



THE GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2026

The good of love from the Lord reigns everywhere in heaven, flowing in unceasingly in the same measure as it is being given out to another.
(Arcana Coelestia 9049:1)

Letter from the Executive Bishop

Dear Friend,

The purpose of the General Church is to help people live a heavenly life through the teachings of the Lord God Jesus Christ in His Second Coming. When people around the world seek the Lord in their lives, the church becomes a vibrant spiritual home. As I reflect on all that has been accomplished in the past year, I am very grateful for the work that has moved our church forward. Thank you for the many ways you seek to serve the Lord, whether in your family, your work, your congregation, or your daily interactions with others.

We also thank the clergy and our teaching workforce, the Central Office team that supports congregations and employees around the world, as well as our General Church Board members and those serving on Bishop's Council. As you will see in the following report, this year brought encouraging growth in efforts to strengthen congregations and to prepare a new generation of ministers and educators for service.

Throughout this year, I have often reflected on the Lord's call, "Whom shall I send?" and the willing response, "Here I am! Send me" (Isaiah 6:8). I have had the pleasure of encouraging congregations around the world to bring shared focus to that simple idea. The invitation to consider how the Lord may be calling each of us to serve in the next chapter of our lives will only grow as we head into our next year.

In many ways, we hope the next year for the General Church will look like the last one. Yet there will always be new and important ways to extend ourselves if we are truly paying attention to the Lord's promptings. It is useful to consider the things we are already doing, and to recommit to them in our next chapter of dedicated usefulness, even as we look to the future with hope.

Thank you to all who are already serving, who are coming to church, and who are welcoming others to seek the Lord. May the Lord bless our continued efforts to worship and put our faith into practice in ways that bring blessing.

With affection,



Peter

Peter M. Buss, Jr.

Executive Bishop of the General Church

peter.buss.jr@newchurch.org



Mission Highlights

July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026

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

- **The Global Healthy Congregations Department** continued to expand its work in FY26, partnering with six congregations across the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada to strengthen long-term sustainability, local leadership, community engagement, and ministry. **Each congregation is at a different stage of development**, with the department providing hands-on support to move priorities from planning to action through volunteer engagement and 90-day implementation tools. As these efforts progress, the department is identifying lessons learned and developing resources that will be useful to congregations throughout the Church.
- **Eleven theological students** have been enrolled in Bryn Athyn College of the New Church Theological School 2026-2027 academic year.
- **The new General Church Education Internship** aims to connect education students with New Church schools and communities. This year, Washington New Church School and Oak Arbor School each offered to host a Bryn Athyn College student for a week of observation and student teaching during the College's Thanksgiving break.

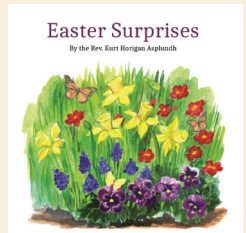
General Church Education

This spring GCED and the principals of the eight North American General Church schools gathered in Oak Arbor for two days of meetings. The group used this time to address a number of topics surrounding the missions of our schools including an inspirational address by Bishop Buss on the vision of the General Church. These days were also an opportunity to strengthen the working relationships between the individuals serving in these important positions and to welcome our newest colleague, Howard Thompson, who has recently begun as the principal at the Washington New Church School.



General Church Education Leadership Team

General Church Education distributed more than 1500 gift packages to families with children up to age 10 with materials for celebrating Christmas, Easter and New Church Day. One of the gifts was a newly published book called *Easter Surprises*. Written in simple, clear language and accompanied by beautiful full-color illustrations, this book helps young children understand the miracle of the Lord rising from the tomb and the importance it has for our own eternal life.



Outreach

The Lord's goal is a heaven from the human race. He builds His kingdom heart by heart, as people receive His love in the light of truth and share it with others. Everything General Church Outreach does is meant to support that work. This year, thousands more people subscribed to



Visit us on Instagram:
[@the.new.church](https://www.instagram.com/the.new.church)

our email programs, and each month many thousands visit [NewChurch.org](https://www.NewChurch.org) or connect with us through videos and social media.

