nd degree January 19, 2014. Serves as Pastor of the Hurstville New Church in Hurstville, and the Aurora New Church in Perth. Address: 26 Dudley Street, Penshurst, NSW 2222, Australia

Beugre, Étienne Mogue. Ordained April 2, 2017; 2nd degree August 11, 2019. Serves as Acting Pastor N'dotre Abobo General Church Group, Côte d'Ivoire. Address: 01 BP 12161 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Blair, Charles Edmund. Ordained May 28, 2006; 2nd degree April 27, 2007. Serves as Pastor of NewChurch Live in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 716, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Borketey-Kwaku, Jacob Borteye. Ordained, May 18, 2003; 2nd degree July 13, 2008. Serves as Pastor of Nungua New Church, Ghana. Address: PO Box TNE 1278, Teshie-Nungua Estates, Accra, Ghana

Buick, Brett Dunbar. Ordained May 31, 2015; 2nd degree November 13, 2016. Serves as Pastor of the Kempton Society. Address: 583 Hawk Mountain Road, Kempton, PA 19529

Buss, Erik James. Ordained June 10, 1990; 2nd degree September 13, 1992. Serves as National Pastor for the United Kingdom and Pastor for Colchester New Church, Colchester, Essex, England. Address: 175-181 Maldon Road, Colchester, Essex C03 3BL, United Kingdom

Buss, Jared James. Ordained May 31, 2015; 2nd degree October 23, 2016. Serves as Pastor of the Pittsburgh New Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Address: 299 Le Roi Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15208

Carswell, Eric Hugh. Ordained June 10, 1979; 2nd degree February 22, 1981. Serves as President of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church

Cole, Nathan Field. Ordained January 11, 2009; 2nd degree August 22, 2010. Serves as Visiting Pastor to circles and groups within the United States. Address: (Kempton New Church) 583 Hawk Mountain Road, Kempton, PA 19529

Cole, Stephen Dandridge. Ordained June 19, 1977; 2nd degree October 15, 1978. Serves as Assistant Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church and Theology at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church Theological School. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Cowley, Alan Michael. Ordained May 26, 2013; 2nd degree July 13, 2014. Serves as Pastor of Oak Arbor Society in Rochester, Michigan. Address: 495 Oak Arbor Circle West, Rochester, MI 48306

Cowley, Michael Keith. Ordained June 13, 1982; 2nd degree May 13, 1984. Serves as Visiting Pastor to Western Canada

Dakouri, Evariste Daligou. Ordained July 11, 2010; 2nd degree August 12, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Jacquerville New Church Group in Côte d'Ivoire. Address: 21 BP 4352, Abidjan 21, Côte d'Ivoire

Dayoro, Aime Okpo. Ordained August 25, 2013; 2nd degree August 9, 2015. Serves as Pastor of Ayama General Church Group. Address: 01 BP 12161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Devassy, Peter Naduvilaveettil. Ordained October 23, 2011; 2nd degree October 25, 2015. Serves as Translator. Address: The New Church, Ompathungal Canal Road, Mattathur, PO, Trissur, Kerala, India

Dibb, Andrew Malcolm Thomas. Ordained June 6, 1984; 2nd degree May 18, 1986. Serves as Dean of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church Theological School. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Doukourou, Moise Gogable. Ordained July 11, 2010; 2nd degree August 12, 2012. Serves as Pastor of Gagnoa New Church Group. Address: 01 BP 12161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Dube, Jerome Bhekuyise. Ordained June 5, 2005; 2nd degree November 11, 2007. Serves as Pastor of the Clermont Society in South Africa and Regional Vice President of the South African Corporation. Address: Private Box 1164, New Germany 3620, South Africa

Dziekpor, George Genya. Ordained July 13, 2008; 2nd degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Pastor of the Abelenkpe Group in Accra, Ghana, and Administrator and Instructor of the West Africa New Church Theological Institute. Address: PO Box CS 9277, C7, Tema, Ghana

Ebute-Metta, Kuroakegha. Ordained November 11, 2018; 2nd Degree September 11, 2022. Serves as Pastor of Bayelsa State, Nigeria Group, and National Pastor of Nigeria. Address: PO Box 861, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, 560001

Elphick, Derek Peter. Ordained June 6, 1993; 2nd degree May 22, 1994. Serves as Pastor of Bryn Athyn Church, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Eshun, Ekow Essiedu. Ordained May 27, 2007; 2nd degree July 13, 2008. Serves as Pastor of the Tema, and Madina Circles in Ghana, West Africa, and Principal of the Tema New Church School; National Pastor of Ghana. Address: PO Box CS 9299, Community 7, Tema, Ghana

