

November 2021

# ECHO

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## Newsletter of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

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### *The Reluctant Prophet*

We all have experienced a time in our lives where we struggle to stand up for what we know is right. This is not a new phenomenon. Before us, there were the prophets. There are many examples of prophets reluctant to speak the truth.

Think of Moses when he was asked to go and tell Pharaoh to let the Children of Israel go. He made excuse after excuse why he couldn't serve the Lord. He was a reluctant servant.

Think of Elijah. Fleeing from king Ahab and queen Jezebel after killing the prophets of Baal. He runs and hides saying: "LORD, take my life; I am no better than my fathers" (1 Kings 19:4). He thinks that he alone is left, but the Lord doesn't accept that answer and tells him to go back. Elijah was a reluctant servant.

Think of Jeremiah. From his very first call—like Moses before him—he made excuses why it shouldn't be him. "But the Lord said to me: 'Do not say, I am a youth, for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak'" (Jeremiah 1:7). Jeremiah was a reluctant servant.

Think of Jonah. His whole story shows the great lengths at which he would go to in order to avoid speaking the Lord's words to the people of Nineveh. In the end, he does it, but very begrudgingly. Jonah was a reluctant servant.

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easy to stand for the  
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If all these examples weren't enough, the best example is the Lord Himself just a handful of hours before His crucifixion. "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). It almost sounds like Jesus is reluctant.

However, the ending of His statement is what strikes a clear difference in tone: "Not as I will, but as You will."

Though I wish there were time to examine each prophet's story more fully, let's focus on Jeremiah. As said earlier, he started out with excuses. However, even though at times it may have been through gritted teeth, Jeremiah dutifully spoke the Word of the Lord. The following is one of many hostile and dangerous settings that Jeremiah was called to speak to.

“This word came from the Lord, saying: ‘Stand in the court of the Lord’s house, and speak to all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord’s house, all the words that I command you to speak to them. Do not diminish a word. Perhaps everyone will listen and turn from his evil way, **that I may relent** concerning the calamity which I purpose to bring on them because of the evil of their doings.... when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak to all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, “You will surely die!” (Jeremiah 26:1-3, 8)

After this, the princes show up—the people with real power—and instead of pleading with them, he turns his words to them as well.

“As for me, here I am, in your hand; do with me as seems good and proper to you. But know for certain that **if you put me to death, you will surely bring innocent blood** on yourselves, on this city, and on its inhabitants; for truly the Lord has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing.” (Jeremiah 26:14)

It isn’t always easy to stand for the Lord’s Word. Even the prophets were reluctant to stand for the Word. It should come as no surprise that we too can have difficulty or even just reluctance. But this story in *Jeremiah* is important. As with every truth in the Lord’s Word, the Lord’s love is inmosty present in all of them (see *Apocalypse Revealed* 933).

The Lord wants us to hear the Word so we can change. “People caught up in evils and the accompanying falsities cannot be healed by the Word, because they do not read it” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 936). We need to hear from the Lord. Everyone needs to hear from the Lord. We feel a reluctance to hold fast to the Word. Don’t worry, the prophets did too. They came around eventually. Hopefully one day we too can follow the Lord’s example and say, “Not as I will, but as You will.”

Calvin Heinrichs, Candidate Minister  
October 26, 2021

## *A Clear Idea of God*

How clearly developed is your idea of God? How accurately do you feel that you understand the Lord?

Having as “right” idea of God is important, as we read in Divine Love and Wisdom,

How important it is to have a right idea of God can be seen from the fact that the idea of God forms the inmost element of thought in all who have any religion, for all constituents of religion and all constituents of worship relate to God. (*Divine Love & Wisdom* 13)

Have you considered how all your ideas of religion derive from your understanding of the Lord?

I don't think this teaching implies that we're expected to have a complete or flawless understanding of the Divine, but our understanding of Him is very important. So, we should remain curious, humble, and energized in our search to know Him better.

