

January 2021

ECHO ECHO

Newsletter of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

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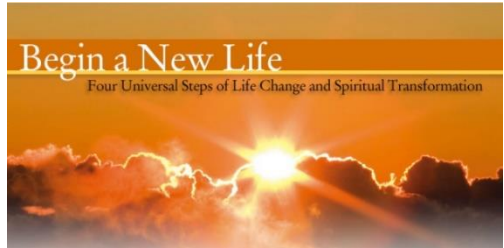
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From the Pastor

“The question then is, How are we to repent? The answer is, we are to do so actively. That is, we are to examine ourselves, recognize and admit to our sins, pray to the Lord, and begin a new life.” (*True Christian Religion* 530)

My friend and colleague, the Rev. Mark Pendleton, runs a program called “Begin a New Life”. It’s based on the doctrine of repentance

as laid out in the Word, and he offers it to people worldwide in the form of a website, worksheets, readings, and face-to-face seminars and workshops. It's a great example, I think, of how the healing truths of the Heavenly Doctrines can be made accessible to all people. In fact, he and I had originally planned on him coming to offer a version of his seminar here at Washington New Church quite a while ago, but the big crazy that we have all been living through for the past nine months has so far stymied our intentions. Maybe this year we'll pull it off.



Anyway, the name of the program comes from the opening sentence of *True Christian Religion* 530, quoted above. It's a favorite passage of mine, as it is for many in the New Church. In a way, the doctrine of repentance might be considered what marketing professionals would call the "killer app" of the New Church. It's a concrete, easily explained, powerful and useful application of doctrine. Anyone can do it, and it has a powerful impact on people's daily lives when they follow through on it.

The process is described in several different ways and can be broken down into different lists of steps. Twelve Step programs are essentially detailed versions of the process. The Word sometimes describes repentance in terms of seven steps. But the passage quoted above is the simplest, and boils it all down to just four things:

That's it. So simple. And yet it's extremely powerful. And as I write this, just two days before Christmas, thinking about the New Year that is to come, my mind is drawn to that final step, for which Mark's program is named: Begin a new life.

1. *Examine yourself.*
2. *Acknowledge your sin.*
3. *Pray to the Lord.*
4. *Begin a new life.*

I've taught frequently about repentance, and the "begin a new life" step is all about commitment. It's about remembering the previous steps. And it's about actively shunning evil inclinations as they

arise in your heart going forward. Sometimes I've called it "making a project" of the area of your life you are focusing on. Today, as I think about this phrase, I'm especially struck by how *total* it is: "Begin a new *LIFE*." Not just, "try to do better". Not, "make a part of your life new." "Begin....a new...*life!*"

Rev. Glenn "Mac" Frazier  
Washington New Church, 2020-12-23

**Online Holy Supper:** on **Sunday, January 3rd, at 11:00 a.m.**, we will be celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Holy Supper. This will be an *online Holy Supper* - something we've never done before. The way this will work is that at the end of the regular Sunday sermon, I will lead the Holy Supper service with readings and instruction. When it comes time to drink wine and eat unleavened bread, I will say so during the service, and then people at home are invited to drink and eat elements that you provide for yourself. **If you would like to participate, you will need to get your own wine and unleavened bread (only online not in person)** Linked below is an **easy recipe** for the bread you can make at home. If providing your own bread is difficult for you, please let me know by December 29th, and we can work something out.

#### **Unleavened Bread Recipe:**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WH38DHHMENkSvqj-QdyeNdgLifxpZxq/view?usp=sharing>

#### **Thank you from our Pastors:**

*Thank you so much for the gift presented after the Christmas Eve service this year. To echo what Brian said at the time, while the gift is very much appreciated in its own right, the message of appreciation that was delivered with the gifts was even more meaningful. This has indeed been a challenging year to be a pastor. So much of what we do at the church has been turned upside down by outside circumstances that we have had to repeatedly relearn and reinvent our jobs. A little innovation can be quite exhilarating, but this year has been emotionally exhausting, to be quite*

*honest. But knowing that our efforts are noticed and appreciated significantly lightens the weight of the past year's challenges. So, thank you. It remains a great pleasure to be serving you all. Thank you. ~ Mac & Brian*

### ***From the Board of Trustees:***

On December 1, 2020, the Board of Trustees (BoT) hosted a Zoom discussion session for the Congregation, inviting anyone who had questions or items to discuss - based on the written reports distributed in November - in lieu of the semi-annual Society meeting. Approximately 15 members attended for discussions and to check in. If anyone did not receive the written report (emailed by Bonnie Cowley on November 18), please contact the Church.

