

January 2018

ECHO ECHO

Newsletter of the
Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

www.theWNC.org • 301-464-5602

Pastor: Rev. Michael D. Gladish
11910 Chantilly Lane; Mitchellville, MD 20721
mdgladish@gmail.com
~~~~~

Assistant Pastor: Rev. Michael E. Ferrell  
4210 Canyonview Drive; Upper Marlboro, MD 20772  
Michael.ferrell@washnewchurch.org  
~~~~~

Principal: Rev. Brian D. Smith
11503 Chantilly Lane
Mitchellville, MD 20721-2126
Brian.smith@washnewchurch.org

WCNJ Inc. Treasurer

Mr. Brent Hyatt
bhhyatt@verizon.net

WCNJ Inc. Co-Treasurer

Mr. Wynne S. Hyatt
wynneshyatt@aol.com

WCNJ Inc. Investment Treasurer

Mr. Edward Simons
simons@safewareinc.com

WCNJ Inc. Secretary

Sharon Croft
croft.cooper@verizon.net

Echo Editor

Bonnie Cowley
Bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch.org

Echo News Notes Editor

Hanna Hyatt
hannaihyatt@gmail.com

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to another New Year!

As a matter of interest, we're taught that there's no physical time or space in the spiritual world but that states of mind – thoughts

and affections – present the *appearance* of time and space.

Thought, we read, brings presence, and affections create a feeling of time even though the present moment is really all there is in the world of the spirit. Still, all of our moments are experienced in sequential order, so that, too, contributes to the sense of time.

It has been 8 ½ years now since I began here as your head pastor. A lot has happened in that time. Many members have left us and many new ones have joined us. We have completed a very ambitious building and renovation project, and we are in the throes of reinventing at least some aspects of our school program. We have welcomed new staff members and said farewell to others. We are much more engaged with the community around us than ever before, and several “outside groups” now use our building on a regular basis. So what else is new?

Well, in June of 2019 I will be 72 years old, and at that point will have served here for 10 very full years (and 46 years overall in my career). Most days I feel I could go a lot longer, even that I may only just be learning, finally, how to do this work. But realistically I’ve come to the conclusion that staying on would not be fair to you, to my wife, to new, younger ministers, or to me, lest I leave no time for other things while I still have reasonably good health. *I have therefore, in consultation with the Bishop’s office, announced to the board of trustees that I will retire as your head pastor at the end of June, 2019.*

That is the same year that the church will install a new executive bishop, which will likely trigger several other pastoral moves in our system, so it is a good time for you to be “recruiting.”

The timing of this announcement gives us about 18 months to get organized with at least a tentative new strategic plan (the current one expires soon), and in due course a new committee to counsel the bishop on my replacement. Time will fly, as we are all busy, and there’s a lot to be done.

Ginny and I intend to stay in our home (the former manse) in retirement, and continue to participate as members of the congregation. I am also committed to helping as much as possible without

imposing in any way on your decisions moving forward. In fact there's something I quite relish about the role of "lame duck" pastor! It certainly presents special challenges, but at the same time offers a lot of freedom for everyone if we work it properly!

About the New Bishop

As mentioned in the last Echo all pastors of the General Church have been tasked with soliciting broad counsel from among our members as to *the particular skills and qualities you feel are most needed in our next executive bishop*. The ministers will announce all their nominees in March and one of these will be affirmed in June (2018) by both the clergy and the board of directors (which he chairs). We would be grateful therefore if you would give this your best thought and communicate your ideas to Mike, Michael or Brian or to any member of the pastor's council sometime during the Christmas season.

As noted above, this appointment will create a domino effect throughout the ministry, and so, even as you consider the most desirable qualities for a bishop, you might want to start thinking about the qualities you want or need in a new pastor here.

