

February 2023

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Newsletter of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

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## From the Pastor

*Get ready for some computer science history. And bear with me: I have a spiritual point to make at the end.*

Have you ever heard someone talk about “booting up” a computer? This is a term almost as old as computing itself. It refers to a

sequence of steps a computer takes to go from an inert pile of circuitry to a functioning, “computing” machine.

You see, everything a computer does it does by running a set of instructions called a program. But how does it know how to run programs at all? That’s where the operating system comes in. The operating system is a lower-level program that all the application programs run on. It is responsible for managing the computer’s physical resources (memory, storage, input, and output devices, etc.) as well as for executing the instructions within individual application programs.

But before the computer is turned on, the operating system isn’t loaded into memory. This creates something of a circular problem: the operating system is how the computer knows how to run software, but it is also itself a piece of software that needs to be loaded and executed. Effectively, it wakes up to the world like a newborn child, or maybe more aptly like an adult with amnesia. The central processing unit (CPU) has nothing to work with, and so nothing can happen.

To solve this problem, computers have a section of their memory called a “boot block” that stores very simple instructions for loading and then executing the full operating system. Usually, a boot block is the very first “track” in the computer’s memory or storage. (Note: I’m simplifying things here, but this is the gist.) It’s called a “boot” track, and the process of having the computer load its own operating system into its memory is called “booting” because this is short for “bootstrapping”—the act of reaching down, grabbing the straps of your boots (you have straps on your boots, yeah?) and lifting yourself off the ground. Physically impossible, but a cute analogy for what the computer is doing inside its own head.

So...what’s the point in all this? I tell you this because this is also how we access divine truth through the Word.

Really.

According to *Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* (50-61), we need three things to properly perceive divine truth: the science of correspondences, doctrine, and enlightenment.

*Correspondences* help us “decode” the symbolic representations in the literal stories of the Word into higher concepts, like stones into truths, or gold into love. *Enlightenment* is a gift from the Lord that opens our perception in response to our sincere love of truth and life of good according to it. And finally, *doctrine* is instruction, thinking, and synthesis of ideas about what the Word is trying to say to us and how we understand it.

But there’s a catch. According to those same passages, *the Word cannot be understood without doctrine, and yet doctrine must be drawn from and also confirmed by what is written in the literal sense of the Word.* Seems like a closed loop, doesn’t it? So how does the Lord get us around this problem?

*Enlightenment* is a gift from the Lord that opens our perception in response to our sincere love of truth and life of good according to it.

Well, while much of the Word is a collection of stories, genealogies, wild visions, poems, chronologies, and such, it also has here and there throughout simple statements of pure, genuine teaching/doctrine. It can be tricky figuring out what the divine truth is within the story of David numbering the people, for instance, but when the Lord straightforwardly says, “Love the Lord and love your neighbor...upon these hang all the Law and the Prophets”, it doesn’t take any work to see what He means by it.

Some of these “boot block” passages aren’t quite as obvious at first glance, but many are. If you want to see an example of this process of starting with a simple doctrinal statement in the Word and using that to unlock and “boot up” additional doctrine, read through...well...*Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture*. It uses this method extensively to teach us how to read the Word.

So, if you want to perceive real Truth, and you are armed with a knowledge of correspondences and are living a life of charity that the Lord can infill with enlightenment, then you just have to read the Word. But don't forget to boot it up: start with what the Word plainly teaches as doctrine, and then read the rest of it in light of that. As you go, you will discover more and more doctrine, which, if put into action, will lead to more enlightenment, and enrich your life in a never-ending cycle. For eternity.

Truly, the Lord is good.

Rev. Mac Frazier  
January 25, 2023

### *From the Board of Trustees:*

The Board of Trustees met on January 10, 2023. Stewart Smith joined the meeting and participated in a lengthy discussion regarding the project to renovate the front restrooms in the building. Due to added plumbing and infrastructure work, the cost has increased from the original estimates. The Board will continue to consider options and will be seeking additional information and recommendations from the Building Committee, for further discussion at the next meeting. Bill Kunkle was also a guest attendee, and provided an overview of building and IT maintenance activities over the past year, with thanks to Eric Genzlinger and a multitude of volunteers. Rev. Frazier and Rev. Smith provided updates on Church and School activities. The next meeting will be held on February 14 at 7:30, with scheduled topics of investments, budget planning, and nominations for the next year, as well as further discussion of the bathroom renovation project. ~ Sharon Cooper, BoT Secretary

### **TAG Corner**



The Theta Alpha guild is gearing up for the spring and will be meeting **Monday, January 30<sup>th</sup> at 8:00pm** (*this is a new time*) at the church.