Following this session, the BoT held a semi-annual joint meeting with the School Board. Topics of discussion included, for the School: tuition for the coming year; COVID protocols, impacts, and plans; staffing and budgets; and grant requests; and for the Church: grounds and building contracts; Pastors report, including Christmas services plans; and fundraising activities.

Sharon Croft ~ BoT Secretary

## **Announcements**

**Passing into the Spiritual World:** On Tuesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> our friend Martha Brannon was called to the spiritual world after a valiant battle with cancer. More details in the news notes P. 11.

Our condolences to her husband Mike and daughter Meghan.

**Christmas Centerpiece Sales, 2020:** Many thanks to all of you who purchased centerpieces this year. 36 pieces were requested, and we raised just over \$700 (special thanks to those of you who contributed extra dollars!), all of which has now been turned over to the Washington Society Operating Fund. Your participation in this fundraising effort is much appreciated. ~ Mary Cooper

**2021 Echo Directory:** I have sent out an email to everyone asking to have any changes or corrections for last year's directory. With it I have included a PDF version of the 2020 directory.

Please look it over – not just your contact info but other info in the directory that may apply to you or your family – children’s names and DOB, what boards you might be on etc. Be on the lookout for this email and PLEASE respond... even if it is “my listing is fine, thank you!” If you didn’t get the email and want me to know of a change, please email me. ~ Bonnie Cowley

**“Souper” Sundays:** We have had two very successful “Souper” Sundays so far. Our cooks have prepared wonderful varieties of soup and bread and you have bought us out completely each time. The pre-order system seems to be working for those who think it wise to stay away from in-person services. If you haven’t yet, please consider ordering ahead of time.

Next “Souper” Sunday is January 10<sup>th</sup>. I will be emailing out the possible soup/bread choices for you to look over and order either for pick up at church or later [I am also willing to deliver, within a reasonable distance, to those who are unable to get out.]

**Free for the taking:** Jenny Smith ordered this dress for an event in her trip to Cancun earlier this month, but it was not going to make it on time, so they expedited another one, and it still didn't make it, so they gave her a refund for both and said she didn't have to return the dresses. But now she has two, one is still in the package, and hasn't been opened. The following link is the ad for the dress with the description - <https://www.kohls.com/product/prd-4317833/product.jsp>. If you are interested in having this dress, please contact her: 301-466-8783 or [jennysmith296@gmail.com](mailto:jennysmith296@gmail.com).

**New Addresses:**

|                                                                                                  |                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| David Glenn<br>Western Maryland Hospital Center<br>1500 Pennsylvania Ave.<br>Hagerstown, MD 2174 | Jenny Smith<br>2901 Cold Spring Way<br>Apt. 431<br>Crofton, MD 21114 |
| Edward & Wystan Simons<br>2775 Quarry Road<br>Box 273<br>Bryn Athyn, PA 19009                    | Carina Heinrichs<br>3707 Enterprise Road<br>Mitchellville, MD 20721  |

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!



If you haven't been attending services in person during the pandemic you may not know that the new envelopes for your donations have not yet arrived. We should have them by late January, but in the meantime, you can put your envelope **number** on any old envelope to have your otherwise

anonymous donations credited to your account. Then again, if you're staying home for safety's sake, please remember the online donation option, which is explained on our website – in the lower right corner of the home page at [www.theWNC.org](http://www.theWNC.org).

Of course, you can always mail in your contributions, or drop them off at the church office. We are looking forward to a new and much improved year for church community-building, and hope to see you again soon!



☞  
"Are we glad to hear that you don't know where you'll get the money you need. For a minute there we were afraid you wanted to get it from us."