Floyd, Thomas X. Ordained May 31, 2015; 2nd degree June 16, 2019. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor in Stockholm and is Visiting Pastor in Scandinavia. Address: Bakkegata 8A, Åsgårdstrand 3179, Norway

Frazier, Glenn “Mac” McKinley. Ordained May 28, 2006; 2nd degree June 22, 2008. Serves as Pastor of the Washington New Church, Mitchellville, Maryland. Address: 11914 Chantilly Lane, Mitchellville, MD 20721

Frazier, Pearse McCollum. Ordained May 22, 2011; 2nd degree September 30, 2012. Serves as Assistant Director of General Church Outreach. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Frazier, Scott Innes. Ordained May 28, 2006; 2nd degree May 11, 2008. Serves as Assistant Professor of Religion and Latin and Chair of the Religion Department at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Genzlinger, Matthew Laird. Ordained May 27, 2001; 2nd degree August 10, 2003. Serves as Instructor at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church and the Academy of the New Church Boys School. Address: PO Box 707, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Gladish, Nathan Donald. Ordained June 13, 1982; 2nd degree November 6, 1983. Serves as Pastor of the New Church of Boston and also Small Group Leadership Coordinator for General Church Outreach. Address: PO Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Glenn, Coleman Starkey. Ordained May 24, 2009; 2nd degree October 3, 2010. Serves as Instructor of Theology at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA, 19009

Glenn, Joel Christian. Ordained May 31, 2015; 2nd degree September 25, 2016. Serves as Pastor of New Church Westville and School Pastor of Kainon School in Westville, South Africa. Address: 36 Perth Road, Westville KwaZulu-Natal 3630, South Africa

Glenn, Thane Powell. Ordained May 24, 2009; 2nd degree June 6, 2010. Serves as Associate Professor of Religion and English at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Gnagne, Gedeon G. Ordained August 25, 2013; 2nd degree, August 9, 2015. Serves as Pastor of Sikensi, Gomon, and Bakanu Groups. Address: 01 BP 12-161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Gyamfi, Martin Kofi. Ordained June 9, 1991; 2nd degree August 28, 1994. Serves as full time Regional Pastor for West Africa. Address: The New Church, PO Box AS 10, Asakraka-Kwahu, E/R, Ghana

Halterman, Barry Childs. Ordained June 5, 1994; 2nd degree September 8, 1996. Teaches and serves as Head of the Religion Department in the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools and Chaplain for the Secondary Schools. Address: PO Box 707, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Jin, Yong Jin. Ordained June 5, 1994; 2nd degree June 16, 1996. Serves as Pastor of the Philadelphia Korean New Church, and responsible for outreach to the Korean-speaking community in the United States; Regional Pastor for Asia; Dean of the Korean New Church Theological School. Address: 537 Anne Street, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

Jung, Young Ho. Ordained April 29, 2012; 2nd degree April 26, 2014. Address: 104 -301 Han Shin Apt, 131 Jeaki-Ro Dongdeamoon-Gu. Seoul, Republic of Korea

Kim, Seoung Gil. Ordained April 29, 2012; 2nd degree April 30, 2016. Serves as Pastor of Kangbuk New Church in Seoul, South Korea. Address: In Su Dong 391-15, Suyu 5-dong, Kangbuk-Gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea 142-884

Lasme, Mellon René Agnès. Ordained, April 2, 2017; 2nd degree August 11, 2019. Serves as Pastor of Bassam New Church Group in Côte d'Ivoire, and Instructor in Theology at the New Jerusalem Theological school in Bassam. Address: 01 bp 12161 Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Lee, Jong-Ui. Ordained May 31, 1998; 2nd degree June 17, 2001. Serves as Pastor of Olivet Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Address: 279 Burnhamthorpe Road, Etobicoke, ON M9B 1Z6, Canada

Lee, Soon Choel. Ordained April 29, 2012; 2nd degree April 26, 2014. Serves as Pastor of Seoul New Church in Seoul, South Korea and National Pastor for South Korea. Address: 1st Floor Seoul New Church, 11 Nokburn-Ro, Eunpyung-Gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Lompo, Samuel Oumpougula. Ordained August 25, 2013; 2nd degree August 16, 2015. Serves as National Pastor for Burkina Faso, and Pastor of the New Church of Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou. Address: 11 BP 412 Ouagadougou CMS 11, Burkina Faso

