

March 2021

ECHO ECHO

Newsletter of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

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## From the Pastor

An ongoing topic as I write this is when and how we will return to “normal” education at the school, here. Since March 13<sup>th</sup> of last year, we have taught our students online because of the pandemic. It seems to me that, at least as we are currently configured, we are better able to deliver our best educational services to children

through face-to-face gatherings. A lot is lost when we teach online. That said, we have also learned a great deal about online education, and along the way I think we may also have honed skills that will serve us well once we return to “normal”.

Likewise, there are big challenges for workers and employees in this world of “whoops! now we all suddenly telecommute” that many find themselves in today. But there are also certainly benefits.

And with all this going on, I, like many others, have been really thinking a lot about what all this will mean in a “post-COVID-19” world. Have you noticed all the “scare quotes” I’ve been using? If it gives you the sense that I don’t expect the “normal” we return to be the same as the normal we had before the pandemic, it’s because I don’t. We are going to see some of these changes in how people work stick around even after the events that forced them on everyone have subsided.

One of the biggest reasons telecommuting didn’t become generally widespread is that there is a disadvantage to being one of the few people not actually coming into the office, and so there was built-in resistance even for those who were most inclined to give it a try. Plus, businesses in general were reluctant to allow it for fear of lost control. But with the outbreak of the pandemic, masses were suddenly forced to all switch over together. And a lot of us are finding we like it, even with the new challenges it brings.

And with the now accelerated telework revolution many are finding themselves in, we should expect to see a domino effect of other changes. The biggest one I’ve heard talked about recently is the decoupling of our careers from where we choose to live. In a telecommuting world, finding a new hometown where the Internet access is fast, cheap, and reliable may become more important than a location that has a good job market. Because the job market for many (but certainly not all) industries is going digital, just as many other marketplaces already have.

This means changes for the digital workers, of course. They can choose to live in places that better serve their needs in the areas of

friendships, family, recreational activities, culture, lifestyle, climate, etc. It will mean changes for employers, too, possibly seriously reducing overhead costs associated with leasing or owning real estate, among other things. And perhaps most interestingly, it will bring about changes for the physical locations themselves. It seems obvious that real estate prices will shift everywhere, but also consider the social impact: small communities will experience less of a talent drain, in ways that I have to imagine will be mostly positive.

My instinct is to be cautiously excited by these changes. Partly because I am a very change-friendly person by nature, but also because I see a lot of potential good in it. I think a world where many more occupations are decoupled from location than ever before is exciting and possibly much healthier for civilization in the long run.

But. But...I also worry greatly about the loss of intangible value that will come about from a reduction of semi-random social interactions. The Internet has no public spaces. Everything belongs to someone. Every online space is there because some government or corporation is providing it for a specific purpose, and these spaces are designed to be efficient.

There's value in bumping into a friend when standing in line at Starbucks, but my love affair with ordering ahead on their mobile app and skipping the line is a powerful thing. Chance encounters with strangers while waiting for a bus have deepened my appreciation of humanity. I play a lot more chess against serious opponents now that I can find a game at any minute of any hour of any day from anywhere that has cell phone service, and yet some of my favorite moments playing competitive chess come from conversations with other chess players out in the lobby outside a physical tournament hall.

And I remember how I felt about the first Internet revolution back in the 1990s. I helped build this world. As a cofounder of one of the first web development companies, I was an excited evangelist for how the Internet would free us from the shackles of space and time, allowing people who felt lonely in their ultra-niche interests

to go out into the new online world and build communities with the one thousand others on earth who shared their interests and passions. I was extolling everything that is great and convenient about shopping online before e-commerce was really even a thing. And I was right...but I also severely underestimated the powerful dehumanizing elements that would come with this kicking free of the earth from beneath our feet.

And now we live in a world where the loss of local institutions has caused us all to be constantly glued to national politics in a wildly unhealthy way. We live in a world where lunatics and fanatics instantly network among themselves in powerful feedback machines. Heck, even the sanest among us are more and more getting stuck in informational echo chambers that inevitably radicalize us, even if just by small amounts.

