A stack of approximately 15 flat, greyish-brown stones is balanced precariously on a dark, jagged rock ledge. The stones are stacked in a slightly irregular but stable column. The background is a vast, blue-tinted landscape of mountains and valleys, suggesting a high-altitude or alpine environment. The sky is a clear, deep blue. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

THE GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM
FISCAL YEAR 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

*WHAT SHALL I RENDER TO THE LORD
FOR ALL HIS BENEFITS TOWARD ME?*

PSALM 116:12

Letter from Bishop Buss

Dear Friends,

This past year the General Church focused on its core work of fostering internal charity among all those who chose to participate. We are grateful for the worship services and other church spaces through which the Lord can help us put our faith into practice in our daily lives.

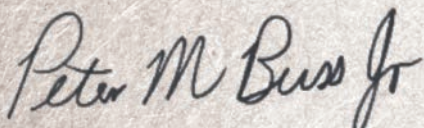
The General Church Assembly, our first such gathering in thirteen years, is a great example of creating space for people to experience the best of what our church can offer—community, encouragement to “go up to the mountain of the Lord” to focus on His will for our lives, and inspiration to return home with a renewed commitment to “walk in His paths” (Isaiah 2:3).

We rejoice also in the meaningful gatherings around what matters most, from Christmas celebrations, to weddings, to memorial services, to church camps, to New Church Day pageants. The value of translating faith into action requires a context, an earthly means of reaching and serving the neighbor. In these moments of authentic community, people express deep appreciation for being served and feeling connected to others. I pray each of us can experience the church in these ways.

Another context within which people experience positive and impactful community is in our schools. We are thankful for the precious work of teachers and administrators who do so much for the children and families we serve. Our gratitude extends also to the creative and energetic people who contribute to our strategic paths forward and tackle the inevitable challenges that come up in the work that we do.

The General Church works to make the New Church – the sum of people’s earnest desire to live the Lord’s truths – more and more present on earth. Your contributions help to keep the church active and vibrant on earth, and we thank you for your support as we strive to be in the stream of the Lord’s providence, helping each other to live a life that leads to heaven.

With affection,



Rt. Rev. Peter Buss Jr., Executive Bishop

Peter.buss.jr@newchurch.org



New Church



A Year In Review

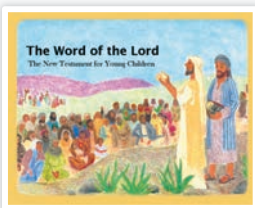
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

The mission of the New Church is to help people live a heavenly life through the teachings of the Lord God Jesus Christ in His Second Coming.

Spiritual Pillars in Education

GCED has completed the project of developing and producing ten online learning modules for General Church teachers about the New Church and New Church education. This is one form of professional development the teachers will be engaging in this year and in the future.

GCED published *The New Testament for Young Children* in June. This is a companion to The Old Testament published in 2019. It features simplified text by Carol Buss and delightful pictures by Dianna Synnestevedt. These books are being distributed to GC schools and will be sent to families with young children in the coming year.



Also published this year is *A Treasury of New Church Stories for Young Children*, which includes 15 stories to help teach little ones about the Lord, His creation, the wonders of heaven, and His love and care for all people.

Both books are available at the new bookstore website: www.newchurchbooks.com.

Engagement Online

Instagram and YouTube accounts run by Outreach have gained over 2,000 new followers in the last year. Outreach has also found over 1,500 new subscribers to the Christmas and Easter Daily Readings emails, which bring the Word and spiritual reflections closer to us as we celebrate the holidays.

Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/57vd734c>

Outreach also improved its online presence by refreshing websites like newchurchbooks.com and the denominational home base, newchurch.org. Newchurchbooks.com now offers improved ways to search for and browse books that help you and your family feel closer to the Lord. The new site allows you to shop for educational materials and spiritual growth programs in addition to the classic inventory of the Heavenly Doctrine and related New Church books.

Newchurch.org features simplified navigation and a welcoming homepage that highlight the foundations of the New Church. The best way to share your faith with others is to speak directly from your experience, but don't forget to refer friends to newchurch.org if they want to learn more!

Spread the word about the new contact update form - we don't have up-to-date info unless you share it with us! This simple, secure form ensures that you or your loved ones receive family gift mailings, church news updates, holiday cards, and more. <https://tinyurl.com/yjwyptwb>

School Leadership Collaboration

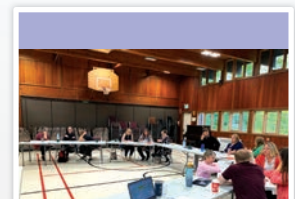


The principals of the General Church schools met for a day and half of meetings at the Glenview New Church School in the spring. With a full agenda of items to discuss, the meetings were very productive.

