

April 2023

ECHO ECHO

Newsletter of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

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## From the Pastor

Whenever something goes in the opposite direction that one expects there is always the temptation to try to "get back to zero". For instance, when people buy a stock which then goes down, there is a well-established phenomenon in which, as the price approaches the point at which many people bought it, a wave of sales happens which quickly pushes the price back down below

that original entry price. This is because people who bought the stock—and who are now thinking irrationally—become desperate to prove to themselves that their mistake was "not really a mistake" by coming out of the deal at the same place they entered it. A more rational approach would be to recognize the mistake, sell at a loss, and move on.

This can be seen more generally in what is sometimes called the "sunk costs fallacy". Imagine you've already invested a lot of time and effort into some project, but as time goes on, it becomes more and more clear that the project is not succeeding. Now, there are two ways of evaluating your situation: 1) you can reason that you already invested so much into the project, that it would be a waste to abandon it, or 2) you can ask yourself, "If I were to start fresh on this project today, with the information I have now, would I start it?" The logical and rational approach is the second one, but we become emotionally invested in our past efforts and so tend to be naturally inclined towards the first. This can lead to a dangerous cycle sometimes called an "escalation of commitment", in which you throw "good money after bad", digging yourself in deeper and deeper with no hope of escape beyond the (now impossible) success of the project.

This is not just an economic or psychological phenomenon; we can apply our understanding of this to matters of spiritual importance, too. Consider that we are all being constantly held in perfect spiritual equilibrium, as it says in *True Christian Religion*:

“This spiritual equilibrium or free choice can be illustrated by earthly examples of equilibrium. It is like the equilibrium experienced by a person tied around the waist or arms between two men of equal strength. The person in the middle is pulled by one man to the right and by the other to the left. In that situation the person in the middle is able freely to pull to one side or the other as if not constrained by any force at all.” (TCR 478:1)

Every single moment of your life, there are spiritual forces – both heavenly and hellish — exerting a constant influence on you. When you make a choice, whether for good or evil, both of those

forces move with you in that choice. If you take a step toward hell, then the angels will take one step along with you, ready to draw you back. This means that, while your past is not meaningless, your focus really should always be on your present moment. Each moment is its own brand new starting point — in every moment you are at zero with regard to your next decision.

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So don't fall into the trap of thinking that just because you have already gone down a certain path, you're doomed to continue on that path. No matter what mistakes you've made in life, you are always at the cusp of a decision that can reverse your direction. The amount of force the Lord permits hell to exert on you does not change, nor does the amount

of assistance the angels are ready to give you, no matter where you are on your path of life. All that matters is your next choice.

Will your next step be one towards heaven, or one towards hell? Forget about your past steps; just focus on this very next one, on this singular moment. The Lord, through His angels and His creation, will do the rest. You never need to "get back to zero" before improving. You are always at zero. So, make your next choice. ~Mac Frazier, Pastor

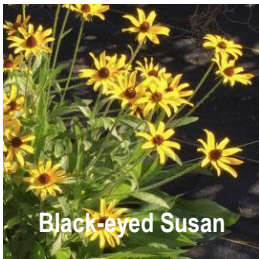
### **Good Friday and Easter**

**Friday, April 7<sup>h</sup> at 8:00pm** – will be an adult in-person only Holy Supper/Good Friday service (no virtual).

**Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am** - will have a family festival Easter service. The congregation is encouraged to bring flower offerings for a procession during the 1<sup>st</sup> hymn of cut flowers or potted plants.



**Recommendations of Easter Flower Offerings:** Every year for Easter we have a tradition of bringing flowers to the Church as an offertory. **The Landscape Committee** would like to continue to improve the church landscape and perhaps do some additional new plantings in places like the wet and muddy ‘Nile’ as the kids and teachers like to call it. Here is a short list of some plants that could be planted in the “rain” garden: Goats Beard, Joe Pye Weed, Swamp Milkweed, Turtle Head, Forget-me-nots, Cardinal flower, Blue Lobelia, Rain Lilies, Dog Tooth Lilies or Camasses.



For our sunny beds along the building Maryland native plants are the best -. This is not an exhaustive list, just some ideas, and if you have any of these in your own garden you could feel free to divide them and donate that way too! See this link for examples.

*(<https://extension.umd.edu/resource/recommended-native-plants-maryland>)*

**From the Board of Trustees:**

The Board met on March 14 for our regular monthly meeting. Topics included a lengthy discussion about the school, including staffing, marketing, and needs. The monthly topic was grounds, and it is expected that there will be a work party at the Church in May. Other discussions related to the renovation project, grant request, repairs and maintenance, and a report on the Investment Committee. The annual Society meeting is upcoming, including elections to the Board of Trustees and School Board. If anyone is willing to serve in either of these roles, please contact the Pastors or any member of the board. The April meeting will be held on April 11, and is a joint meeting with the School Board.

~ Sharon Cooper - Secretary, WCNJ, Inc.