The videos we release, the website we run, the emails we send, and the online groups and conversations we help foster are all ways of reaching people and helping members share the Church.

Find us online:

[youtube.com/newchurchvideo](https://www.youtube.com/newchurchvideo)
[instagram.com/the.newchurch](https://www.instagram.com/the.newchurch)
[facebook.com/newchurchonline](https://www.facebook.com/newchurchonline)
www.newchurch.org

New Church Life

Visit [newchurch.org/newchurchlife](https://www.newchurch.org/newchurchlife) to read sermons, doctrinal articles, and editorials such as:

- “Presenting a Unifying Direction” by Rt. Rev. Peter M. Buss—the next step in the General Church vision. An accompanying editorial expanded on the call to the church and to each of us.
- “Why Bryn Athyn College? ‘Choices Matter’”—a transcription of a podcast with College President Sean Connelly and the Rt. Rev. David Lindrooth, discussing the new vision for the College.
- The Memorial Address and tributes to the Rev. Daniel W. Goodenough.
- From the Academy Board of Trustees—***“A Shared Strategic Direction for the Academy”***
- Commencement Address for Bryn Athyn College and the Academy Secondary Schools, and a complete listing of graduates and awards.

Clergy

Ordinations

- › Jin O Jung **FIRST DEGREE** (Gwangju, South Korea)
- › Benedict Morris **FIRST DEGREE** (Monrovia, Liberia)
- › Benjamin Hayford **FIRST DEGREE** (Tema, Ghana)
- › Sylvanus Karikari **FIRST DEGREE** (Tema, Ghana)

Minister Moves:

- › Howard Thompson ▶ Washington New Church Assistant Pastor and Principal
- › Brian Smith ▶ Kempton New Church High School Teacher and Pastoral Staff
- › Daniel Calvo ▶ Pittsburgh New Church Assistant to the Pastor
- › Thomas Jackson ▶ Oak Arbor Church Assistant to the Pastor
- › Olaf Hauptmann ▶ New Church of Boston Pastor
- › Alan Cowley ▶ New Church LIVE Assistant Pastor and Academy of the New Church instructor

Regional Clergy Meetings:

- › Canadian/Midwest/Western US – Toronto, Ontario - January 27-29, 2026
- › South African/Brazilian – Westville, South Africa - February 17-19, 2026
- › European – Stockholm, Sweden - March 10-12, 2026
- › Eastern US – Mitchellville, Maryland - April 7-9, 2026
- › Asian/Australian – Tokyo, Japan - May 12-14, 2026
- › Bryn Athyn/Academy – Bryn Athyn College, June 23-25, 2026



Asian/Australian Regional Clergy Meeting in Tokyo, May 2026

Society News

- › The General Church ordained its first ever priest in Liberia, **Rev. Benedict Morris** on November 16, 2025.
- › In October 2025, **Midwest New Church** signed its articles of incorporation, officially launching a new congregation.
- › Rev. Jean Atta, Pastor at New Church of Phoenix, has launched **Blessed Source Ministry**, which has been holding regular Sunday afternoon services in Glendale, AZ since January 2026. The congregation of 19 — mostly West African French speakers new to the New Church and Swedenborg — currently worships in French, with plans to expand to English services.