Churches are in serious, serious trouble in this regard, and therefore the human race is. Churches, when they are healthy and fulfilling their purpose, provide three things: meaning, purpose, and connection. A church should be a place where a person goes to learn, so that they can better understand themselves, their neighbors, and the universe and what all this might be about. A church should be a place where a person goes to be inspired to rise above selfishness and materialism, and to find ways to contribute to the good of others outside of themselves. And a church should be a place of community: a place where one gathers, not because of language or ethnicity or race or politics or economics or age but because of a common view of spiritual purpose and meaning.

But if our churches retreat into the online-only mode that some others seem to be headed toward, then we will become purely about information. We will continue to preach messages about meaning, but that's just the information leg of the stool. Online church so far does not seem to be much good at service or community. We try, but the bandwidth for human contact and emotion is just too thin, even with live multi-way video. And action leg and the passion leg are both missing from "online church". This worries me deeply.

And yet, I'm still mostly optimistic about the new future we are building. I just want to be sure we are thoughtful and intentional about it, rather than just letting it happen to us however it unfolds. Change is inevitable. We can either react to it, or we can figure out how to position ourselves ahead of it so as to maximize our ability to pursue our mission. Or at least we can make some educated guesses and then do our best to prepare.

Mac Frazier, Pastor  
Washington New Church, 2021-02-19

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

The Board met for our regular monthly meeting on Feb. 9, for reports and discussion on the Church, School, and Acton Park. Rev. Frazier noted that it has been one year since COVID restrictions began. Online church services are well attended, and contributions income has continued despite the reduction of in-person Church attendance. A nominating committee is being pulled together for May elections, and nominees are needed for School Board and Board of Trustees. If you are interested in serving, please contact Church staff or any member of the Boards. School status and staffing was discussed, including some actions on staffing needs for next year and scheduling of a special joint meeting of the Boards to discuss. Kathy Johns reported on her efforts to pull together ideas, designs and bids for bathroom renovations at the front of the building. The March BoT meeting will be held on Tuesday, 3/9 at 7:30pm.

~Sharon Cooper, BoT Secretary

### **Hello from the White Horse Academy!**

Despite the snowy weather, we have been making progress on the outdoor worship area. The students have planed, sanded, and stained enough wood for about 10 benches. Just last week, they helped collect large logs for the "feet" of our



benches. They have been trying out different ideas for the bench layout and are imagining different possibilities for an altar.

The students have also been making progress in their academic courses. We are planning our first Junior Journey which should take place in the Spring of 2022 - more details to come in the next issue. My students who are studying Korean have been blessed to have the volunteer services half an hour a week of a South Korean native - Jieun Yang or Raina as she asks us to call her. This has been a wonderful opportunity for them to interact with a native speaker and learn more about the culture.

To complete our studies of folk and fairy tales in our English class, the students and I have been playing a Dungeons and Dragons game to explore the story of Beowulf. It is a novel experience (LOL).

If you know of any high school students who would benefit from a personalized new church high school program that involves hands-on projects and career explorations, let us know! We have space available for a few more students for 2021-2022, and we would like to see all of them filled. Students can learn in-person or from a distance. Enrollment begins now! Contact us by calling Bonnie Cowley or Brian Smith at 301-464-5602 to request more information. Or Brian Smith at [brian.smith@washnewchurch.org](mailto:brian.smith@washnewchurch.org).

*Coach Sprinkle*

## **NEW COPIES OF THE WORD**

We have obtained 4 shiny new copies of the world's ONLY thoroughly New Church translation of the Old and New Testaments - known as "the Kempton Translation" - and they are available at the book center in the church lobby for \$35 each.

A small companion booklet explains everything you need to know about this, but here we'll just note that this new version is in a much more manageable format than the first one. It's still a heavy book, and the translation still uses archaic English, but it is incredibly valuable for study and reflection because of its literal accuracy and faithfulness to the doctrine drawn from it in the

Writings. Check it out! And if you want one, pay Mike, who sponsored the order.

