

February 2022

ECHO ECHO

Newsletter of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

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## From the Pastor

Anxiety, depression and addiction are all on the rise. Suicide rates have jumped dramatically in recent years, especially with the younger generations, and most dramatically among young girls. Mass violence, amplified by firearms and otherwise, has increased. And the most mundane of civil arguments now seem to inevitably

polarize everyone into teams focused more on defeating the “enemy” than on defending the weak or standing up for what is just.

The modern world is showing frightening symptoms of serious spiritual disease. People increasingly report that they struggle with loneliness, hopelessness, fear, and a lack of purpose. Some of this is driven by the corruption and collapse of traditional religion and the “vastation” (spiritual emptying out) of traditional organized Christianity. Some of it is the result of the impact of social media, and of ever-present instantaneous communication tools.

Smartphones and the Internet are amazing tools that can do a lot of good in the world, as well. And organized religion, when done properly, is a means of salvation, not destruction. We simply need to pick and choose how we use them, and how we develop them.

And we need to get better at not allowing them to be turned toward evil.

*...loving, truth-abiding, spiritual communities, like our own strives to be, can (and should!) be sources of healing for those who lack hope, meaning, and connection.*

These two realms--technology and religion--can do a lot of good for one another, if we choose to shepherd them in that direction. We need to promote a moral and ethical practice in the use of personal communications technologies, amongst ourselves and for the world

around us. What’s more, loving, truth-abiding, spiritual communities, like our own strives to be, can (and should!) be sources of healing for those who lack hope, meaning, and connection. And as we practice the life of religion by embodying the teachings of the Lord’s Word and offering comfort and connection, hope and purpose to those who are suffering, we can use those same technologies that sometimes isolate people and magnify their problems as a means of countering those evil forces.

We as a church community are already doing things that counter the downward pull of postmodernity. But perhaps there is more we can do. I encourage you to set aside some time to ponder how we can be even more a force for good in the world around us. Talk to your friends about this. And let me know what you come up with.

And in all this, remember that the Lord is never absent. When hell seems to be winning in the world, I try to think of the Lord's teaching in *Secrets of Heaven* 840:

As long as our trials continue, we think the Lord is absent, since evil demons disturb us, sometimes to the point where despair almost prevents us from believing God exists at all. But the Lord is closer than we can possibly believe. When the trouble ends, we find comfort, and then we first believe the Lord is present.

Rev. Glenn "Mac" Frazier  
Pastor, Washington New Church  
2022-01-27

## School Report



February is good month to start thinking about school promotions. Word of mouth and our street sign are two ways that new families find WNCS. We welcome help from alumni, parents, grandparents, and community members to spread the word about the Washington New Church School. Many people in the Bowie area are still surprised to find that we have had a school here for over 50 years. You *don't* need to do high pressure sales. Instead, just talk about something that you value in the school and share it with others so that they have more options to consider. We can't take everyone. We have limited slots and capacity. But the more people that know about us and who reach out, the better we can do at finding and welcoming the strong-fit families who would love to receive a WNCS education.

February is also the month when we begin our budgeting process and working out staffing for next year. Our huge news on the

staffing front is that at the end of this school year, Mrs. Maxwell is going to take a much-deserved retirement after 27 years teaching at Washington New Church School (and 29 teaching years total). This is bittersweet for us because Kim has been such an integral part of the team for so long. And yet, after such great service we are also genuinely excited that she gets to move into the retirement phase of life.

Going forward our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> homeroom classroom will be headed by Jordan Brunne, who is just about to graduate from Bryn Athyn College. We are excited to welcome her into the school community and draw on her many talents and interests.

Our tuition for next year will be \$8,260. This is an increase over the current year, but it is actually a lower percentage increase than our rising staff costs. And in turn, though our staff is receiving a significant hike for cost of living, this increase is still actually *less* most measures of inflation. The net result is that the tuition at WNCS is still only about half of the actual cost per student and a lot of generous people work to keep it that way. I add these points of context to emphasize that the board *is* sensitive to the people stretching to pay WNCS tuition.

Let me end on a community note with a (warm) invitation to stop by the Wednesday evening fire circle. This gathering has continued for over a year now through even the coldest weather. It is an opportunity to talk, joke, discuss and generally get to know other community members – in and out of the church and school communities.

Principal,  
Brian Smith

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

The BoT met on January 11, 2022. The monthly topic of Building/Maintenance/Facilities was led by Bill Kunkle and Eric Genzlinger, who reported on a long list of accomplishments, including numerous IT improvements, computer upgrades,

equipment installation, building maintenance projects such as A/C unit replacements, playground improvements, outdoor lighting upgrades, and many maintenance projects. Plans in work include upgrading of the audio system in the nave and roof and window repairs. The Board is deeply appreciative of the untold hours of volunteer time put in by Bill and Eric – thank you both! Sharon Kunkle provided updates to the COVID cleaning protocols and preparations for the return to in-person school. Monthly reports by the Pastor, Treasurer and Principal were followed by recommendations and discussion regarding staffing for the School. The next meeting of the Board will be on Feb 8, with monthly discussion topics on investments, annual budget, and nominating committee.