Mangoua, Cyprien Kouamé. Ordained July 11, 2010; 2nd degree August 12, 2012. Serves as Pastor of the Cité Verte General Church Group in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and District Pastor of Abidjan. Address: 01 BP 12161, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Matsumoto, Shiro. Ordained April 30, 2012; 2nd degree April 27, 2014. Serves as National Pastor of Japan. Address: 1-206, Inagedai-House, 7-8, Inagedai-cho, Inage-ward, Chiba-shi, 263-0032 Japan

McCardell, Ethan Derek. Ordained May 25, 2003; 2nd degree March 21, 2004. Serves as Pastor of Sunrise Chapel in Tucson, Arizona. Address: 8421 East Wrightstown Road, Tucson, AZ 85715

Mkhize, Sibusiso Protus. Ordained May 25, 2003; 2nd degree November 11, 2007. Serves as Pastor of the Impaphala Society in South Africa; Visiting Pastor to Empangeni. Address: H602 Umgankla Road, Kwa Mashu 4360, South Africa

Nicolier, Alain. Ordained May 31, 1979; 2nd degree September 16, 1984. Address: Conte' 09420 Rimont, France

Odhner, Grant Hugo. Ordained June 7, 1981; 2nd degree, May 9, 1982. Serves as Pastor of Michael Church in London, England. Address: 131 Burton Road, Stockwell, London, SW9 6TG, United Kingdom

Odhner, John Llewellyn. Ordained June 7, 1980; 2nd degree November 22, 1981. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of Bryn Athyn Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, and works on the Office of Outreach Internet Project. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Pendleton, Mark Dandridge. Ordained June 9, 1991; 2nd degree May 29, 1994. Serves as Pastor of the Glenview New Church, and President of the Midwestern Academy of the New Church. Regional Pastor for Midwest United States. Address: 74 Park Drive, Glenview, IL 60025

Perry, Charles Mark. Ordained June 9, 1991; 2nd degree June 19, 1993. Serves as Pastor of the San Diego Society in San Diego, California; visits Palo Alto, California. Address: 2701 Meadowlark Drive, San Diego, CA 92123

Roth, David Christopher. Ordained June 9, 1991; 2nd degree October 17, 1993. Serves as Pastor of the New Church of Boulder Valley in Boulder, Colorado, and Regional Pastor for the Western United States. Address: 1370 Forest Park Circle, Lafayette, CO 80026

Sandstrom, Ryan Matthew. Ordained May 22, 2011; 2nd degree January 13, 2013. Serves as Pastor of Ivyland New Church in Ivyland, Pennsylvania. Address: 851 W. Bristol Road, Ivyland, PA 18974

Schnarr, Grant Ronald. Ordained June 12, 1983; 2nd degree October 7, 1984. Serves as Instructor of Theology and Chaplain at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church, Regional Pastor for NewChurch Live. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Schorran, Justin Eric. Ordained June 13, 2021; 2nd degree May 7, 2023. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of Carmel New Church in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. Address: 40 Chapel Hill Drive, Kitchener, ON N2R 1N2, Canada

Segbenu, John Kwaku. Ordained July 13, 2008; 2nd degree July 4, 2010. Serves as Pastor of Ningokope New Church. Address: PO Box 325, Madina-Accra, Ghana

Silverman, Ray. Ordained June 6, 1984; 2nd degree June 19, 1985. Serves as Professor of Religion and English in Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Address: PO Box 717, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Smith, Brian Donald. Ordained May 30, 2010; 2nd degree October 30, 2011. Serves as Assistant Pastor of the Washington New Church and Principal of the Washington New Church School. Address: 11914 Chantilly Lane, Mitchellville, MD 20721

Smith, Jeffrey O. Ordained May 26, 2018; 2nd degree August 15, 2021. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of Bryn Athyn Church. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Smith, Lawson Merrell. Ordained June 10, 1979; 2nd degree, February 1, 1981. Serves as Associate Pastor of the Kempton Society in Kempton, Pennsylvania. Address: 583 Hawk Mountain Road, Kempton, PA 19529

Smith, Malcolm Glenn. Ordained May 30, 2010; 2nd degree February 26, 2012. Serves as Assistant Pastor of Bryn Athyn Church, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Address: PO Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Synnestvedt, Louis. Ordained June 7, 1980; 2nd degree November 8, 1981. Serves as Pastor of Boynton Beach Church in Boynton Beach, Florida, and Visiting Pastor of Bonita Springs, Florida. Address: 10621 El Clair Ranch Road, Boynton Beach, FL 33437