Another one of my favorite teachings about our relationship with the Lord is this one from *True Christian Religion* 787, “Conjunction with an invisible God is like a conjunction of the eye's vision with the expanse of the universe, the limits of which are invisible; it is also like vision in mid-ocean, which reaches out into the air and upon the sea and is lost. Conjunction with a visible God, on the other hand, is like beholding a man in the air or on the sea spreading forth His hands and inviting to His arms.”

The first passage spoke about the importance of a correct idea of God because of how it connects to all aspects of religion. This second passage enjoins us to ground our picture of the Lord in the visible human form rather than in an invisible abstraction. We are to picture a loving human standing above the ocean water, with His hands outstretched toward us for an embrace.

Each of us have an idea of the Lord that evolves and changes over our life. Sometimes He may seem to us to be very distant or angry, other times He may seem loving, clear, and present. We may have

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strong convictions about specific aspects of His nature at certain times while at other times we may feel confused about how He is described in the Word.

Despite these fluctuations, He remains at the center of our lives and our understanding of Him remains at the center of religious thinking. This is the fuel in New Church schools.

Cultivating and developing an accurate and powerful understanding of the Lord for each of our students forms the center of everything we try to do in the school.

Principal,  
Brian Smith

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

The BoT met on September 14 for our first meeting of the new fiscal year, via Zoom. Topics included an update from the Pastor, including activities from the summer and plans for the fall, and an update from the principal on the status of the new school year, and upcoming changes to the staff for the next school year. Updates to the facility include Bill Kunkle building a new sandbox for the school playground over the summer (with thanks), and progress to the front bathroom renovation plans. Board officers were elected as follows: President/Chair: Steve Ball; Vice President: David Radcliffe; Secretary: Sharon Cooper; Treasurer: Brent Hyatt. Rev. Michael Ferrell was unanimously confirmed to serve on the School Board to fill a vacancy. The WNCS anniversary celebration is being considered for June of 2022. Thanks, are in order to Kathy Johns for keeping the Board organized with an updated list of monthly topics for the board to discuss. The Contributions Comm. needs members, with the departure of Mike Gladish as its head. The BoT met again On October 12 via Zoom. Normal monthly business was discussed, including status of finances, as well as

reports from the Pastor and Principal. The monthly topic was a report from Acton Park Corp., as well as an update on COVID cleaning protocols. The Board discussed options for the semi-annual Society meeting, and agreed to hold an informal meeting on October 29, pending discussion with Pastor's Council. The November Board meeting will be held on November 9, with the monthly topic on fundraising and marketing.

~ Sharon Cooper, Secretary, WCNJ Inc.

### ***Theta Alpha Guild Holiday Uses***



There are many ways we can join to support the society events that make our holidays special. Please consider giving some time for these events. Volunteers needed! Join the upcoming meeting or respond to a future email to sign up to help.

- MEETING - Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> @ 8:00 PM at the Church
- Souper Sundays – [Nov 7<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>]. Pre-order, buy or contribute soup or bread – Contact [Bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch](mailto:Bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch) to make, bake or order.
- Theta Alpha Bake Sale - SUNDAY Nov. 21<sup>st</sup>. Can you bake some goodies for the Thanksgiving holidays?
- Thanksgiving Food pantry delivery - delivery person needed
- December Events which will need lots of helpers – Tableaux -Nave Decoration-Christmas Eve Service & gathering.

### ***White Horse Academy Shoe Drive***

We believe in an afterlife or a second life for humans, but what about our shoes? Did you know that shoes can be given a second life too? We didn't, but now we do, and we want to support Micro-Enterprises in creating jobs and incomes for people who need them by collecting shoes. We will also be raising funds for our Junior

Journeys. It's a win-win-win for everyone. You get to clean out your closets of used shoes that are still in good condition that you don't wear anymore, we get to earn a little bit for our cultural journeys, and a Micro-Business in an underdeveloped country gets a chance to change lives.

The White Horse Academy will be collecting shoes during the months of November and December, locally, in Bryn Athyn, and in Kempton. Share the word with everyone you



know, where you live and your family and friends in our sister societies. Gather your unwanted shoes and drop them off any time at the church. There will be a specially marked box in the foyer. Remember, the more shoes we collect, the more good we do. Thank you for your help!