~ Sharon Cooper, Secretary

### **Who's Got Talent?**

There are always people who love to entertain others and those who love to be entertained. Growing up in a small church community there were lots of opportunities to entertain and to be entertained. When I was a small child my neighbor friends and I would make up elaborate plays (usually about royals and their poor subjects). We would make create elaborate costumes and invite our mothers to tea at one of our homes so we could have an audience. I suspect that the plays were not as entertaining as the opportunity for our mothers to get a break from their somewhat isolated, mundane lives but we were contributing to a sense of community.

Even long before I was born people were often isolated from one another and family. During the depression and war time there was a great need to get news about the world and great need for entertainment. When radio was all there was, a family could gather around to listen to the news from foreign battle fields, catch the most recent episode of Life of Riley or hear Bob Hope entertain their far-flung sons and daughters. Sharing more broadly with others outside their tiny circle had a soothing leveling effect – gave them community.

Humans are no strangers to isolation and have always managed to find ways to have community through entertainment even if it was only the church talent show or campfire sing along.

Fast forward to now. Yes, the church pews are pretty empty as well as the theaters, but the hunger for community has driven an explosion of connection via the Internet. Yes... I know there are lots of bad things about the Internet - I'm sure our grandparents frowned on some of the bawdy entertainment available in their day. But some of it is amazing! Snap Chat, Tic Tok, YouTube and the like have opened up places where people can share their talents. Music, art, cooking, wood working, dance and so much more. And of course, you have the silly stuff... lip syncing, Funny baby videos, farces on the pandemic, virtual teaching and mask wearing and who has not seen a funny cat video. Much of it is amateurish yet people love it, watch it and share it.

We are trying so hard right now to connect in meaningful ways – online church, book discussion groups and the like. But isn't it time we tried something lighter, something fun? How about a virtual talent show? The Washington Society has talent (Ok maybe

not as much as America's Got Talent) but we have artists, musicians, poets, actors, comedians. We could even tap some of our alumni. We certainly have those who would love to connect and enjoy that entertainment.



*If you are with me,* read further in this Echo, watch for emails inviting submissions for your talent, AND put this date on the calendar ~ (see more p. 11)

**WCNJ/WNCS' Got Talent (Virtual) Show, Saturday, February 26<sup>th</sup> [time to be determined].**

Bonnie Cowley

## **TAG Update:**

Not much to mention since much of TAG's work goes on in the background. But we do have a TAG meeting scheduled for Wednesday, February 9 at 7:00pm. This will be a Zoom meeting. You will be sent a link shortly before the meeting.

On the agenda for the meeting: February – We Care cards that go out to our young people in the area and care package collection for our Academy HS and college students, Souper Sunday report and update on who needs sunshine and support (the pandemic has been tough on lots of people). Please join us to support the Washington New Church and School.



## **Announcements**

**Beautiful Books on the Doctrine of the Lord:** The Rev. N. D. Pendleton was bishop of the General Church from 1916 until 1937, and during that time wrote many deep, interesting papers and addresses on the doctrine of the Lord. "Selected Papers" and "The Glorification" are classics of New Church literature worthy of every earnest reader's attention. Though first published in 1938, amazingly, we have hundreds of brand-new copies available, now at the special price of \$7.00 plus postage.

You can order them easily at [www.newchurchbooks.com](http://www.newchurchbooks.com), or, if you wish, anyone visiting BA can pick them up at the Cathedral and schlep them back home for you.

**LITURGIES:** Did you know that the Bryn Athyn Cathedral bookstore now has a new batch of a thousand copies of the blue, 2005 edition of the Liturgy for sale at just \$8 each? To order, see above or call Meg Keegan at 215-947-0266, ext. 4922.

**New Address:** Brad & Christine Johns' new address:  
13815 Dayton Meadows Ct, Dayton, MD 21036. They will be moving on or about Feb 1.

## NEWS NOTES

### Bits of News, Noted

#### *It Must Be February:*



Did anybody else run out of firewood? Did you use up all your electricity? Is fuel oil really expensive? Did you have tree limbs down all over the place? Did a pine tree branch crash down on your power line and put you in the dark for a couple of days? If the answer is yes to any of these, then you are enjoying winter along with the rest of us. It has been a long time since it has been this cold for this long in this area, but at least the Chesapeake Bay has not frozen over. (Yes - I remember when....) Look at the bright side: maybe the cold will kill off some of those pesky summer bugs. And the end of January brings us smack up against February, which means summer is almost here! Well, spring, anyway. And we will be mowing the grass in about six or seven weeks. Life is good!

#### *The Great Escape:*

**Phil and Janna Zuber** got it right: they managed a one-week get away to Puerto Rico - a long planned law firm retreat. They report it was wonderful and felt safer there than they do here with respect to Covid issues. Proof of vaccination was required before entering anywhere, plus masking, plus warm temps - middle 80's every day, plus nice people, plus incredible craft beers! Of course, perfection is hard to acquire: they came home to a water main break and no water in the house. Luckily the bill was on WSSC and they only had 24 hours to contemplate how grateful they are for running water!