Villanueva, Johnny Antônio Zavalaga. Ordained October 28, 2008; 2nd degree August 19, 2012. Serves as Pastor of Campo Grande and Fatima. Address: Rua Caldas 242, Campo Grande, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil 23-081-080

Walsh, Garry Brian. Ordained May 27, 2001; 2nd degree September 8, 2002. Serves as Pastor of Sower's Chapel, Sarver, Pennsylvania. Address: 100 Iron Bridge Road, Sarver, PA 16055

Yang, Dong Y. Ordained April 30, 2016; 2nd degree October 30, 2022. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor, Seoul New Church. Address: A dong 202 ho, 65-13,

Songpobaeksong-gil, Ilsanseo-gu, Goyang-si, Gyeonggi-do, Republic of Korea
10212

Zatthey-Agboga, Godwin. Ordained May 27, 2007; 2nd degree July 13, 2008.
Serves as Pastor of New Salem New Church in Ho, Ghana. Address: PO Box
HP 396, Ho, Volta-Region, Ghana

Timothy. *Last name omitted for protection. Ordained May 1, 2013; Second
degree April 30, 2016. Serves as a New Church Pastor for China. Address:
Contact Rev. Yong Jin

MINISTERS in the First Degree

Ahotosse, Martin Cokou. Ordained April 14, 2019. Serves as Assistant to the
Pastor in Hevie, Benin. Address: 03 BP 3850, Cotonou, Benin

Choe, Mahn Hoe. Ordained April 29, 2012. Serves as Acting Pastor of
Ahnseong Uri New Church in Ahnseong, South Korea. Address: Woorim Apt
105-806 Jinsa-Ri, Kongdo-Eup, Kyeong-ki, Ahnseong-Si 456-713, Republic of
Korea

da Silva, Marcos Marques. Ordained July 9, 2023. Serves as Assistant to the
Pastor of Campo Grande and Fatima Societies, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Address:
Rua Serraria Lote 3 Quadra 2, Campo Grande, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil,
23-071-010

Gunther, Steven Paul. Ordained May 29, 2022. Serves as Assistant to the
Pastor of the Oak Arbor Society in Rochester, Michigan. Address: 945 Oak
Arbor Circle West, Rochester, MI 48306

Heinrichs, Calvin Bradley. Ordained May 29, 2022. Serves as Assistant to the
Pastor of Kempton New Church

Mbali, Patrick Vikinduku. Ordained March 3, 2019. Serves as acting Pastor
of the Diepkloof congregation in South Africa. Address: 41 Demper Street,
Westwood Gardens, Lindhaven 1724, South Africa

Nakato, Sachio. Ordained November 6, 2022. Assists in Tokyo, Japan.

DIRECTORY

Park, Jea S. Ordained April 26, 2014. Serves as Minister to the Ham Pyung Chundranamdo Korea. Address: 658 Sanggok-Ri Haebo-Myun, Hampyung-Gun Chunnam –Do, Republic of Korea

Rodrigues, Daniel. Ordained July 7, 2023. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor of Curitaba Circle, Brazil. Address: Rua Maria da Luz Rocha Belao, 392, Xaxim Neighborhood, Curitaba, Parana, Brazil, 81-710-590

Sie, Gabriel Amari. Ordained April 7, 2019. Serves as Pastor of a group in Abidjan. Address: 09 BP 12161, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Stole, Mandla. Ordained March 4, 2018. Serves as Pastor of the Alex Congregation, South Africa, and as Executive Vice President of the South African Corporation. Address: 392 E. Bank Avenue, Alexandra 2014, South Africa.

Yang, HyunJin. Ordained May 29, 2022. Serves as Assistant to the Pastor, Seoul New Church.