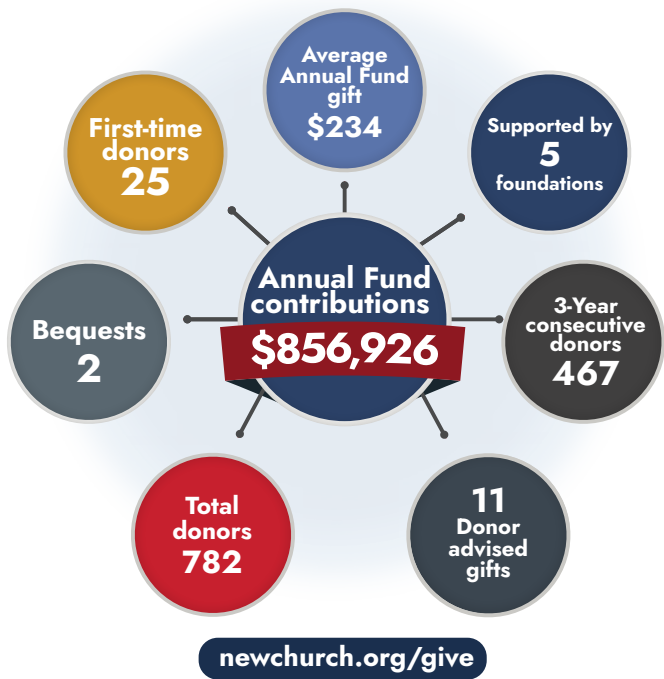
Blessed Source Ministry congregants gathered with Rev. Jean Atta after a Sunday service

Membership

- > Membership July 1, 2025 **5372**
- > Deaths **34**
- > New Members **55**
- > Membership June 30, 2026 **5387**
- > Resignations **6**

Donor Participation

Your gifts sustain the programs and resources covered by this report.
Thank you to all who support the mission of the General Church.



Board Members

Annette Baltz
Rydal, PA
Darren Bau-Madsen
Berthoud, CO
John Berridge
Deal, United Kingdom
Craig Bostock
Treasure Island, FL
Rhett Brown
Oslo, Norway
Erin Busby
Austin, TX
Peter Buss, Jr. - *ex-officio*
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Glenview, IL
Thomas David
Grafton, MA
Eli Echols
Duluth, GA
Stephen Elphick
Dartford, United Kingdom

David Frazier - *ex-officio*
Huntingdon Valley, PA
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Bryn Athyn, PA
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Bryn Athyn, PA
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Kitchener, Canada
Brynna Carswell-Smith
Boston, MA
Shawn Synnestvedt
Sunset Beach, NC
Jamie Uber
Pittsburgh, PA
Wayne Wadsworth
Marietta, GA
Tanya Woker
Westville, South Africa

Finances*



- Contributions: **31%**
- Investment Income: **64%**
- Other: **5%**



- Congregations: **20%**
- Education: **11%**
- Ministry: **18%**
- Outreach: **8%**
- Administration & Shared Services** **43%**

- › Total revenue for the fiscal year reflects strong giving fueled primarily by generous restricted donations and a large estate gift. Contributions made up more than 30% of total revenue, far exceeding the five-year average of 15% from contributions. Strong giving continues to offer an excellent opportunity to expand General Church's support for congregations, programs, and services.
- › Major gifts, reinvestment of past annual surpluses, and strong market performance have all helped grow the New Church Investment Fund (NCIF). After taking payouts to fund operations, these advantages have ensured a robust financial position for the General Church. As a result, assets exceed liabilities by more than four-to-one, providing financial resilience and increased capacity to support church mission and strategic priorities.
- › In fiscal 2026, the General Church continued spending on the priority of developing teachers and priests through enhanced recruitment and the initiation of a partnership with Bryn Athyn College to launch the Graduate Certificate in New Church Education starting in 2027. The General Church also supported congregational growth, health, and outreach throughout the year. Resource planning has helped the church ensure progress such as a second year (and counting) with a resident pastor for the Midwest New Church, and first General Church minister in Liberia.

David Butler, Controller David.Butler@newchurch.org

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

** This financial summary is unaudited. Audited results will be available upon request.*

*** Administration and Shared Services support the ecclesiastical, administrative, financial, technological, and operational needs of the church to ensure its mission is effectively carried out.*