As a follow-up to last month's news notes, the Webb telescope has also escaped; it is in orbit around the sun and the hundreds of motors, switches, gears, arms, and levers all performed flawlessly and

the people who designed and built it are now able to breathe. A relative of the News Notes Editor, James Cooper (he is not the owner of the Echo Publishing Company) says it is quite a feeling to watch 12.5 years' worth of work fly away to its new home a million miles away. We suppose it is sort of like watching a child finish school and get a job and start an independent life, hopefully sending back messages and pictures once in a while.



### *Condolences:*

Keith Gordon Huntley, a life-long dedicated New Churchman, passed peacefully into the spiritual world in Centreville, MD, on January 4, 2022, at the tender age of 98. A resurrection service was held at Bryn Athyn Cathedral on January 16, 2022, at 4:00 pm, with Rev. Mike Gladish officiating. Keith attended the Washington New Church when he could for the last 8 or 9 years, but Chestertown is a long commute. Still, he managed to attend occasional services and set up a sound recording system in the new building, editing and sending the services to the GC Sound committee until the new video system was established. Our condolences to his family.

### *Shameless dad plug....*

**Marcellus Smith** and his dad (**Lincoln**) just set up a YouTube channel for his music compositions, which include some computer-generated instruments and some vocals. (He's going by Zeprel on YouTube for privacy :-)) You can listen at the following location:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQNgmnljh7E>

### *A Random Observation:*

Not too long ago **Kai Smith** was wearing a walking boot on his right foot – now it is on his left. Did he forget which foot he broke? Or could it be that he managed to break both feet a few months apart? It's a mystery. But recover soon, Kai.

***Congratulations are in Order:***

We are happy to report that **Christiana Kern** has been promoted to Supervisory Program Manager at U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Congratulations to **Astri Hernandez** on her graduation from the University of Maryland in December with a degree in Psychology. We wish you well in your future in the real world!

Those of you who know **Asher Odhner** (of Westminster, MD) will be happy to know that he has announced his engagement to Clara Bichon. Unfortunately, he will be moving to Pennsylvania where, fortunately, he will be starting a new job. Congratulations to the joyful couple.

***Other News of the good kind:***

We hear on good authority that **Bill & Julia Buick** continue to do well in Towson, where Julia continues to work in tax at Johns Hopkins University and Bill is in his twelfth-year teaching Latin in Baltimore County Public Schools. Jack, 12, is attending Dumbar-ton Middle School and continues to build his skills in art and drawing. Ryan, 10, attends Rogers Forge Elementary School and continues to swim on a team based in the Towson area.

***Grand Finale:***

You all recently received a personalized News Note via email from **Hanna Hyatt** asking for you all to join us in making the Echo a vibrant source of community communications by sharing your joys and adventures. So, what is your news? Let us know and become famous. Or don't you do anything interesting? (We suspect you do.)

*February*

*Anniversaries*

*“With people who are in a state of truly conjugal love, their union of minds increases, and with it their friendship.”*

*~ Emanuel Swedenborg, DL 214*

*~ John & Mary Ellen Kern ~*

*Feb 12<sup>th</sup> • 45 yrs.*



## **Talent Show Ideas:**

- ★ **SINGING**, friends or family group singers
- ★ **PLAY AN INSTRUMENT?** Piano, violin, cello, trumpet, kazoo, accordion, bagpipes.
- ★ **THEATRICAL**, Dramatic reading, do a short scene from a play with a friend or family ... in costume! Perform a monologue, ventriloquism, pantomime.
- ★ **CARNIVAL SKILLS**, Juggling, balancing acts [new skills you learned during the pandemic like balancing a 2 year old on one knee, helping your 4<sup>th</sup> grader with homework while video conferencing with your boss... oh wait that isn't a carnival act.]

- ★ **SLIGHT OF HAND**, card tricks, magic tricks.
- ★ **Comedy**, stand-up, silly skits: Comedic “how to” tutorial: “how not to wear a COVID mask, or bake something. [pretending to be Julia Childs, Bobbie Flay or Guy Fiere]. Impressionism.
- ★ **Art** – do a time lapsed art piece - Join our caricature sketching contest. [Three artists will be given the same photo of a famous person and asked to do a time lapsed sketch of the same person.
- ★ ***Don’t think you have any talent?***  
Lip sync. Put on a wig and mouth (dramatically to the song) “Let it Go” (from Frozen), or “If I were a rich man” from fiddler on the Roof” Or your favorite song.

*So how will this all work?*

**TALENT** will be recorded by either a smart phone or on your computer (you can record yourself on zoom and save it, watch it... do it again and save the one you like. We will provide instruction on how to do this. Or get a gen Zer friend (or grandchild) to show you how.

***Remember – keep it to approximately 3 minutes.***