General Church Education (GCED) is grateful to the team in Glenview for the facilities, food, and fun place to gather.

GCED's Greg Henderson traveled to Caryndale in the fall to deliver a presentation on the history of New Church schools to the faculties of the Olivet and Carmel New Church schools.

This was one of the plenary talks given to the faculties of the six General Church schools in the United States at last year's Educational Conference.





Rt. Rev. Brad Heinrichs and the Revs. Daniel Rodrigues and Andy Heilman at the ordination of Daniel Rodrigues in Curitiba, Brazil.

CLERGY MOVES

The Rev. Calvin Heinrichs was appointed to serve as Pastor of the Kansas City Group. This is part of a Great Plains New Church project that the General Church has committed to.

The Rev. HyunJin Yang was appointed as Pastor of the Hurstville New Church in Australia.

The Rev. Steven Gunther was appointed as Acting Pastor of the Oak Arbor Church and School in Rochester, Michigan.

The Rev. Todd Beiswenger was affirmed as the next pastor of the Olivet Church and School in Toronto.

The Rev. Jong-Ui Lee was affirmed as the next pastor the Morningstar Chapel in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Rev. Justin Schorran was affirmed as the pastor in Boynton Beach, Florida.

The Rev. Coleman Glenn has joined the Bryn Athyn Church pastoral staff as an Assistant to the Pastor.

The Rev. Derrick Lumsden has returned to active pastoral work as Associate Pastor in the Kempton New Church and School.

Ordinations

- ▶ Marcos Antonio Marques da Silva
FIRST DEGREE
(July 9, 2023, Fatima, Brazil)
- ▶ Daniel Ricardo Rodrigues
FIRST DEGREE
(July 7, 2023, Curitiba, Brazil)

- ▶ Steven Gunther
SECOND DEGREE
(March 3, 2024, Oak Arbor, MI)
- ▶ Calvin Heinrichs
SECOND DEGREE
(January 21, 2024, Kempton PA)

Clergy Meetings

Plenary, Bryn Athyn, PA
June 25-27, 2024

Disseminating New Church Thought

New Church Life states on the cover that it is devoted to the teachings of the church “as they apply to life.” Throughout 2024 we accomplished this not only through regular sermons and doctrinal papers but a range of topics, including:

- ▶ Legacy books by the late Rev. Kurt Ho. Asplundh: *Living the Good Life – Seven Principles that Can Change the Way We Live Our Lives*, and the late Dr. Jane Williams-Hogan: *The Making of a Modern Visionary - Emanuel Swedenborg, Eyewitness to the Apocalypse*
- ▶ News about Bryn Athyn College and the Academy Secondary Schools navigating financial challenges; the College searching for new President; and the Girls School naming a new principal
- ▶ The Centenary of the Colchester Church, as it prepares the sale of the church and considers a new plan for the church in the United Kingdom
- ▶ Editorials including: *The New Church – Between Dream and Destiny*; *The Call of the Mountain* (leading up to the General Assembly), plus reflections on the Assembly;

Community & Milestones

- ▶ The General Church and Bryn Athyn Society collaborated this year to host the General Church Assembly 2024 from June 27-30. More than 900 of our friends and members attended, many expressing delight and gratitude for the experience:

- “It is wonderful to be reminded that many people from many parts of the world believe in a God and work to make Him part of their lives.”
- “This Assembly was living testimony to the inspiration and joy that comes from the (often hard) commitment to working together with a focus on a common goal, to putting the Lord and the neighbor first and putting aside our own agenda. Let’s do it again!”

- ▶ Recordings of select sessions, including the plenaries, are available on gcassembly2024.org.



Assembly-goers gathered at the Saturday morning plenary session, June 29, 2024.

Photo credit: Bruce Cronlund

- ▶ Colchester New Church (Colchester, England) marked the centenary of the laying of its cornerstone on May 22, 2024. A few days beforehand, on Sunday May 19, the congregation and extra visitors gathered for a special service of worship and a celebration with speeches, photo displays, and refreshments.