About the New Year

As I told the members of the church and school boards last month, I was deeply impressed by the number of new school parents who attended the Christmas Tableaux – and stayed for the visiting time afterward. That said I also couldn't help noticing a certain awkwardness in the social mingling, as we struggled to remember one another's names and backgrounds. I mention this not to be at all critical but to make the point that I truly believe the biggest challenge we face as a congregation going forward is to learn how to negotiate our way from the familiar to the unfamiliar among us, to find really effective ways not only of including new folks but really befriending and encouraging them in every aspect of church life.

Of course we need to be open to the friendship offered *to us* by those who are joining us, to understand and make common cause with them so that a sphere of innocence and mutual respect prevails at every occasion or event. Only in this way will the congre-

gation really grow, and be truly rooted in the faith of charity discussed in the doctrines.

Best wishes to everyone in this precious work.

Pastor's Council on Tuesday, January 16th at 7:30 PM

Once again our Council members for this year are:

Mary Cooper	Amy D Glenn	Cynthia Harvey
Aubrey Hernandez	Kim Maxwell	Curt Moore
John Kern	Joe Sprinkle	Lincoln Smith
	Patrick Sweeney	

Please contact them if you have ideas or opinions you would like represented in church planning.

Our guest this month will be Steve Ball, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the church. I have invited him in particular so that he can participate in the initial discussion of the first item below.

- Your response to the announcement in this ECHO about my retirement at the end of June, 2019. How can we best proceed toward this pastoral change?
- An update on who has been nominated so far to become our next executive bishop, with a quick review of the process and timing of his election.
- Continuation about planning for the future of our high school, including *why* this remains an important focus of our church work if we can possibly manage it.
- Proposal for a completely new and different “alternative” worship service geared to young adults and offered once a month on Sunday evenings.
- Any further thoughts about finishing touches for the new church LOBBY?

Any other issues of YOUR concern or that anyone may call to your attention.



We wish to thank everyone in the Washington society for the lovely Christmas cards, wonderful gifts, delicious treats and all the love you showered upon us during the Christmas season. We are truly blessed. - Michael, Janet, and Jonathan.

From the Principal

In December Jana Sprinkle led the wonderful children's *tableaux*! Special mention should also go to our music teachers, Erin and Sharon, to Carole for organ support and to Bonnie for sharing all her experience with the stage, lights and props. Thanks to all the staff and students for offering this lovely pageant inviting us all into the Christmas season!

I trust teachers and students will have enjoyed a valuable change of pace over the two week holidays. We're now about to reach the half-way point of our school year. I continue to be grateful for the positive tone among the students this year and for all the hard work that teachers, students and parents are putting into their respective jobs in the school. We continue to explore the *theme of "community"* this year in our chapels and special projects. What opportunities do we have together to perform uses in the world more powerful than the sum of its parts?

By the publishing of January's Echo I hope that some of the initial kinks and hiccups will be worked out of our new, *school-focused website* (wncschool.org). The school and church websites will continue to link to each other and to express the closely shared functions but our hope is that the school site will be able to provide parent-focused information more clearly – especially to new parents learning more about our unique offering. At the same time, with a place for the school details, we can begin to de-clutter the church website (theWNC.org) allowing it be a cleaner and more user-friendly resource for the church. Given that both sites are still in transition, there are likely to be typos, mistakes and omissions. PLEASE let Bonnie or me know what you find that needs to be improved. It is especially helpful to learn when you have trouble finding something.

High School Developments: The boards have endorsed a “wide-net” search for candidates who have a vision, energy and excitement for developing renewed, alternative approaches to New Church education in our high school. If anyone jumps to your mind, I would love to receive the referral. It’s very helpful as we gather information to have conversations with a wide range of people. Even those who would be unable to join the WNCS team are valuable contacts. I’ve already learned lots from talking with people who can’t consider relocating to actively work on our high school program.

Especially in the context of planning for Mike’s 2019 retirement it remains very important to me to hear from congregation members who have ideas, excitement and concerns about the development of an alternative high school program. Please keep those communications coming!