## Announcements

**Two New Books on Spiritual Practice:** Two recent books on spiritual practice by Erik Buss are available on Amazon. They explore how to become more loving people and offer the practical activities we should be engaging in to be happier and more peaceful. There are two versions of this work, both of them full of quotes and footnotes so you can clearly see what revelation teaches. *Walking the Path* is a shorter (128 page) treatment, focusing on the practical applications of these practices. *Exploring the Path* (298 pages) delves deeper into why these things are important as well as spending more time on some practical applications. The easiest way to find it on Amazon is to search for Erik J Buss. And as an extra bonus, Amazon is currently selling the shorter for less than half price!

Erik Buss,

Colchester New Church, [erikjbuss@gmail.com](mailto:erikjbuss@gmail.com)

### **TAG Corner:**

Thank so a consortium of cooks – Anne Ball, Mary Cooper, Bonnie Cowley & Kathy Johns – along with guest speaker, voice over artist, Brad Hyland, the annual spring banquet was a real success.

Next TAG meeting: **May 8<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00pm at the Church.**

### **More Church Summer Camps**

**Jacob's Creek Family Retreat 2023:** Theme: "Creation: Behold! I Make All Things New"

The dates for the retreat are **July 27 to the 30<sup>th</sup>** – please be aware that is Thursday to Sunday!

Please keep in mind that registration will be capped at 150 people and the cost of the retreat goes up \$25 **per person** after June 30<sup>th</sup> ~ <https://www.jacobscreekfamilyretreat.org/>

Andrea Cranch ~ [abcbranch@cranchlandscapers.com](mailto:abcbranch@cranchlandscapers.com)

**Maple Leaf: A New Church Camp for Teens:** Held at the Ecology Retreat Centre in Mono, Ontario **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 (grades 9 -12).**

**Laurel Family Camp:** July 30 – August 5<sup>th</sup> at Laurel Hill State Park. [www.laurelcamp.org](http://www.laurelcamp.org). Theme: Sacred Fire.

For more information about these and the many other church camps, please check the lobby bulletin board or email [bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch.org](mailto:bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch.org) for details.

### *GOOD NEWS NOTES (MOSTLY):*

#### **Questions to shatter the earth:**

- If everything blossomed in March, will we have April?
- Was setting the clocks ahead a great leap forward?
- Anybody know what a Carpal Tunnel really is? And why it has a syndrome?

#### **Good News:**

We are pleased to see **Nancy Alford** up and about, and without walker or cane! We hear that spring is also recovery time for others who recently have undergone painful procedures, and we wish them all well.

And what a pleasure to see **Rev. Michael Ferrell** back in the pulpit after many years of trips to hospitals and clinics as he fights an epic battle with an illness that keeps finding new ways to attack him.

#### **Good Food:**

How great was it to go back to the olden days, with real live banquets? Thanks, Theta Alpha and hard-working cooks and cleaners-uppers for arranging and orchestrating this for all those lucky enough to be able to attend. And thanks to Brad Johns for his

entertaining and thoughtful talk about the joy in finding a career that is more than a job but is a use that you love doing.

### Good Visits:

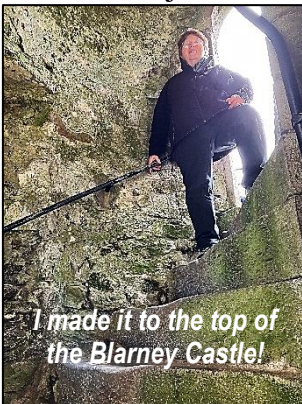


Many of you will remember **Nina Rabani, now Martin**, who was a student at WNCs many years (well, actually decades) ago. She now lives in Orlando but after visiting NASA Goddard for her work she decided to drop by and see her old school, to the delight of old friends and former teachers. Nina says, “My WNCs years were a precious part of my happiest childhood memories.... WNCs was a strong part of four

formative years in my life - from grade 5 through grade 8 - and I profoundly appreciate all the blessings my time there bestowed upon my life.” It was great to see you again, Nina!

### Good Travels:

**Bonnie Cowley** reports that over spring break she went on “the 10-day trip of my life”. As a 70th birthday present from her children she received a trip to Ireland! She says: “ I had always wanted to go to Ireland since my grandfather emigrated from Ireland to Canada when he was just 18 years old. My sister Becky went with me, which meant I got to reacquaint myself with her after having lived apart for 35 years. It is hard to share such a wonderful adventure in just a few words. This trip was a tour - so all of our



hotels, transportation, itinerary and most meals were pre-planned. We had a fabulous tour guide who not only was a native expert on all things Irish but took the time to get to know all 11 of us on the tour. His deep love for his country was clear in everything he did. He spoke with a lovely but understandable Irish brogue (unless he was speaking Gaelic, which he was fluent in). He wanted all of us with Irish heritage to really get to know our ancestral homeland and its

history. We traveled from Dublin down along the southern coast along the Celtic Sea, up along the west coast along the Atlantic to Galway and back across to Dublin. We toured cathedrals, mansions, villages & towns, and several castles (yes, I did climb to the top of Blarney Castle but did not kiss the Blarney Stone). We ate in lots of pubs and as a Scotch drinker I have recently been converted to an Irish whiskey drinker.

I can't thank my family enough for this trip!"