AUTHORIZED CANDIDATES

Hayford, Benjamin Ebo Saah, Ghana

Karikari, Sylvanus Charles, Ghana

N'Drin, Rodrigue, Côte d'Ivoire

GENERAL CHURCH MINISTER SERVING A NON-GENERAL CHURCH GROUP

Thompson, Howard Arthur. Ordained May 22, 2011; 2nd degree June 23, 2013. Serves as Pastor of the Roseville Congregation, the New Church of Australasia. Address: 4 Shirley Road, Roseville, NSW 2069, Australia

RETIRED

Buss, Peter Martin Sr. Ordained June 19, 1964; 2nd degree May 16, 1965; 3rd degree June 1, 1986. Bishop Emeritus of the General Church

Keith, Brian Walter. Ordained June 6, 1976; 2nd degree June 4, 1978; 3rd

degree October 17, 2004. Bishop Emeritus of the General Church

Kline, Thomas Leroy. Ordained June 10, 1973; 2nd degree June 15, 1975; 3rd degree November 30, 2003. Bishop Emeritus of the General Church

Asplundh, Kurt Hyland. Ordained June 6, 1993; 2nd degree April 30, 1995. Teaches Theology part time at Bryn Athyn College and sixth-grade Religion at Bryn Athyn Church School

Bau-Madsen, Arne. Ordained June 6, 1976; 2nd degree June 11, 1978

Bown, Christopher Duncan. Ordained June 18, 1978; 2nd degree December 23, 1979. Serves as Visiting Pastor to various groups in the United States

Burke, William Hanson. Ordained June 7, 1981; 2nd degree August 13, 1983

Cooper, James Pendleton. Ordained June 13, 1982; 2nd degree March 4, 1984. Executive Vice President of the General Church in Canada, Visiting and Regional Pastor in Canada, and Chaplain of the Military Services Committee

Darkwah, Simpson Kwabeng. Ordained June 7, 1992; 2nd degree August 28, 1994

Echols, John Clark, Jr. Ordained August 26, 1978; 2nd degree March 30, 1980

Elphick, Frederick Charles. Ordained June 6, 1984; 2nd degree September 23, 1984

Ferrell, Michael Eugene. Ordained June 5, 2005; 2nd degree June 3, 2007

Gladish, Michael David. Ordained June 10, 1973; 2nd degree June 30, 1974. Serves as Regional Pastor of the Southeastern United States

Goodenough, Daniel Webster. Ordained June 19, 1965; 2nd degree December 10, 1967

Heilman, Andrew James. Ordained June 18, 1978; 2nd degree March 8, 1981

Heinrichs, Daniel Winthrop. Ordained June 19, 1957; 2nd degree April 6, 1958

Heinrichs, Willard Lewis Davenport. Ordained June 19, 1965; 2nd degree January 26, 1969. Serves as Visiting Pastor of the Central United States

Howard, Geoffrey Horace. Ordained June 19, 1961; 2nd degree June 2, 1963

Koudou, Roger. Ordained July 13, 2008; 2nd degree July 11, 2010. Serves as Pastor of Yopougon group, Côte d'Ivoire.

Larsen, Ottar Trosvik. Ordained June 19, 1974; 2nd degree February 16, 1977

McCurdy, George Daniel. Ordained June 25, 1967; Recognized as a Priest of the New Church in the second degree July 5, 1979; received into the priesthood of the General Church June 9, 1980. Serves as Visiting Pastor of the Harleysville Circle in Harleysville, Pennsylvania, and the Cape Cod Group in Massachusetts. Acts as the General Church's Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agent for Military Chaplains, Civilian Chaplains

Nemitz, Kurt Paul. Ordained June 16, 1963; 2nd degree March 27, 1966. Serves as a translator for the General Church

Nobre, Cristóvão Rabelo. Ordained June 6, 1984; 2nd degree August 25, 1985. Serves as a translator for the General Church

Orthwein, Walter Edward III. Ordained July 22, 1973; Recognized as a priest of the General Church in November, 1976; ordained into the 2nd degree, June 12, 1977

Rogers, Norbert Bruce. Ordained January 12, 1969

Rogers, Prescott Andrew. Ordained January 26, 1986; 2nd degree April 24, 1988. Serves as Pastor of the Charlotte Circle in North Carolina

Rose, Patrick Alan. Ordained June 19, 1975; 2nd degree September 25, 1977

Rose, Thomas Hartley. Ordained June 12, 1988; 2nd degree May 21, 1989
Sakae, Seich. Ordained April 26, 2014

Sandström, Erik Emanuel. Ordained May 23, 1971; 2nd degree May 21, 1972

Schnarr, Philip Bradley. Ordained June 5, 1996; 2nd degree May 31, 1998

Simons, Jeremy Frederick. Ordained June 13, 1982; 2nd degree July 31, 1983. Serves as Visiting Pastor to the Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, Circle; Spiritual Editor of New Church Life

Smith, Christopher Ronald Jack. Ordained June 19, 1969; 2nd degree May 9, 1971. Serves as Religion teacher for grades 11-12 students in the Kempton Church School

Yang, Gyu Dae. Ordained into 2nd degree October 21, 2007.