**“Souper” Sundays:** I would like to thank all of the ladies who made soup (and chili) and baked bread. In spite of the pandemic attendance at church services our sales were fabulous due to pre-sales. We have brought in so far \$728 (one more Sunday to add to that February 28) this money will be shared this year: half = \$364 to the operating fund and half = \$364 to the White Horse Academy (particularly to develop the outdoor worship center. (*see p. 6*)

### **Monopoly:**

Erin Stillman would be delighted to do Safeway Monopoly for the school again. It is ok for people drop tickets off at the office. Monopoly starts March 3.

## **February’s News:**

This has been a winter to remember – or better still, to forget; it seems that problems impede our way no matter which is our way. But some people get it right:

*No man can conform his faith to the dictates of another. The life and essence of religion consists in the internal persuasion or belief of the mind.*

— Thomas Jefferson, 1819

We all are given a conscience. The hard part is using it.

In spite of all that happened, apparently not much news happened. So, we might have to make up a few things along the way, as foretold last month.

**Warm Feelings:** In spite of the cold weather, there have been some warm feelings at the Church parking lot every Wednesday evening generated in part by very nice fire circles happening after 8:00 PM. Collections of assorted fire-watchers, both young and old and with a few ‘tweeners, gather for some congenial social distancing under the stars – or clouds – and look forward to you joining them (after first joining **Pastor Mac** on Zoom at 7:00 the same Wednesdays for sessions on the Easter story, of course.)

**Condolences:** to the Hyatts on the passing of **Hanna's** maternal grandmother.

*Also*, best wishes to **Jean Allen** recovering from surgery. I know she has appreciated the meals!

**David Glenn's story:** David is still struggling with his recovery and faces a long period of physical and occupational therapy and treatments at Western Maryland Hospital Center, where he will be well cared for. Amy was able to stay with relatives in western Maryland for a while to be with David. They are hopeful that his next round of IVIG will jumpstart his progress a little more and produce some larger overall improvements. Good luck, David – we are pulling for you.

**Itinerant Pastor Mike** reports that a book including his sermons on a theme of prayer and providence may be published before or immediately after Easter by the General Church. It will include 40 sermons spanning decades and will be available through the General Church book center and [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

**From the same source:** Mike had successful cataract surgery on one eye on Feb. 23rd and will follow up with the other on March 1<sup>st</sup>. He is looking forward to greatly improved vision, and that is good news.

**Other News:** The **Boynton Beach Retreat** will be held on Sunday, March 14th, and will be entirely online this year. Information about that can be obtained from the office or church bulletin board.

Registration can be done here:

[http://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/7716134138020/WN\\_NPTFSONoT7uD5z2pmh4yhg](http://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/7716134138020/WN_NPTFSONoT7uD5z2pmh4yhg)

**More Other News:** Regional Pastor Mike has been busy working with the Rev. Garry Walsh in Pittsburgh to help that Society get through the year without a full-time pastor. Mike is pleased to announce that the Rev. Jared Buss has been nominated to serve as their new full-time, resident pastor. Pending affirmation, he will move to Pittsburgh by July 1, together with his wife, Justine, and three children.



**From the General Church:** Bishop Peter Buss, Jr. has announced the formation of a Bishop's Council to provide ongoing input to the Bishop's Office from non-Board lay people around the Church and to facilitate two-way communication. The following people have agreed to serve:

**Brendon Cockerell**, Westville, SA; **Doug Hunt**, Boulder, CO; **Emmy and Jared Hasen**, Caryndale; ON; **Helen Ferrence**, Bryn Athyn, PA; **HuiLing Sun**, Hurstville, AU; **Kathryn Kloppers**, Westville, SA; **Tom & Rachel David**, Boston, MA; **Lincoln Smith**, Mitchellville, MD; **Mandela Thomas**, Seattle, WA; **Marian van Genne**, Holland; **Owen Smith**, Glenview, IL; **Roger and Kathy Schrock**, Kempton, PA; **Thando Tshabalala**, Johannesburg, SA.

### **More General Church News:**

The Rev. **Derek Elphick** has been nominated and affirmed as the next Pastor of the Bryn Athyn Church. Derek and his wife, Gay, will move to Bryn Athyn by July for this purpose. The Rev. **Eric Carswell** has graciously agreed to delay his retirement plans to take on the role of Assistant Pastor of the Bryn Athyn Church for up to two years to provide transitional support for Rev. Elphick.