(brian.smith@washnewchurch.org)



Money Matters

For your convenience, the Washington New Church offers two special ways of making contributions to the church. One is what we call “the envelope system,” which involves getting a box of offering envelopes for each Sunday of the year with the same number stamped on every envelope. The number corresponds to your name on the treasurer’s accounts, so you can make your donation by cash or check without writing anything on the envelope, and you will receive a tax receipt for all your donations at the beginning of the new year. It’s clean, neat and a discreet way of giving.

The new envelopes for 2018 are here now and ready for you to pick up in the church lobby. If you’re new to the system just pick up an unclaimed box of envelopes and write your name next to the number on the sign-up sheet. Of course there’s no obligation to use every envelope, but it does help to track your offerings.

The other super-convenient way to contribute is to create an account on the e-giving, <http://giving.ncsservices.org/dl/?uid=ncs-2818>

and set yourself up for automatic monthly donations directly from your bank account. Using this method you can be sure that your commitment to the church will be honored even when you are unable to attend a service, or when you forget for any reason. You can even use a credit card on this website, but the direct payment is better, since it costs the church only 25 cents per transaction.

Nobody wants you to feel pressured to give to the church, but if you recognize its value and want to support it, these two methods of doing so make it very easy. Thank you for your consideration!

Christmas Centerpiece Sales

Thanks to all who helped put the centerpieces together, and who purchased them! We made and sold 44 pieces, and made \$815 for the Church Operating Fund!

This was definitely a worthwhile and fun fundraiser. We hope all who got them enjoy them. Happy Christmas! ~ Mary Cooper

Sermon Topics for January, 2018

the 7th: The Church Has Answers - A poor widow had a small amount of flour and oil to prepare a meal so that she and her son could eat and die. Elijah the prophet told her to make a small cake from it first and bring to him. There's no other way - the Church has answers. ~ MEF

the 14th: “Our Father who art in the Heavens...” Our idea of God is the most important thing in our lives, so let's begin the New Year reflecting on the deep meaning and implications of this first phrase in the Lord's Prayer. ~ MDG

the 21st: TBA - BDS

the 28th: All About the Second Coming of the Lord: what is it, really, and how exactly can we see it? Where is it and how and when will it (or did it) take place? You might *think* you know the answers, but this sermon may surprise you. ~ MDG

The 27th: Swedenborg's Birthday Banquet.

You won't want to miss this! For the first time ever we are having a guest speaker who will address us and interact with us remotely via live Internet on our big screen. Curtis Childs, whose program, "Off the Left Eye" reaches thousands of people every week, has this to say about his presentation:



Talk Title: The Internet's Insatiable Hunger for Swedenborg

Content description: "I want to share with the audience the exciting developments we've been seeing over the past year. All over the world, people are finding Swedenborg's message and diving in headfirst. We'll look at what interests people, how it affects their lives, and what we hope the future holds.

"As my time and the time of other staff members gets in higher demand as our audience grows and more people want to meet us, we're working here to develop a system that will let groups of viewers and our staff get together physically. The Washington New Church might be a great candidate for the program."

LIBRARY REPORT 2017-2018: The WNCS Library continues to serve many uses. Besides trying to keep up with the wide spread of reading levels and interests, it also serves as a classroom, tutorial room, a computer room and a sometime storage room.

The big news is that Amanda Hyatt has volunteered to take on the mammoth task of putting all the books on computer. She has researched the software options and has received the go ahead from the Board of Trustees to purchase the software. It is a wonderful opportunity for the Library to have someone who is willing and able to spend the next couple of years on this task.

We continue on with the weekly help of Mary Cooper, Jean Allen and Amanda Hyatt. ~ Dorothy Radcliffe, Librarian

2018 Echo Directory: I should have the Echo Directory ready to distribute by the middle of January. Though I have received lots of responses to my request for changes, I do not have everyone. I will be sending out one more email to all (whom I have email for)

with a PDF copy of the 2017 Directory attached and a request for changes or corrections. bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch.org

Church Events in January, 2018

Mondays, the 8th & 22nd the *evening* Heaven and Hell study group meets at the Cooper home at 8:00 PM with Rev. Ferrell.