Ministers in Other Careers

Alden, Mark Edward. Ordained June 10, 1979; 2nd degree May 17, 1981

Barnett, Wendel Ryan. Ordained June 7, 1981; 2nd degree June 20, 1982

Bell, Reuben Paul. Ordained May 25, 1997; 2nd degree April 11, 1999

Chapin, Frederick Merle. Ordained June 15, 1986; 2nd degree October 23, 1988

Childs, Robin Waelchli. Ordained June 6, 1984; 2nd degree June 8, 1986

Clifford, William Harrison. Ordained June 6, 1976; 2nd degree October 8, 1978

Glenn, Richard. Ordained June 28, 2020

Fitzpatrick, Daniel. Ordained June 6, 1984

Glenn, Robert Amos. Ordained May 28, 2000; 2nd degree June 2, 2002

Hauptmann, Olaf. Ordained May 23, 2004; 2nd degree July 30, 2006

Keal, Solomon John. Ordained May 27, 2012; 2nd degree February 2, 2014

Lewin, Alan. Recognized as Priest in the General Church November 19, 2006. Ordained into the 2nd degree December 2, 2007

Kouame, Henry Joel Kouassi. Ordained July 11, 2010; 2nd degree August 12, 2012

DIRECTORY

Lumsden, Derrick Alan Mark. Ordained May 25, 2008; 2nd degree May 16, 2010

Odhner, Calvin Acton. Ordained May 22, 2011; 2nd degree February 17, 2013

Paek, Sung-Won. Ordained May 27, 2001

Rose, Jonathan Searle. Ordained May 31, 1987; 2nd degree February 23, 1997. Serves as translator for the Swedenborg Foundation

Schorran, Paul Edward. Ordained June 12, 1983

Synnestvedt, Judah Edward. Ordained May 26, 2018

Xaba, Langalibalele Abraham (Phila). Ordained August 27, 2006; 2nd degree August 9, 2009

Note: In addition to Societies and Circles, there are Groups of General Church members in various geographical areas that receive occasional visits from a priest.

SOCIETIES AND CIRCLES

Society

Pastor or Minister

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Rev. Sylvain Apoh Agnes, Senior Pastor

Rev. Moise Bab, Pastor

Accra, Ghana

Rev. George G. Dziekpor, Pastor

Alexandra, Johannesburg, South Africa

Rev. Mandla Stole, Pastor

Asakraka, Ghana

Rev. Martin K. Gyamfi, Pastor

Rev. Hennock Aggro, Assistant to the Pastor

Rev. Israel Ampem-Darko, Assistant to the Pastor

Atlanta, Georgia

Rev. Michael D. Gladish, Pastor

Boulder, Colorado

Rev. David C. Roth, Pastor

Boston, Massachusetts

Rev. Nathan D. Gladish, Pastor

Boynton Beach, Florida

Rev. Louis Synnestvedt, Pastor

Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

Rev. Derek P. Elphick, Pastor

Rev. Malcolm G. Smith, Assistant Pastor

Rev. John L. Odhner, Assistant to the Pastor

Rev. Jeffrey O. Smith, Assistant to the Pastor

Buccleuch, Johannesburg, South Africa

Rev. Glenn G. Alden, Pastor

Clermont, Durban, South Africa

Rev. Jerome Bhekiyuse Dube, Pastor

Colchester, England

Rev. Erik J. Buss, Pastor

Dawson Creek, B.C., Canada

Rev. James P. Cooper providing oversight

Detroit, Michigan (Oak Arbor Church)

Rev. Alan M. Cowley, Pastor

Rev. Steven P. Gunther, Assistant to the Pastor

Diepkloof, Soweto, South Africa

Rev. Patrick Mbali, Pastor

Freeport, Pennsylvania (Sower's Chapel)

Rev. Garry B. Walsh, Pastor

Glenview, Illinois

Rev. Mark D. Pendleton, Pastor

Rev. Elmo K. Acton, Assistant Pastor

Hurstville, Australia

Rev. Todd J. Beiswenger, Pastor

Impaphala, South Africa

Rev. S. Protus Mkhize, Pastor

Ivyland, Pennsylvania

Rev. Ryan M. Sandström, Pastor

Kempton, Pennsylvania

Rev. Brett D. Buick, Pastor

Rev. Lawson M. Smith, Associate Pastor

Rev. Calvin B. Heinrichs, Assistant to the Pastor

Kitchener, Ontario, Canada (Carmel New Church)