The Rev. **Erik Buss** has accepted the role of providing leadership in a National Pastor capacity throughout the United Kingdom, based out of Colchester. Erik will move to the UK with his wife, Ann, by July 1.

The Rev. **Grant Odhner** has accepted an assisting pastoral role in the UK, based out of London. Grant will move to the UK with his wife, Sarah, by July 1.

The Rev. **Alan Cowley** has been nominated to serve as the Pastor of the Oak Arbor Church and School. Pending affirmation, he would move to Rochester, MI by July 1, together with his wife, Susan. **Rev. Lou Synnestvedt** has been nominated by the bishop to take his place in Boynton Beach. The society will vote. April 14<sup>th</sup>.

The Rev. **Ethan McCardell** has been nominated to serve as Pastor of the Sunrise Chapel. Pending affirmation, he will move to Tucson, AZ by July 1, together with his wife, Jessica, and their five children.

**Actually:** None of this was made up.

## Use - the Key to Resilience

*By Bonnie Cowley*

Now that we have a full year of the pandemic under our belts I thought it might be good to look back on how we, as a group fared. Mike Gladish gave me the idea of asking people to send in photos and comments about some of the things that helped them survive this year. I already knew that many, like myself found that we did not have a lot of free time on our hands ... many had to work longer hours, others from home and often helping children navigate online school. The pandemic has been hard for all of us. Yet I see in the following pictures people taking the talents given them and producing some beautiful and useful things. I see delight, creativity, and resilience.. Where does that come from?

“The enjoyment that good gives and the pleasure that truth provides, which constitute the blessedness known in heaven, do not consist in having nothing to do but in being active. For the enjoyment and pleasure that consist in having nothing to do turn into the absence of enjoyment or pleasure, whereas the enjoyment and pleasure that consist in being active are lasting, constantly uplifting, and creative of blessedness.” (AC 6410)

It is true, many have struggled with the lack of activity. At first being locked down limited what we could do, where we could go and who we could see or help. The one thing that was never missing, however, was the continual creative flow of the Lord’s Love and Wisdom into the world. We may not have been aware of this at first but with growing fears and some with less to do, a space was created where that warmth and light could flow in. It was no coincidence that people made masks, helped the shut-ins, and gave more to charity. “The only good thing about this pandemic is that it’s made people care a little bit more about their neighbors,”<sup>1</sup> And with that desire to be of use, many tapped into their creativity, combined their love with learned skills and produced beautiful, useful things.

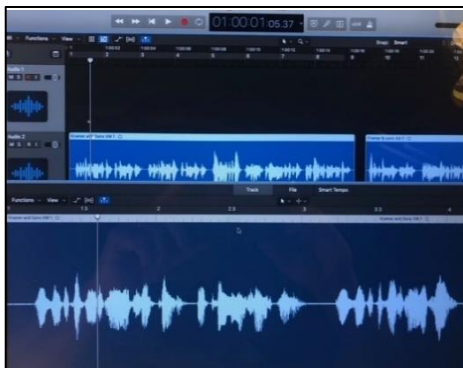
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-economy-charity/americans-give-to-charity-like-never-before-amid-pandemic>

Nothing tangible to look at (unless you looked in my freezer 🌀) 🏹

Here's a picture of my typical Recording template for Logic Pro X (The software I use for editing voiceover projects). This was for a COVID-19 related voicemail message.

**"...In these unprecedented times..."**  
~ Brad Johns



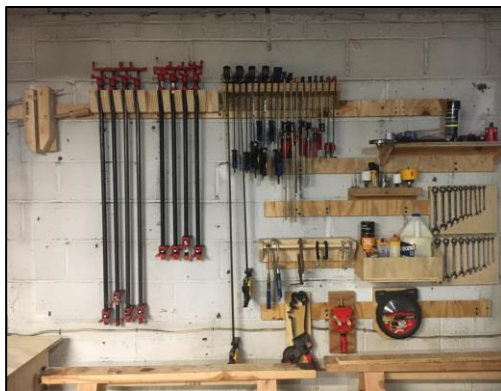
↑ A few of the 1,080 masks I made during the pandemic.  
~ Nancy Alford



←  
Erin  
Stillman  
working  
on a  
basket  
making  
time  
lapse  
video in  
her  
green-  
house.