### ***How Can We See the Lord's Plan? [Revisited]***

*By Bonnie Cowley*

*I will frequently look at some of the editorials I have written in the past for this newsletter to get some inspiration that might fit the current times and I ran across this essay written in 2001 [which I have re-written to reflect today's time frame]. It certainly was not*

*a pandemic at the time but the year 2001 brought the death of my son in August and shortly after that, 9/11 happened to the USA.*

*Even now, as COVID has affected the entire world, can we see the Lord's plan?*

Most of us are none too sad to see the close of 2020. For many, in fact for most of the globe, last year's events changed the focus and probably the very course of our lives. What are we to make of changes like this? - changes we sometimes feel ill prepared to deal with. How can we see The Lord's plan in such worldwide events and suffering?

Years ago, I heard a sermon by Rev. Nathan Gladish<sup>1</sup> that asked us to think about a time when we were given some directions or perhaps a diagram for something that we had wanted to make or do, and for some reason, we were unable to look past the complexities in the diagram and see the result or even how we might get that result. He said that the Lord has a plan for all of us and that often that plan does not seem very clear.

It is like a technical manual that came with a piece of equipment I got for Christmas. Is the manual no good just because I might not understand it? I can usually trust that someone smarter than I can decode the manual, or I can call tech support to get some help. It is that same kind of humble trust that I can have in the plan for my own life. No matter how little I may see of the Lord's leading in a dark or confusing time I can trust that He understands His plan.

One of the helpful things I will do when I'm in a state of this kind of confusion is to look at providence in "hindsight". I don't just look at the choices I've made that I think have turned out well. I also look at some of the events I would not have chosen (perhaps even resisted) that did turn out well. If someone had told me 30+ years ago that I would move to the Washington DC area, and become a secretary I would have thought that ridiculous. I may have even gone out of my way to keep it from happening. After all, I

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<sup>1</sup> [sermon by Rev. Nathan Gladish, December 2001, Pittsburgh, PA]

had no interest in the DC area and I could barely type! Yet now, I am ever grateful for this job and this society.

This reminds me of one of my favorite quotes from the Arcana - “They who are in the stream of Providence are all the time carried toward everything that is happy whatever may be the appearance of the means.” (AC 8478)

What a lovely hopeful passage. All I must do is allow myself to be in the stream of providence [how? See pastor’s article P.1] and I can be sure that the outcome will be a happy one. A new year can give me the opportunity to look at what I can see of the Lord’s plan from the past and to try to be in “the stream of Providence” in the year to come. To quote another sermon given just before the New Year (2001)<sup>2</sup> “The Lord wants us to make new beginnings. He wants us to examine the course of our past lives and to decide to improve the way we conduct ourselves based on the things we have learned during the year.”

And what a learning experience last year has been for all of us. Have we not seen in powerful contrast the hells that effect our lives as well as the overpowering sphere of the Lord’s love acting through so many people, first responders, neighbors helping neighbors, average people giving of their time, food, and money? Despite all that has happened to us in 2020, regardless of the *appearance*, we can know that the Lord does have a plan. I personally feel that we have every reason to be hopeful, optimistic, and secure in what lies ahead even if we don’t clearly see His plan. Happy New Year!

## December News

### Not News:

2020 was not a good year, unless the only thing you were paying attention to was the stock market. It is true that there have been other “wish we could forget” years, but this one was close to our homes, and messed up our lives, so obviously it was much worse than those other ones. But the light at the other end of the tunnel is

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<sup>2</sup> [sermon by Rev. Jim Cooper, December 2001, Mitchellville, MD]



looking less and less like a train and more and more like a needle bearing Covid vaccine. Dare we hope that there could be an end to these abnormal times; that we can rid ourselves of the 2020 scourge? Sometimes it feels like all we can do is hope. But, hoping is not enough; we need to do our best to keep things moving toward the tunnel's end. As pastor Mike once said, "If you're going through hell, keep going."