Rev. Mark B. Allais, Pastor

Rev. Justin E. Schorran, Assistant to the Pastor

Kwa Mashu, Durban, South Africa

Rev. Jerome Bhekiyuse Dube, Visiting Pastor

London, England, (Michael Church)

Rev. Grant H. Odhner, Pastor

Mitchellville, Maryland

Rev. Glenn 'Mac' Frazier, Pastor

Rev. Brian D. Smith, Assistant Pastor

NewChurch Live

Rev. Charles E. Blair, Pastor

Ningokope, Ghana

Rev. John K. Segbenu, Pastor

Pankrono-Kumasi, Ghana

Rev. Adu Amoako, Pastor

Phoenix, Arizona

Rev. Jean A. Atta, Pastor

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Rev. Jared J. Buss, Pastor

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Campo Grande, Fatima)

Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs, Visiting Pastor

Rev. Johnny A.Z. Villanueva, Pastor

Rev. Marcos Marques da Silva, Assistant to the Pastor

San Diego, California

Rev. C. Mark Perry, Pastor

Seoul, Korea

Rev. Soon Cheol Lee, Pastor

Stockholm, Sweden

Rev. Göran R. Appelgren, Pastor

Rev. Thomas X. Floyd, Assistant to the Pastor

Tema, Ghana

Rev. Ekow E. Eshun, Pastor

Toronto, Ontario, Canada (Olivet Church)

Rev. Jong-Ui Lee, Pastor

Tucson, Arizona

Rev. Ethan D. McCardell, Pastor

Westville (Durban) South Africa

Rev. Joel C. Glenn, Pastor

Circle

Visiting and/or Resident Pastor or Minister

Cape Town, South Africa

Rev. Joel C. Glenn, Visiting Pastor

Central Pennsylvania

Rev. Jeremy F. Simons, Visiting Pastor

Charlotte, North Carolina

Rev. Prescott A. Rogers, Pastor

Chicago, Illinois

Visiting Pastors

Cité Verte, Abidjan

Rev. Cyprien K. Mangoua, Pastor

Connecticut

Rev. Dr. Andrew M. T. Dibb, Visiting Pastor

Copenhagen, Denmark

Rev. Göran R. Appelgren, Visiting Pastor

Curitiba, Parana, Brazil

Rev. Eduardo Beirith, Pastor

Rev. Daniel Rodrigues, Assistant to the Pastor

Dome (Taifa), Ghana

Rev. Israel Ampem-Darko, Pastor

Gesco, Abidjan

Rev. Evariste D. Dakouri, Pastor

The Hague, Netherlands

Rev. Grant H. Odhner, Visiting Pastor

Harleysville, Pennsylvania

Rev. George D. McCurdy, Visiting Pastor

La Crescenta, California

Visiting Pastors

Lake Helen, Florida

Visiting Pastors

New York City / Northern New Jersey

Rev. Jeremy F. Simons, Visiting Pastor

North Ohio

Visiting Pastors

Palo Alto, California

Rev. C. Mark Perry, Rev. Jean Atta, Visiting Pastors

Perth, Australia

Rev. Todd J. Beiswenger, Visiting Minister

Philadelphia New Church (Korean)

Rev. Yong J. Jin, Pastor

Seattle, Washington (Light for Life New Church)

Rev. Jean A. Atta, Visiting Pastor

Tokyo, Japan

Rev. Yong J. Jin, Pastor

Yopougon, Côte d'Ivoire

Rev. Roger Koudou, Pastor

Announcements

ORDINATIONS, First Degree

The affection for interior truth teaches what is in the Word. This is evident from the symbolism of a shepherd as being one who leads and teaches. From this affection a church is a church, and a pastor is a pastor. (Arcana Coelestia 3795)

Marques da Silva, Marcos Antonio

At Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, July 9, 2023, Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs officiating.

Rodrigues, Daniel Ricardo

At Curitiba, Parana, Brazil, July 7, 2023, Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs officiating.

BAPTISMS

Infants are introduced by baptism into the Christian heaven, and angels are there assigned to them to take care of them, by whom they are kept in a state of receiving faith in the Lord. (True Christian Religion 677:5)

Flowers, Oscar Edward

At Warminster, Pennsylvania, August 12, 2023 (born January 27, 2023), son of Francis and Kelly Switzer Flowers, Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman officiating.