Jana Sprinkle ~ WHA Education Coach

### ***A Church on the Hill***

*Editorial, by Bonnie Cowley*

We all know that it is important to plan for our future. Its starts early. When young people think about a future career they may start on a path of education toward that goal. We plan for a family, for the home we wish to buy or build one day, we plan for retirement. Though we know that we should trust in the Lord regarding our future, we also know that the Lord wants us to be part of that work.

Organizations must plan too. Throughout its history, the Washington New Church has formed strategic plans. Plans like moving the congregation out of DC, building a community, and beginning a school. This does not mean WCNJ does not trust that the Lord is leading us. It is this effort to reach the lofty goal of a New Church and New Church Education in this area that the Lord uses to continually bend and bring us to His goal of Heaven for all of us and those we serve.

Recent years of shrinking attendance and the pandemic have put the achieving of many of these goals in question. It is easy to feel like the Washington New Church and School has been a failed experiment or at the very least is no longer viable or near an end.

This past Sunday, we had a dedication of a new woodland worship space up on a hill above the church and school. Pastor Mac in the dedication mentioned that the very spot on the hill was part of a much grander plan that our founders envisioned. They had planned and hoped that someday a new building, a separate church would be built on that hill leaving the entire old building to the school. Seems like a church on the hill was a fantasy. Or was it?

In attendance for the woodland dedication were several long-time members who remember that vision of a church. Was the dedication of some benches and a stone altar in the woods a big disappointment? I can't really speak for them but seeing most of those members walk the trail, join in the service, and share our lunch dedication says to me that they know the Lord's plans are long range, often quite unknown to us and that every step toward our worship of him is part of that plan.

I personally teared up from the lovely service. We work so hard to be the Lord's New Church. Can we accept our own limitations and trust that the Lord has a plan that we may not know? We must continue to share and live what He teaches, even if it is simply in a clearing in the woods. For "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." Gen. 28-16

## *News Notes*

### **NOTED NEWS:**

Notably the autumn season is in full swing, with semi-warm days and semi-cool nights, all in preparation for spending a few hours in the yard raking those colorful leaves that we so enjoyed before their fall. The beauty of October was in full view for the dedication of the outdoor worship center on the hill, constructed by the White Horse Academy students. After church a good-sized crowd attended the delightful ceremony on October 24<sup>th</sup>, a memorable



mostly sunny Sunday afternoon. The stone altar and the rustic benches in an open space amongst the tall trees were a handy substitute for the decades-old but now faded dream of a bricks and mortar structure in that location. Thanks, Academicians!

Also, thanks, farewell, and bon voyage to candidate **Calvin Heinrichs and family Liza and Siegfried**. We enjoyed your time here and trust you will find that you actually learned something useful for your future in the ministry. We did.

### **NOT-SO NEWS:**

We were saddened to hear that **Keith Huntly** is ailing and is in Hospice care. Well-wishers can contact him at 410-708-3729 (cell) or at [huntleykg@gmail.com](mailto:huntleykg@gmail.com). His home address is 10577 Millbrooke Drive, Chestertown 21620.

Also, we were saddened by the news that **Barry Stillman** is in Hospice care. He can be contacted at [barryanderin@verizon.net](mailto:barryanderin@verizon.net).

*Message from Erin* - The Stillman's are daily grateful for all that is being done to support them. The meals, the visits the messages. Thanks to all!

Our condolences to the **Radcliffe family** on the passing of Dorothy Radcliffe's sister **Laura Boolsen**, who died in Frederiksberg, Denmark on October 13th. A memorial service is being held in Glenview on Nov. 12th at 4PM, with Mike Gladish giving the service. She was 93. Laura Gurney was able to be at her aunt's side at her passing.

### **SOUPER NEWS:**

Following the dedication (see above) the good-sized crowd increased its size by means of hand-made soups and breads at a free outdoors lunch at the Church. This was a happy and congenial affair (did I say, "free food"?) sponsored by the Theta Alpha as a reminder of things to come; namely, more "Souper" Sundays. Good company, good food, sunny October weather. What more could one ask for? (Other than free food.)