On our agenda: TAG spring banquet, valentine's day lunch for the teachers, form a nominating committee for TAG officers, care packages for our ANC and BAC

students, “We Care” cards for our local young adults and away college students who are not at the Bryn Athyn College. [if you know of any students or young adults that we may be forgetting, please contact TAG secretary Anne Ball [agball6262@gmail.com](mailto:agball6262@gmail.com).



“**Souper**” **Sunday** is winding down with our last Sunday sales on February 26<sup>th</sup>. **However**,... February 12<sup>th</sup> [Super Bowl Sunday] is our annual “**CHILI**” **SUNDAY**. We already have lots of chili and cornbread makers. Varieties so far: Meat/Bean Chili, Vegetarian Chili, Mole Chili, slightly spicy bean chili and

meat/bean & Vegetable chili. We will also have cornbread and corn muffins.

**PRE-ORDERS:** You can pre-order your chili and cornbread by emailing [bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch.org](mailto:bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch.org). Delivery will be available within the Bowie/Mitchellville area or pick up at the church. Thanks for participating in this great fundraiser!

## ***Plant Sale:***

The decision has been made!

This year we are having a plant sale (instead of a yard sale) to start raising money to replace our failing playground system. A medium nice one could set us back \$20,000, so here's the plan...



The sale is set for Saturday, April 29, we plan to have plants available for a couple weeks following. The students are already working on planting seeds making charts and labels and arts and crafts are following. We have friends on board to do fund matching, and friends who are on board to help with plant growing. If YOU are able, we need help with advertising, working

on projects with children, starting plants, looking after plants before the sale, set up, concessions, clean up and...you name it! If you have time or skills to offer call Bonnie or Erin, and we will sign you up. Parent hours available too.

Brace yourselves. We also hope that you will get your plants from us this year. Need a lovely hanging basket, planter, or birdhouse? We would love to oblige.

One side note: I have explained that this is an opportunity for selfless giving. There's a high likelihood that our current students will have grown up and left the school by the time we get our new playground. They've been very cute about the idea of doing this for Brenna and Austin's baby, or babies we don't even know about yet. Please help us capture that full \$1,000 Match!

~ Erin Stillman [-barryanderin@verizon.net](mailto:barryanderin@verizon.net)

## Announcements



**" You are invited to sign up for Easter Readings!** Starting February 22nd, daily emails will walk you through the Easter story, providing thoughts and questions to inspire reflection. Accompanying the readings will be weekly online groups where you can share thoughts and insights with others in a relaxed and informal setting. Register at:

[newchurch.org/easter](http://newchurch.org/easter) ~Freya Williams - Engagement Coordinator  
Work: (267)-508-2124



**A New Church Camp for Teens**  
**Held at the Ecology Retreat Centre in Mono, Ontario**

We look forward to welcoming campers from **Saturday, July 8 – Friday, July 14, 2023**. This will be a week of friendship building,

laughter, restorative relaxation, and spiritual growth for teens who will have just completed any year of high school.

After our unfortunate hiatus due to the pandemic, we look forward to at last exploring the theme of **LIGHT**.

*Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life." ~ John 8:12 ~*

Want to register or get more information? Please visit the recently updated [maplecamp.com](http://maplecamp.com) or contact Stephanie Kuhl, Camp Director, at [gcic.mapleleafcamp@gmail.com](mailto:gcic.mapleleafcamp@gmail.com) or 226-929-6075 regarding any questions. Maple has been serving New Church youth since 1969, sponsored by the General Church in Canada and staffed by experienced volunteers.

After GCIC contributions, regular camper fee is \$300, with discounts for early bird registration (before May 1) or for "junior staff" (returning campers finishing high school). A deposit of at least \$50 (\$5 non-refundable) is required with registration and full payment is due by June 16. Financial assistance is available.