**Real News:**

**Tableaux Happened:** Traditions die hard, so despite masks and social distancing and cold, breezy weather, the tableaux presentation went on in early December. Some people noticed some differences, but the essential message about the birth of the Lord was on display and was a happy start to the Christmas season. Thanks to **Bonnie Cowley** and all the other people who helped make it happen in the face of many obstacles, and to the large number of unknown people (masked and in the dark) who braved the cold to participate in this birthday celebration.



**It was Special:** Imagine a dark, cold, clear December evening, with shepherds huddling around a campfire, with Mary and Joseph in a rough shelter with their newborn child, and bright stars overhead - Mars at its brightest and Jupiter and Saturn in conjunction – when suddenly an angel appears, brightly lit and awesome. And you have pictured our tableaux this year. Well done!

**Good News:**

**Latest Bulletin:** Important, exciting, and happy news from Phil and Janna Zuber is the birth of their 6th grandchild on December 28th. The parents - **Kira and Joseph Jenkins** went into the hospital early that morning for a scheduled c-section. At 8:58 a.m. **Justin Indiana Jenkins** arrived weighing in at 8.2 lbs., and 20"



long. Parents and baby are all doing well and feeling very blessed with this precious new life to love and nourish.

Congratulations to Kira and Joe.

**Home for the holidays: Michael Ferrell** reports: "I'm discharged from John Hopkins Hospital. Further treatment has been shifted to next year. I'm currently in a remission phase and part of a transplant study. Current plan: monitoring and follow-up in 6 months for results of the study. All is well. Janet and I thank you for your prayers and the cards." Stay well Michael!

**Improving: David Glenn** is steadily improving, but it will be a while before he can get home. Originally, he was given a timeline of 3-6 months before he would be coming home but as the 6-month mark nears, it is obvious that the timeline is going to be extended by at least several more months, depending on his progress. So far, progress is "pretty good; arm movement going on! He can lift his arm a few inches and move it back and forth!" He is no longer on a ventilator and his trach has been removed, although he is limited to how much he can talk while it heals. We look forward to continued progress. David Glenn; Western Maryland Hospital Center; 1500 Pennsylvania Ave; Hagerstown, MD 21742.

**Musical Notes:** It was nice to see a few member families (selected **Smith brothers** and numerous masked singers) out caroling around Acton Park on a cold and windy evening the week before Christmas. It sure helped to break up the feeling of isolation. They called themselves, "The COVID Carolers!" More accurately "The Cold COVID Carolers" from ages little to big. Thanks for spreading joy.

### **Traveling News:**

**A Moving Story:** In case you missed it, **Jenny Smith** has a new address ever since she moved last September. It is: **2901 Cold Spring Way, apartment #431, Crofton, MD 21114**, a nice 2nd floor apartment in a nice housing development called "The Point."

**Partly Moving: Curt Moore** reports that he has moved from his job as a night watchman with the Smithsonian Institution and is now working as a Life & Health, Annuities insurance agent. As he

said, "Instead of protecting artifacts, property and staff, I will be protecting families from financial ruin from a death or disability" Best wishes!

**Winging It: Jenny Smith** had a wonderful, if all-too-short trip to Cancun on the first weekend of December, to attend the wedding of a soul-sister from earlier days.

**Also on the wing: Brad & Kathy Johns** enjoyed a winter vacation in the US Virgin Islands just before Christmas, escaping the cold. Good move!

**Grounded Wings:** We hear that **Barry and Erin Stillman** now have matching motorized bicycles and may be seen occasionally touring around on the county's bike trails. We are wondering if these are anything like the motorized "exercise" bikes we have on order for our basement gymnasium. Probably not.

**Clipped wings:** Most of the rest of us found traveling at all during the Christmas celebration, much less flying, to be either impossible or unwise or perhaps both, creating quiet family gatherings (or not so quiet, depending on the ages or inclinations of homebound kids) on Christmas. The moving Tableaux, and the excellent on-line Christmas Eve candlelight service helped to provide some normalcy, but the result was a paucity of news about visitors and other doin's, resulting in said clipped wings for the News Notes editor. But wait until next year! (Oh – it is next year:)

**Sad News:**

**We are** saddened by the passing of our friend **Martha Childs Brannon** just before Christmas. Martha and Mike were long-time active members of the Washington Society serving the society in a variety of ways. Their two children also attended WNCS. They then moved to the Baltimore area a few years ago becoming very involved in the society there. Martha had been battling cancer for way too many years. Our condolences to Mike and family. A memorial



service was conducted at the Church by Rev. Michael Gladish on December 27<sup>th</sup>, followed by an on-line reception. (copies of the address are available from the church office, and a video of all but the first few minutes is available via theWNC.org website).