**Yolanda Carbajal** , whose daughter Nayeli attends WNCS, reports that their family took a much-needed trip to California for Spring break. She reports, "It has been 2 years since we have spent quality time with our family. We had a great family cookout and just hung out. I was able to go into the office for a day to visit with some of my coworkers. But a big highlight of our trip was when Nayeli and her niece Ellie were able to spend the day together at the happiest place on earth: Disneyland! Nayeli was living her best life!! Lol She met a few of her favorite Disney characters and we ended the night by watching the Disney parade. Magical moment! We are hoping to make another trip out there sometime again this year. Family is everything!"

**Brad Johns** traveled to Atlanta for a big (800 voice over artists) conference. He was a presenter for two of his own sessions and served on a marketing panel. He is currently working on a job for a General Church teachers' course. If anyone would like to hear some of his voice-over work, you can go to [AmericanVoicepower.com](http://AmericanVoicepower.com) and listen. He really enjoyed talking about his career at the Theta Alpha Banquet.

### **Not-So-Good News:**

**Gale W. Smith**, uncle to the **Stewart and Aaron Smith** families of Acton Park as well as former Acton Parkers **Matthew and Chris Smith** and families, passed into the spiritual world on Friday, February 24, 2023. He was 84 years old. A memorial service was held at Bryn Athyn Cathedral on Saturday, March 18, 2023, at 3:00 pm. Rev. Jeremy Simons officiated. Our condolences to the Smith families.



We were sorry to hear that both **John and JeanAllen** managed to end up in hospital and subsequent treatment regimens at the same time, repeating bouts of the same illnesses that have plagued them before. Jean sends the following message: “Some people appear when you need them most. They love you and lift you up, reminding you of the best, even when you are at the worst. These people are not just friends, they are earth angels.’ ~ Author unknown ~. John and I want to thank all our earth angels for the outpouring of kindness shown to us. The many cards, meals, bread, preserves, and homemade goodies have been a blessing. Most of all, thank you for your prayers.” We wish them speedy recoveries.

### **In Between (Regional) News:**

Those who reside in the Acton Park/Church area might (should?) be interested in the upcoming public hearing at the County Planning Board concerning proposed zoning map amendments. The changes under consideration primarily concern commercial and University areas along Rtes. 197 and 301. The hearing will be on Tuesday, May 9, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. Details can be found at:

<https://www.mncppc.org/3390/Bowie-Mitchellville-and-Vicinity-Master->

This is a rescheduling of a postponed meeting.

### **Fowl News:**

Acton Park residents – or at least two of them – spotted a very large wild turkey of the winged type skittering around in the shrubbery in their back yard. It is hoped that it will be well fed between now and November.

## **Plants for Playground:**

### **It's time to sign up for the Plant Sale!**

Tear this page out – fill it in and drop it (send it to the school office or email Erin Stillman your wishes to buy or help! [barryanderin@verizon.net](mailto:barryanderin@verizon.net)).

# PLANT SALE

Sat., April 29<sup>th</sup>  
8:00am  
~ ~ ~

Washington New Church  
& School  
11914 Chantilly Lane  
Mitchellville, MD 20721



Win a Hydrangea

Questions?  
301-464-5602



Vegetables  
Herbs  
Crafts    Flowers  
Food    House plants  
Raffle    Flower pots

If you can give us a rough guess of what you might like to buy, we will do our best to have it on hand the day of the sale.

We have literally hundreds of plants that local friends have started, and Patuxent Nursery is giving us a discount on all plants.

Approximate cost will be:

Small pots 2"-5" - \$5

Medium pots 1 gal - \$10

Large pots and very special plants \$20

**Please circle what you might like:**

## We will have:

Lots of veggies  
Tomatoes all sizes.  
and colors  
Cucumbers  
Peppers  
Herbs

Flowers for sun  
and shade  
Perennials  
Annuals  
Shrubs  
Azaleas and Peonies  
House plants

## **How You Can Help?**

*name:* \_\_\_\_\_ I can help with

- Food Making**
- Prepping and selling food the day of**
- Plant people for heavy work or potting plants**
- Plant People for sales and giving advice.**
- Cashiers**

**Time I am Available** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thanks!**

**The Team**

**Questions? Call Erin Stillman 301.801.3905**

**Reminder:**

- There is a two for one match in play for the first \$1,000. Your dollar becomes \$3.
- Don't need plants? Swing by the for baked goods, breakfast and/or lunch.
  - You can purchase a planter, or have your plants repotted while you wait.

***Please return form or email Erin by Friday April 7<sup>th</sup>.***



## *April Anniversaries*

*“In the marriage of one man with one woman who are in conjugal love, the wife becomes more and more a wife, and the husband becomes more and more a husband.”*

*Emanuel Swedenborg - CL 200*



*Apr. 13<sup>th</sup> ~ John & Sharon Croft ~ 27 yrs.*

*Apr. 16<sup>th</sup> ~ Pam & Andy Cooper ~ 33 yrs.*

*Apr. 20<sup>th</sup> ~ Curt & Wanda Moore ~ 32 yrs.*