Tuesday, the 2nd, the WNC School board will hold its regular meeting at the church at 7:30.

Tuesday, the 9th, the Board of Trustees will meet at 7:30.

Tuesday, the 16th, the Pastor's Council will meet at 7:30.

Wednesdays, the 3rd, 17th & 31st, the *morning* Heaven & Hell study group meets at the Gladish home at 11:00 AM.

Wednesdays, the 8th & 24th, the Prophets Survey Course continues at the church with the pastor & Rev. Bernita.

Thursday, the 18th, the Acton Park Board meets at 7:30 at the church. Among other things there will be news of a proposed major housing development near us, just north of Rt. 50.

Saturdays all month the Yoga class meets at 2:30, and **on the 20th** the Guild of Bowie Artists has its regular workshop from 9:30 'til about 2 PM.

Also Saturday, the 20th the teachers will all have private appointments with the School Board members in room 12.

Finally, the BIG EVENT of the month is the Swedenborg Birthday Banquet, on Saturday, the 27th. We needed extra space to introduce our guest speaker, so please see page 8 & 16 for all the details.

What Community Means to Me

An Editorial by Bonnie Cowley

“No man is an Island...” begins an old poem by John Donne. Though self-sufficiency and independence seems not only to be the

American ideal but also a modern goal, I believe more and more that it is by interconnectedness and community that we really fulfill our own destiny as well as the Lord's wish for all of humanity.

The Internet is touted as the great connector and though it does seem to take "space" and (to some degree) "time" out of the equation there is still much missing. Even with the ability to reach out to anyone, anywhere, anytime many people still feel alone.

When my mom died last month I got to enjoy the fruits of being part of a community. As word spread, I did receive lots of messages via the Internet - texts, emails and phone calls of condolences, yet many of those same friends went out of their way to come to the office, my home or meet me after church to speak to me *in person* or give me a hug. And it didn't stop there. At the memorial service the connecting with friends and family was tangible and meaningful - a sister I had not seen in years, an aunt I remember with fondness from my childhood, friends that were part of a community I once belonged to like the Pittsburgh New Church, the Academy or even a church camp.

Most people do value community even if they do not belong to a *church* community. They may belong to a bowling league, a Rotary club, neighborhood association or be involved in their children's school, soccer or swim team. I am not suggesting that these types of communities are not valuable, but as time goes on... when I am no longer able to bowl or my children have grown up I have lost many of those connections. As I look back at the many communities I have been part of, it is the people in those communities that have common, useful, spiritual goals that still resonate with me today. It is those people that, even over time or distance, can still drop the shallow niceties of conversation and pick up where we left off with topics of real substance. Those are the people with whom the differences in age, economics and social status matters little. For me, those people are from my church communities and it is comforting to know the wealth of support I have.

But developing one's community takes time, work and sometimes sacrifices. Fortunately for me, it began when I was young, a habit handed down and nurtured by my parents. They gave me the starter

kit for my own community...the roots, so to speak. It didn't mean I had to make the Pittsburgh Church my only community but that I needed to have a community and needed to continue to develop it for myself by being an active – *in person*, participant.

So, thanks to *this* community, The Washington New Church & School, for all of your support and friendship this past year.

Happy New Year! ~ Bonnie Cowley

Acton Park 2018 Calendar

This past summer an appeal letter from Acton Park Board went out

to the congregation and friends asking for donations. Here is some of the content of that letter:



“The AP Board has been working hard for several years to determine the best path forward for our property and open spaces. Residential development

is not within reach at this time, and pursuit of development has exhausted our bank account. In fact, for the first time in AP's history, we may not have enough funds to pay for taxes and accounting services THIS YEAR. While we continue to pursue creative uses of the property that can generate some income (such as the Forest Garden Lease), we ask for contributions, in any amount, to help us get through this year.”

We are pleased to report that this letter netted us more than sufficient funds to cover this year's taxes and as a gift to donors we have created a lovely 2018 calendar illustrating the Park with some notations of its use and history.