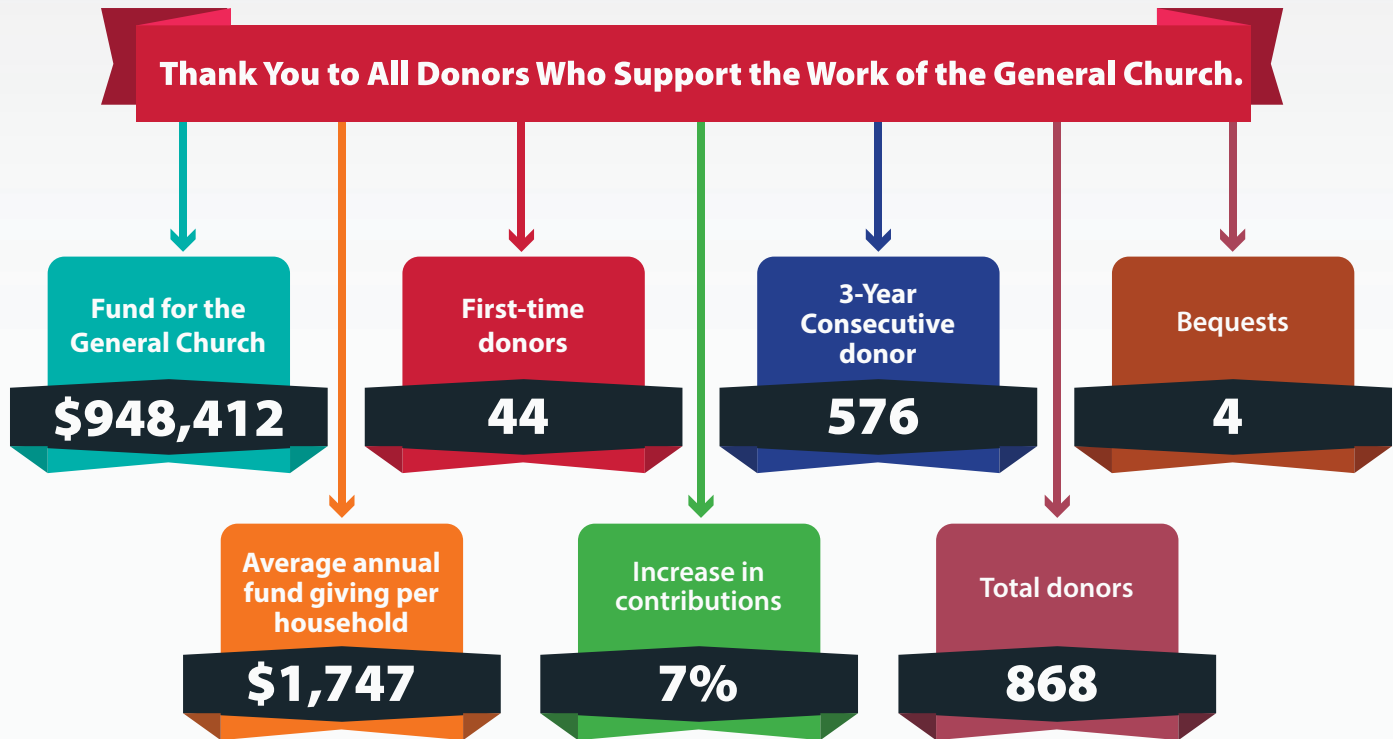


The cornerstone at Colchester (foreground) in 1924.

- ▶ Asian Regional Pastor John Jin is leading an effort to unite and energize the General Church in Korea, Japan and other areas in Asia. The project looks to the Threefold Word for guidance in how the church can thrive in the context of the history and culture of the region. The work focuses on two questions: What is the Church? And what does it mean to build the church on earth? The emphasis, Rev. Jin says, is more on strengthening dedication to New Church truths than on increasing attendance.
- ▶ Online church groups among Mandarin and Cantonese-speaking communities have grown over the past few decades. Rev. Jin and other ministers have baptized over 100 people during their work in Asia, and more than 600 people now participate in a Mandarin-speaking New Church online forum.

DONOR PARTICIPATION

Gifts directly support the programs and resources mentioned in this report.



<https://newchurch.org/give>

Membership

- ▶ Membership July 1, 2023 - 5,369
- ▶ Resignations - 9
- ▶ Membership June 30, 2024 - 5,372
- ▶ New members - 52
- ▶ Deaths - 40

Current as of June 30, 2024. Totals are subject to change. Full report can be found in the forthcoming Nov Dec 2024 issue of New Church Life.