**Our Condolences** also to **Laurel Walsh** and former WNC pastor Garry Walsh on the passing last month of her mother, **Lynn Winans Smith**, into the spiritual world after a long battle with dementia. A "virtual" service was conducted for her by Bishop Heinrichs on Dec. 17th, with scores of people attending online and sharing their memories afterward.

**Condolences also** to Candy Quintero and other family and friends of her **Aunt Donette Rose Alfelt**, who passed away just before Christmas.

**Pat Sweeney Update:** Over the holidays Pat found himself battling new symptoms in his ongoing fight against cancer. He has been admitted to the cancer center at the University of Maryland where he is receiving the best possible care at this time. While visitors are not allowed for the duration of his stay, texts of well wishes are welcome.

Pat and his family send their heart felt thank you (again) for the many forms of love and support coming to them. It is truly giving them a needed boost.

**Other News:**

**Many thanks:** to **Brian Smith** and helpers, **Timmy Radcliffe** and **Malik Muhammad**, (one of our high schoolers) on completing the new paint job on the front of the church and school. It looks great!

And to **Lincoln Smith** who is helping the high schoolers develop a new outdoor worship space at the top of a hill on the east side of the bridge the students also built over the



creek just east of the church a few years ago. The worship space is coming along nicely and will be a real treat when it's done. Thanks to Andy Cooper (& Col. Smith's lumber pile) for some very special heavy oak planks that will be used for benches there.

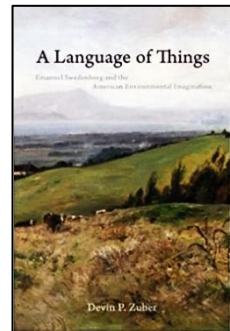
**Also thanks,** to **Mary Cooper** for her lovely Christmas centerpieces made once again for the benefit of the Church. And to Mary and her helpers in providing the chancel decorations for the Christmas Eve candle-lit service.

**Starry Eyes:** **Chuck Quintero** had fun last month helping people view a once-in-a-lifetime (if you happen to be living in the correct eon) phenomena: the alignment of Jupiter and Saturn, visible in the southern skies in conjunction on December 21<sup>st</sup>, and close together on other evenings. It also happened 850 years ago, we are assured, but we have no first-hand knowledge of that.

**Legal News:** Two weeks before Christmas, **Phil Zuber** was interviewed on a radio show called Everyday Law. It can be listened to here: <https://www.podbean.com/eu/pb-5iv7h-f53832#.X-DoDQtTaAU.mailto>. Phil shares a lot of Prince Georges County history, as well as some personal anecdotes from his legal career.

**Book Reports:** We are informed on good authority that Itinerant **Pastor Mike** is working on a book of sermons that the General Church has agreed to publish - probably this spring - on a theme of Prayer and Providence. An inside source revealed to the Editor that this book will be in an attractive paperback format and may even be offered on Amazon as an e-book, hopefully suitable for new readers and church members alike. Good going, Mike – we look forward to it.

**And Another:** A notice from **Devin Zuber**: “I'm really delighted, and still a little speechless, to share that my book--\*A Language of Things\*--has been officially awarded the 2020 Borsch-Rast Book Prize and Lectureship, an annual prize for "innovative and creative scholarship" in religious studies or theology (it's one of the bigger ones out there in these fields)”