These calendars are now available to anyone who wishes to make a donation of \$20 or more (not tax deductible) to Acton Park.

Remember - Acton Park is not just for those who live here. Acton Park also acts as a long-term asset that continues to serve the needs

of the Washington New Church and School. We need to protect this asset.

Contact Steve Ball (AP Treasurer) steve@attorney-ball.com to make a donation. You can view the calendar in the church lobby.

~ Bonnie Cowley, member - Acton Park Board

News from December

Just In!!! ... New Baby Boy - **Alder Nathan Smith** - was born December 25, 2017, 8 lb. 6 oz. to Brian and Janine Smith. They had a very special Christmas with a home birth. Mom and baby are doing well. Daddy and siblings also enjoying the new baby sphere – what a great Christmas gift! And grandparents



Nathan and Elise Gladish, along with two of Janine’s sisters arrived from Arizona & BA to enjoy this blessing as well. Congratulations!

Holiday visitors... Many of our students are back for the break from ANC, BAC and other colleges.

Angela and Charles Radcliffe with Spencer, Rachael and Vivian had a whirlwind trip here to visit Laura Gurney and family & Bill and Dorothy Radcliffe for dinner and to exchange gifts. Yet somehow they managed to sneak in a visit with Cowley/Martin-Attiliises beforehand... shot down to Virginia to visit Spencer and Rachael’s other Granny Judith Amstutz, all before going out to Laura’s.

Mike & Ginny Gladish were delighted to have two short visits over the holidays with daughter, **Evie, her husband Cedric Synnestvedt**, and 8 month old **Linus**, who were on a whirlwind tour from Austin, TX to see their east coast families.

Mike says, “We would also like to thank all the members and friends of the church here who contributed so generously to our Christmas gift this year. It is a pleasure to serve you and we also thank you all for everything you do to keep this church vibrant and strong.”

more gratitude...

Wystan and Edward Simons want to thank their friends in the church for the continued support they received during her recovery. Her breast cancer biopsies were in October, but her healing was slower than she hoped. The meals, grocery shopping, dog walks, walks with Owen, and assistance with laundry all really helped during November. As of this writing, 8 of her 20 radiation treatments are completed! Her energy is good, especially since getting rid of the pre-Christmas cold Owen passed her (and Edward), and they have enjoyed having Bronwyn, Freya, and Oskar home from Philadelphia for the holidays.

Brad and Kathy Johns were grateful to have time with Kathy's dad. She says, "Brad & I spent Christmas day with our nonagenarian parents in Cairnwood Village. A highlight was giving my Dad, **Geoffrey Cooper**, a WWII Veteran's cap which he put on and promptly began singing his own battalion's song from 1943. He knew all the words!"

Sad as it is, **Bonnie Cowley & Jeannette Roscoe** are grateful for the gentle passing of their mother **Joan M. Alden**. Bonnie says, "On December 9th our mother passed peacefully into the spiritual world. She was 90 years old. A few days later all but one of Joan and John Alden's 12 children, most of their grandchildren and many great grandchildren traveled to Pittsburgh (some from as far away as Florida, Oregon, Arizona and France) for the memorial service. It was a very moving service attended by nearly all of the Pittsburgh society, followed by a memorable reception. Joan Alden is also survived by her husband, of nearly 71 years, John Alden. Though she will be sorely missed - the family is delighted by her peaceful passing after a very full earthly life."

And congratulations all around ...

David Radcliffe has wrapped up his brief time in the Senate working for Chris Van Hollen, one of our Maryland Senators. Mr. Van Hollen has put this in the Congressional Record:"

TRIBUTE TO DAVID RADCLIFFE

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the tremendous service of David Radcliffe, who joined our staff as a Brookings fellow this year. David's expertise in de-

fense, veterans, and homeland security issues was invaluable, helping to ensure we met the needs of Maryland. David came to our office with a wealth of policy knowledge from his civilian work at the Department of Defense and his military service as an Army Ranger. He not only adapted quickly to his work in the Senate, he helped define his role in a new office. His versatility, kindness, and equanimity endeared him to constituents across the State. David was unfazed by any change in plans or new last-minute requests, simply responding, "Semper Gumby"--always be flexible. His strong principles, willingness to pitch in wherever needed, and sense of humor made him a great colleague and terrific staffer in my office. We owe him a debt of gratitude, and we will miss him greatly. My whole staff and I wish him well as he embarks on his next journey in service to our country.