Hurd, Vivian Serenity

At Parry Sound, Ontario, Canada, June 16, 2023 (born October 16, 2020), daughter of Andrew and Claire Sheldon Hurd, Rev. Coleman S. Glenn Officiating.

Hurd, Cassidy Patience

At Parry Sound, Ontario, Canada, June 16, 2023 (born August 17, 2022), daughter of Andrew and Claire Sheldon Hurd, Rev. Coleman S. Glenn officiating.

Jones, Gleice Oliveira

At Rochester, Michigan, September 23, 2023, Rev. Alan M. Cowley officiating.

Jones, Heather Olivia

At Rochester, Michigan, September 23, 2023 (born March 14, 2016), daughter of Richard and Gleice Oliveira Jones, Rev. Alan M. Cowley officiating.

Jones, Nolan Hawk

At Rochester, Michigan, September 23, 2023 (born March 30, 2020), son of Richard and Gleice Oliveira Jones, Rev. Alan M. Cowley officiating.

Jones, Ryan Hunter

At Rochester, Michigan, September 23, 2023 (born March 10, 2018), son of Richard and Gleice Oliveira Jones, Rev. Alan M. Cowley officiating.

Loba, Destine Ben-Christ

At Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, October 10, 2023 (born October 5, 2023), son of Patrick and Jeanne Yeble Loba, Rev. Sylvain A. Agnes officiating.

Smith, Kerek Daniel

At Bowie, Maryland, October 8, 2023 (born September 26, 2023), son of Brian and Janine Gladish Smith, Rev. Lawson M. Smith officiating.

Van De Meulen, Skylar Ann

At Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, October 1, 2023 (born August 4, 2023), daughter of Colin Schnarr and Ayla Van De Meulen, Rev. Mark B. Allais officiating.

BETROTHAL

*It is proper on earth for a priest to perform betrothals and to hear, receive, confirm and consecrate the consent. The consent is the essential element in marriage, and the rest of the things that follow are its formalities.
(Conjugal Love 303)*

Blair-Asplundh, Charles Edmund

Blair and Susan Leslie Asplundh

At Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, September 2, 2023, Rev. Solomon J. Keal officiating.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MARRIAGES

The conjugal union of one man with one wife is the precious jewel of human life and the repository of Christian religion. In a word, a person is a living soul as a result of that love. (Conjugal Love 457)

Agnew-Graham, Brett Douglas

Agnew and Katharine Graham

At Upper Black Eddy, Pennsylvania,
September 9, 2023, Rev. Jeremy F.
Simons officiating.

Allegretto-Fisher, Amerigo James

Allegretto and Madison

Elise Fisher

At Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,
September 30, 2023, Rev. Jared J.
Buss officiating.

Blair-Asplundh, Charles Edmund

Blair and Susan Leslie Asplundh

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania,
September 30, 2023, Rev. Solomon J.
Keal officiating.

Crompton-Asplundh, Robert

Henry Crompton IV and Brandy

Asplundh

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania,
October 7, 2023, Rev. Barry C.
Halterman officiating.

Givens-Brown, Shannon L. Givens

and Nailah Brown

At Bristol, Pennsylvania, July 7,
2023, Rev. Barry C. Halterman
officiating.

Lloyd-Odhner, James R. Lloyd and

Reagan Odhner

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania,
September 9, 2023, Rev. Kurt Hy.
Asplundh officiating.

McCurdy-Elphick, Shane Bradley

McCurdy and Rachel Eden Elphick

At Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania,
September 23, 2023, Rt. Rev. Peter
M. Buss Jr. officiating.

Synnestvedt-Pommata, Jon Arthur

Synnestvedt and Ponatda “Pam”

Pommata

At Rochester, Michigan, September
1, 2023, Rev. Alan M. Cowley
officiating.

IN MEMORIAM

A human being is so created that as to his internal he cannot die; for he can believe in God, and can also love God, and can thus be conjoined with God by faith and love; and to be conjoined with God is to live to eternity. (Arcana Coelestia 10591)

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May 27, 2023, of Mauritius. 82

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June 16, 2023, of Glenview,
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October 15, 2023, of Bryn Athyn,
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October 2, 2023, of Bryn Athyn,
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Simonetti, Paul John

September 24, 2023, of Langhorne,
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August 6, 2023, of Rosseau, Ontario,
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