### ***GATHERING LEAVES 2023: CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS***

Gathering Leaves, the international retreat for Swedenborgian, New Church women, will be held at the Lord's New Church in Bryn Athyn, 24-27 August 2023. The theme for 2023 is "Delighting in Spiritual Variety." If you want to give a presentation or workshop, or organize an activity, please contact Amy (Dwyer) Glenn at [amydwyer08@gmail.com](mailto:amydwyer08@gmail.com) by 14 Feb. 2023.

While attending in person may not be possible for all, our hope in sharing this globally is also to let New Church congregations around the world know that we are intending to record some of the presentations to be able to share more widely after the event. Please don't hesitate to let me know if you have any questions!

~ Amy Dwyer Glenn

## News Notes

### It's February – But We Will Manage

The New Year sure started off with a bang – or even quite a few of them in Acton Park, with all sorts of best wishes showering down as bits of colorful light in the small hours of the morning. These bits of light were noisy reminders that it was time to get rid of the old year's worth of stuff and to get going with all those well-meant resolutions. OK – now that January is out of the way you must have completed all those resolutions. So how did that work out?

We send our condolences to our friends on the Wet Coast, who have had their own apocalypse in the past few months, with earthquakes, fire, wind, rain, thunder and lightning, floods, more rain, mud slides and overall disaster wreaking havoc. The only thing they missed was brimstone. They will be happy to see February since not as much can happen in such a short month.

### **Mixed Blessings:**

Hurray! The school year is more than halfway over! Aargh – there is still half a year to go! Oh no, the school year is almost over. Take your pick.

Spring garden catalogues are starting to arrive. And it is almost time to start digging up the garden and checking the lawn mower. *[See p.5 if you divide some bulbs you can donate to the plant sale.]*

If you notice some right-handed letters missing from these Notes, it was caused by the **Editor's** loss of right-hand dexterity due to carpal tunneling, and then being surgically untunneled, or some such thing. The missing letters have been replaced by left-handed letters pending recovery. Pre-surgery pain has been replaced by post-surgery pain, which meets the definition of a mixed blessing. It is reported that so far recovery is theoretical.

### **Condolences:**

We were sorry to hear that long-time Society member **Dean Boyce** passed away in early January. Our condolences to his family.



Although it is not Autumn, January seems to have become fall month for some of us, including **Nancy Alford**, who fell and ended up in the hospital with a fractured hip, and **James Cooper** who unintentionally went down a flight of stairs and ended up in the same hospital with a severely herniated L5/S1 disc in his back, with microdiscectomy in his future. Nancy says: "I am now home and have received some delicious meals. They are very much appreciated! It will be 6 weeks before I can put weight on my right leg (from Jan 9), and I can't get rehab until Feb 6. So, I'm doing a lot of reading and watching TV. Thanks also for your visits - I really enjoy them."

Following this trend, **Lisa Buss** (Mrs. Bishop Peter, Sr.) also fell and broke her leg, with weeks of no-weight recovery ahead.

We wish them all speedy recoveries (if 6 weeks is speedy). And it hasn't even snowed yet! Be careful out there.

### **Good News is Available Here:**

Snow drops are in bloom already!



Starting on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the General Church will offer a special "Daily Readings" email program leading up to Easter. The readings will include brief passages from The Word and from the Writings accompanied by short commentaries. You can subscribe at: [NewChurch.org](http://NewChurch.org). On that site you look for successive pages: Get answers, Holidays, Easter, and easter reading program. It is a good way to start your day. See P.6

### **A Word from Our Pun-dit, Ogden Nash:**

"I am happy I heard the cockney postmaster say to a doctor who was returning a leprechaun to Gloccamora in an open envelope, Physician, seal thy h'elf."

## *February Anniversaries*



*“Love combined with friendship continues on after the wedding and is strengthened. ...a friendship which differs greatly from that of any other love, because it is a full one.” Emanuel Swedenborg, CL 214*

*Feb 12<sup>th</sup> ~ John & Mary Ellen Kern ~ 46 yrs.*



As I look back on my life, I realize that every time I thought I was being rejected from something good, I was actually being re-directed to something better. ~ Steve Maraboli

*Happy February!*