Lauren Ball & Brenna Sweeney made the Bryn Athyn College Dean's list this term!

Joseph Sprinkle has officially graduated from the University of Maryland with a degree in Computer Science and a minor in Chinese. He is currently looking for a job in programming. **Jennie** has finished her first quarter at SCAD and made the Dean's list. **Jonathan** has just been promoted to Facility Supervisor at the Coventry School for Dogs and Their People. He continues to work full time and is beginning classes at Howard Community College in January. We send our best wishes to all for a happy, healthy new year.

AT ANC: **Emily Martin** was on ANC honor role for the first term. She also won the senior project charity presentation award. The assignment is to research and present information on your charity of choice, what they do and why you chose it as their cause. Emily picked the Brain and Behavior foundation that does research to improved diagnosis and treatment of mental illness generally and specifically. As the winner, she was awarded \$250 for her charity.

This fall **Carl Martin** made the Bowie high school varsity soccer team, the only 1st year sophomore to make the team and Letter (80+ boys tried out for only 25 varsity spots). His team went on to have a 22-4 winning season. The team went on to become the PG

county champions, southern Maryland league champions and southern Maryland regional champions.

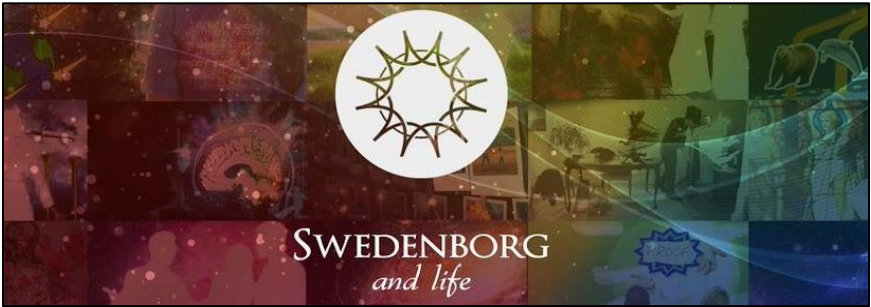
Congratulations, ALL!

Out of town travel...

From Amy **Odhner**: “On December 12th I was in North Carolina celebrating my mom's birthday with Eva and our aunts (mom's sisters.) It was great seeing Deena and Jerry getting settled in their new home. The aunts (Bernice, Adele, and Grace) stayed in a cabin at the nearby KOA. We enjoyed cheesecake and champagne around a fire there as well. The fire was necessary because it was unseasonably chilly that weekend. The whole tribe including Eva's husband and three kids went to Airlie Gardens to see a spectacular Winter Wonderland. Everyone had a wonderful time enjoying family and getting into the Christmas spirit.”



Deena Odhner sent a greeting, “I wanted to give you our new address: [7014 Brittany Lakes Drive, Wilmington, NC 28411](https://www.google.com/maps/place/7014+Brittany+Lakes+Drive,+Wilmington,+NC+28411). As the process of selling a house creeps along, we are hoping for a January closing, still lots to be done here in our house on the lake. Love to you all, Deena”



Swedenborg's Birthday Banquet January 27, 2018

Banquet begins at 7:00pm

A Virtual Presentation with interactive Q & A
Beginning at 8:00pm

Speaker: Curtis Childs

From Swedenborg Foundations "Off the Left Eye"
The Internet's Insatiable Hunger for Swedenborg

Reserve your tickets now - \$12 adults, \$6 students
Reduced price if reserved before Sunday, January 21st

Call or email Bonnie
301-464-5602, bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch.org