Made a bowl out of a log. I call it the pandemic bowl. The utensils were gifts for a grandson who aspires to be a professional chef. ~ Mike



↑ Racks and shelves for clamps and glue supplies (this is only half of the racks built).



Mobile Router Table ↑  
~ Mac Frazier



The snowy weather inspired me to knit an ear warmer and I'm 3/4 through a scarf for my youngest. ~ Laura Cooper



**BEFORE**

**AFTER**

Sorting the church closet. How like Sharon Kunkle to choose this to get thru the pandemic!





*Getting outdoors, making a doghouse for Jasper, building, and planting vegetable gardens and adding to their beautiful flower beds was a pandemic antidote for the Hernandez family*



Two of our local students Kai Smith and Sohaila Smith. Practice on their skateboards. Good to get out!!



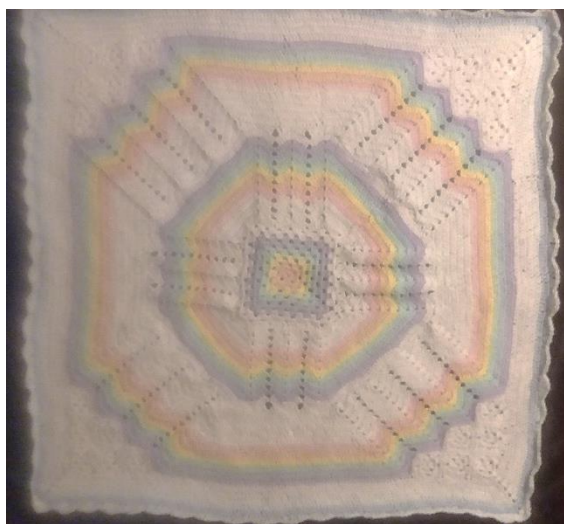
*Finding themselves unable to go out to their weekly pool leagues the Martins decided to complete the carport remodel begun a few years ago – complete with bar and pool table!*



↑ Uncle Kunkle's (Bill Kunkle) Chutney Gluttony had a banner pandemic year.



"Raise your hand" if you think Ginny Gladish makes the finest quilts! ↑



Carole Waelchli spent some of her pandemic time crocheting this afghan for Justin Jenkins born smack in the middle of this pandemic – December 2020.



Justin wasn't the only pandemic baby. Yet I'm sure this bumper crop of babies has kept their parents very busy and focused during this difficult year. Welcome to the "new normal" world!



Ella Kappert  
2/2020



Evelyn Johns



Payton Lewis  
4/2020



Connor Zuber  
6/2020



Bastien Undeutsch  
8/2020



Ruth Hyatt  
11/2020

## *March Anniversaries*

*“Conjugal love comes to those who look to the Lord and love the truths of His church and do the good things it teaches.” ~ Emanuel*

*Swedenborg CL 458*



*Mar. 12<sup>th</sup> ~ Bill & Dorothy Radcliffe ~ 61 yrs.*

*Mar. 15<sup>th</sup> ~ John & Jean Allen ~ 52 yrs.*

*Mar. 30<sup>th</sup> ~ Aaron & Eva Smith ~ 25 yrs.*



| <b>DUTY</b>                 |             |           |           |           |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>MARCH</b>                | <b>7</b>    | <b>14</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>28</b> |
| <b>Preacher*</b>            | GMF         | GMF       | GMF       | GMF       |
| Chancel                     | Mary C      | Mary C    | Mary C    | Mary C    |
| <b>ORGAN</b>                | Jenny       | Carole    | Jenny     | Carole    |
| <b>FLOWERS</b>              | Mary        | Erin      | Janna     | Mary      |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> Usher</b> | Lincoln S   | Glenn F   | Brian S   | TBA       |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Usher</b> | Marcellus S | ----      | ----      | Elias H   |
| <b>Video</b>                | Bill K      | Brian S   | Glenn F   | Lincoln   |