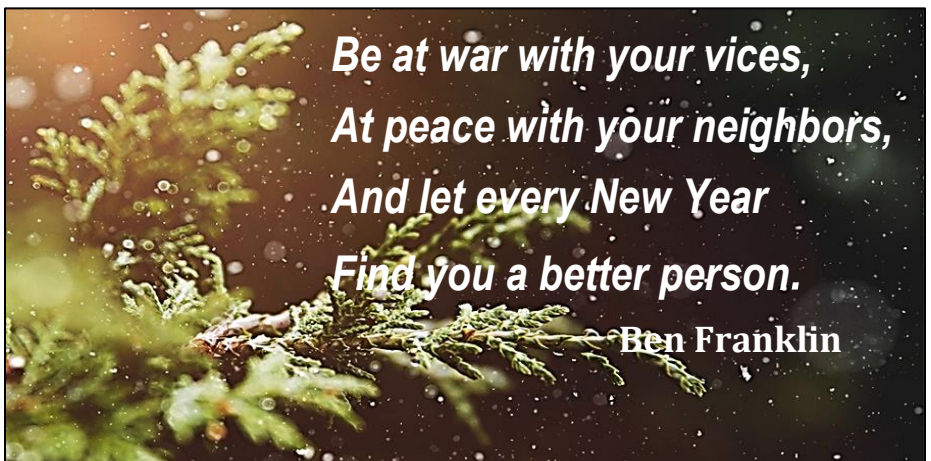
Congratulations, Devin.” [The book is available on Amazon.com in paperback for \$29.50.

**General Church News:** The **Rev. Erik Buss** and his wife Ann will be relocating to the United Kingdom to serve in Colchester. In addition, the **Rev. Grant Odhner** and his wife Sarah will be moving to London in July to be part of the pastoral team serving the United Kingdom.

**Best News:** The best thing about this New Year is that we all now have **2020** hindsight.

| DUTY                  | JAN.     |           |           |           |           |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                       | <b>3</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>24</b> | <b>31</b> |
| Preacher*             | GMF      | GMF       | GMF       | GMF       | GMF       |
| Chancel               | Mary C   | Mary C    | Mary C    | Mary C    | Mary C    |
| ORGAN                 | Carole   | Jenny     | Carole    | Jenny     | Carole    |
| FLOWERS               | Mary     | Erin      | Janna     | Mary      | Erin      |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Usher | Mike G   | Lincoln S | Steve B   | Brian S   | Glenn F   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Usher | ---      | Marcellus | Elias     | ---       | ---       |
| Video                 | Bill K   | Brian S   | Ian L     | Glenn F   | TBD       |

*See calendar next page*



# The Washington New Church and School Calendar

## January 2021

| Sunday                                                 | Monday                                          | Tuesday                         | Wednesday                            | Thursday | Friday                   | Saturday                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
|                                                        |                                                 |                                 |                                      |          | 1                        | 2                                              |
|                                                        |                                                 |                                 |                                      |          | 3 WNCNS Christmas Break— | 4<br>11:00 am Chair Yoga<br>2:30 pm Yoga Class |
| 3<br>11:00 am Worship<br>w/Online Holy Supper (GMF)    | 4<br>8:00 pm Monday Night Reading Group         | 5<br>School Board Mtg           | 6<br>Wednesday Email<br>Arcana Group | 7        | 8                        | 9<br>1:30 pm Chair Yoga<br>2:30 pm Yoga Class  |
| 10<br>3 WNCNS Christmas Break—                         | 11                                              | 12<br>7:30 pm Trustless Meeting | 13                                   | 14       | 15<br>END WNCNS 1st Term | 16<br>1:30 pm Chair Yoga<br>2:30 pm Yoga Class |
| 17<br>11:00 am Worship (GMF)                           | 18<br>8:00 pm Closed Monday Night Reading Group | 19                              | 20<br>Wednesday Email Arcana Group   | 21       | 22                       | 23<br>1:30 pm Chair Yoga<br>2:30 pm Yoga Class |
| 24<br>11:00 am Worship (GMF)<br>12:00 pm Souper Sunday | 25                                              | 26<br>ECHO DEADLINE             | 27                                   | 28       | 29                       | 30<br>1:30 pm Chair Yoga<br>2:30 pm Yoga Class |
| 31<br>11:00 am Worship (GMF)                           |                                                 |                                 |                                      |          |                          |                                                |