Board of Directors

Annette Baltz
Darren Bau-Madsen
John Berridge
Craig Bostock
Beth Brock
Rhett Brown
Erin Busby
Greg Clay
Jesse Cole
Chuck Ebert
Stephen Elphick
Charlotte Gyllenhaal

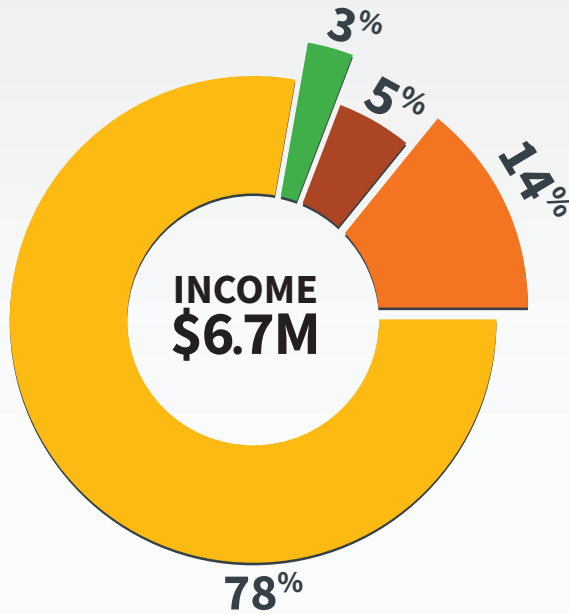
Kirk Hasen
Grant Heinrichs
Robert Heinrichs
Barbara Horigan
Keith Hyatt
Rene Johnson
Ethan King
Catherine McQueen
Kelly Niall
Erik Odhner
Torrance Pitcairn
David Radcliffe
Brynna Carswell Smith

Shawn Synnestvedt
James Uber
Wayne Wadsworth
Tanya Woker

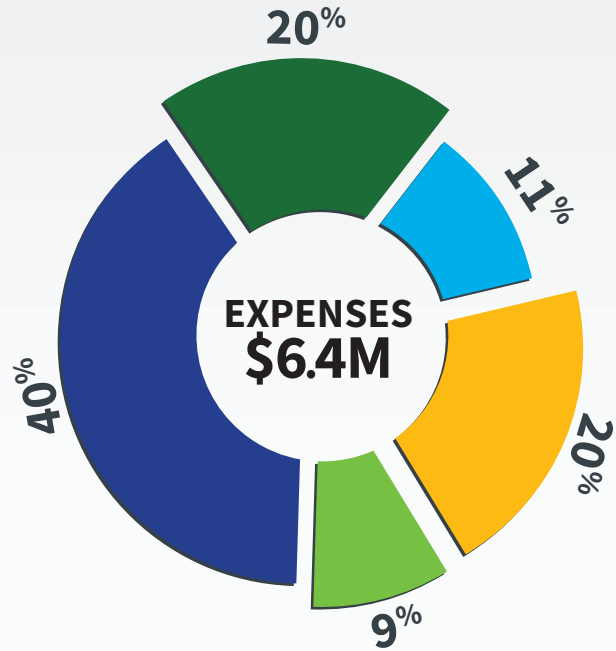
Ex-Officio Members

Peter Buss Jr.
David Frazier
Bradley Heinrichs
David Lindrooth

FINANCE



- Contributions (14%)
- Investment Income (78%)
- Sales & Other (3%)
- Transfers In (5%)



- Congregations (20%)
- Education (11%)
- Ministry (20%)
- Outreach (9%)
- General Admin (40%)

Overall, the General Church had a good operating year posting revenue of about \$6.7m and spending roughly \$6.4m, yielding a healthy surplus of approximately \$300k.

Here are some of our highlights from this past fiscal year (unaudited):

- ▶ Total contributions to the General Church were up compared to the prior year by about \$200k, which was bolstered by several large, planned gifts to the Annual Fund.
- ▶ Total cost to put on the highly energized Assembly was \$205k, which was offset in part by total revenue received for this event of \$109k. The expense difference was borne by the GC and by the Bryn Athyn Church.
- ▶ The average ticket price for all attendees, including children, was about \$61. The average cost per attendee, including children, was \$230.
- ▶ Favorable market conditions helped to grow the endowment by about 5% after investment gains, and after all uses were subtracted. Endowment income accounts for about 75% of our operations.
- ▶ Strategic projects continue as a focus, spending more than \$275k in FY24 on strategic initiatives. Including training and developing priests and teachers. Growing congregations and supporting renewals for existing societies.
- ▶ During the fiscal year, the General Church provided roughly \$1.1m in support of congregations and schools globally.
- ▶ We held three different regional treasurers' meetings for congregations in North America, Europe, and Africa, to discuss challenges and solutions for financial and administrative matters. Participation in those meetings increased by more than double from when meetings were only held in North America.
- ▶ About 20% of our expenses support global operations outside North America.

David Butler, Controller
David.Butler@newchurch.org

David Frazier, Executive Director
David.Frazier@newchurch.org