## **GOOD NEWS:**

**Rev. Michael Ferrell** has a new video available on YouTube at:

<https://youtu.be/dahOR50le5M>

The title is “For God So Loved the World”, and is a song and images based on the Apocalypse. It is nicely and reverently done and recommended as a quiet and peaceful interlude to a busy day.

## **TRAVELING NEWS:**

Taking time off from busy schedules is said to be good for you – it is a “Diversion of Charity” (look it up).

**Bonnie and Dave Cowley** are trying to prove that by periodically taking a few days of "un-planned" vacation - without children or grandchildren - in fact really, without a plan. They call it "driving into the sunset" vacations. Early this October they took two days to just drive up into the central mountains of Pennsylvania to see what Raystown Lake was all about. They took every small road they could find, went through dozens of the prettiest little American towns, had breakfast at an incredibly good Mennonite country kitchen, and saw more Amish and Mennonite buggies than they had ever seen before. They drove up and then down and up and then down again one beautiful mountain after the other, and finally stopped by an orchard to buy fresh Stayman apples. And BTW - Raystown lake was a big disappointment; what is supposedly the largest manmade lake in PA is just a fat meandering river. They had a great time, however. That and an apple a day! This must be good for you.

**James and Jeannette Roscoe** had a wonderful trip to Italy, one year delayed, to celebrate their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. They spent 9 nights in Florence at the Grand Hotel Baglioni, right in the heart of the city, and did day trips to wineries in Tuscany, Sienna, and Cinque Terre. They report that “It was fantastico!”. This was their view each morning at breakfast.

**Janna Zuber** retreated to the mountains of Virginia for a few days at an Art Retreat, presumably to paint the autumn leaves red and gold in them thar mountains.

Showing her versatility, Janna also traveled to Bryn Athyn on Charter Day to attend her (delayed) [& cancelled] 50<sup>th</sup> class reunion.

Not to be outdone, **Mary Cooper** also traveled to BA on the very same Charter Day to attend her (delayed) 65<sup>th</sup> class reunion. Both greatly enjoyed the opportunity to meet with old and older friends and rehash life since the good old days. Mary (and George) recovered by spending a week in the Garrett County mountains watching the leaves become autumnal during the Autumn Glory Festival. (Highly recommended.) Janna recovered by retreating (see above).

### **FUTURISTIC NEWS:**

Watch for the upcoming announcement of **Christmas centerpieces**. We can't say anything more about that yet because we are only at Halloween. But it's coming!

The calendar for November is filling up fast. Look for clues elsewhere in the Echo and online and, well, elsewhere. And don't forget the **fall work party** – another highly recommended activity for all ages (with the possible exception of persons exactly 87 years and 3 months old, but that's under negotiation).

### **RANDOM NON-NEWS:**

*Question of the day:* Could the inventor of the alphabet read?

*Question of the evening:* How many goblets (= kid-sized goblins) did you feed candy to on Halloween? We fed a few, but it was safe to do so – they were all wearing masks. Fortunately, there was enough left over to feed a couple of gobs (= parent-sized goblins).



*Happy Thanksgiving!*

## *November Anniversaries*

*“Conjugal love in its essence is nothing else but the wish of two to be one, or, in other words, a will on their part that their two lives become on life. To carry out that will is the constant endeavor of this love, and all that it does.*

*Emanuel Swedenborg - CL 215*



*Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> ~ Dan & Jeanine Federline ~ 7 yrs.*

*Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Bob & Bea Newkirk ~ 58 yrs.*

*Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> ~ Court & Elaine Lee ~ 48 yrs.*

*Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> ~ Barry & Erin Stillman ~ 26 yrs.*



**Don't  
Forget!!**

**Indoor/Outdoor  
Work Party**  
**Saturday, November  
13<sup>th</sup> @ 8:30 Am**  
**Coffee & snacks**  
***We need all the help we can get!***