

March 2024

ECHO ECHO

Newsletter of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

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## From the Pastor - Updating Our School's Mission

*[The following is an updated version of what I presented at our society meeting in January.]*

### The Next Phase for WNCS

As we embark on a new year, it's time to reflect and set a renewed vision for the Washington New Church School. The past several

months have been a journey of engaging with our church community, understanding our needs, and re-envisioning the future of our school.

Our school was originally established with a specific mission: to educate the children of New Church families, under a curriculum informed by the Heavenly Doctrines. However, over time, this mission has evolved. Today, while we continue to serve our church families, we predominantly educate students from outside our church society. This shift, though gradual, signifies a change in our focus and mission.

There are compelling reasons for our church society to focus on providing New Church education more broadly. While there is no doctrinal mandate for a New Church society to operate a school, or for such schools to serve families beyond the church's membership, doing so aligns with the broader mission of our church. This expansion of our school's mission is not just acceptable; it's desirable.

*The direction we choose will significantly influence our hiring decisions and the school's overall trajectory.*

We are at a critical juncture with significant faculty and staff turnover. This phase presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Before making new hires, it's imperative to have a clear direction and scope for the school's future. The direction we choose will significantly influence our hiring decisions and the school's overall trajectory.

Over the past months, I've engaged in numerous one-on-one conversations, discussions with our faculty, the Board of Trustees, the School Board, the Pastor's Council, and various people around the wider General Church. These discussions, along with feedback from my Echo articles and sermon series, have been invaluable in shaping Brian's and my understanding and approach.

So now I am sharing a new, updated vision for our school, more in line with our current reality and needs. This vision is not born in isolation but is a result of ongoing dialogues with faculty, staff, various boards, committees, and, most importantly, our church community.

Together, we can ensure that our school not only continues to operate but thrives as a beacon of New Church education.

Our school is not just an educational institution; it is a manifestation of our church's mission and values. As such, your input, support, and assent, as members of the church, are crucial.

I invite each of you to be an active part of this journey. Your perspectives, ideas, and feedback are not just welcome, but essential. Together, we can

ensure that our school not only continues to operate but thrives as a beacon of New Church education, aligned with our church's mission and values.

## **A Vision for Our School**

At the heart of my vision for the Washington New Church School is a deep-seated commitment to serve not just our immediate community, but the Lord's Kingdom as a whole. In a world rife with challenges and moral complexities, our school's role transcends traditional academic goals. We are not just educating children; we are preparing future spiritual adults to contribute positively to addressing the challenges of this world, grounded in New Church truths and values.

Our shift in focus marks a significant transformation from the goal of evangelizing our children to a broader, more inclusive mission. While many of our students may not formally adopt the New Church as their religion, the seeds of New Church doctrines and values we plant in their minds and hearts will have a lasting impact. This approach represents a form of spiritual planting, where the ideals and teachings of the New Church are subtly yet powerfully woven into the broader fabric of society.

In line with our church's commission to provide people with connection, meaning, and purpose, our educational philosophy is anchored in the belief that every child is a spiritual being, destined for a life of charity, faith, and good works. By intertwining spiritual and secular education, we aim to cultivate individuals who are not only intellectually competent but also spiritually loving, wise, and use oriented.

Our curriculum must continue to foster an understanding of spiritual truths, guiding students to develop a love of learning and truth, along with a love of serving others. And above all this, we must continue to teach about the Lord and foster a love for him. This approach ensures that even if our students choose different religious paths, the spiritual principles, and values they absorb here will continue to influence their perspectives and actions, contributing to a life of purpose and service, and giving them more options as they face hard and important decisions as adults.

This vision encompasses the nurturing of future spiritual “peacemakers” – individuals who, equipped with the wisdom and values of the New Church, will play pivotal roles in addressing the world’s complexities. We are preparing students not just for worldly success, but for spiritual contribution, aligning their talents and capacities with the Lord’s grand design for humanity. Truly, our school is not something we primarily operate to serve ourselves, our students, or our students’ families. It exists for the sake of the larger world.

As we go forward, I see our school as an integral part of the church's mission – that extends beyond the confines of our immediate community to the vast expanse of the Lord's kingdom. In educating our students, we are not merely imparting knowledge; we are providing spiritual potential to immortal souls, instilling in them the seeds of divine truth and good that will bear fruit in myriad ways over the course of time. This vision is not just an educational strategy; it is a spiritual calling, aligning our efforts with the Lord's plan for a world in need of spiritual enlightenment and love: in short, a world seeking connection, meaning, and purpose.

## **The New Mission**

With the above vision in mind, I am directing Brian and our faculty to carry out the following mission on behalf of our church:

*To support parents in nurturing the spiritual, moral, and intellectual development of their children, using a New Church curriculum taught by New Church teachers.*

By instilling in our students the values of love, wisdom, and useful endeavor, supported by an excellent secular education, we strive to prepare them to become successful adult contributors to a global society in need of connection, meaning, and purpose. In so doing, we strive to serve the Lord God Jesus Christ, who is the source of all love and all wisdom.

## Going Forward

This mission is based on input from all of you. It is based on doctrine. It is based on careful considerations—of myself as your pastor, and also that of Brian, our assistant pastor and your school principal—taking into account what will work with our given resources, our current market environment, the talents and potential of our staff, and our understanding of the relevant doctrines.

What's more, this is not really a radical departure from what we have been doing already. But now we are formalizing it and clarifying it so that everyone can be clear and on the same page.

At our society meeting in January of this year, I heard general affirmation from all present in favor of the vision I described. There are some of you who see potential challenges in committing to an all New Church faculty going forward. I want to acknowledge that those challenges are very real. This part of the mission indeed makes Brian's and my task harder. But I firmly believe, as I have outlined in past articles and sermons, that while anyone can be trained to teach New Church doctrines at some basic level, it takes someone who has been actively embracing New Church values and striving to live them to transmit a New Church *culture* to the next generation.

So that shrinks our pool of potential hires for future faculty positions. So be it. It just means that it is vital that we continue to work to find creative ways of finding and/or helping to create more New Church educators, not just on our own but also in partnership with the General Church.

## Conclusion

We are not a school. We are a church that *operates* a school as *one* of its programs. But it is an important program with which we can

do a lot of good for the Lord's kingdom. I believe that this vision and mission for our school is in harmonious alignment with not only the purpose and mission of the Washington New Church, but with the divinely mandated charge given to all churches to provide for the presence of the Lord in the world by means of His Word, and by embodying His love and His wisdom in a community dedicated to His uses. What we are doing here is far more important than merely teaching children reading, writing, and arithmetic. We are helping to build the Lord's future kingdom. And that's a pretty exciting venture that I am grateful to be able to contribute to alongside all of you, the church. May the Lord bless our efforts and guide us all as we do our best to serve Him.

Rev. Glenn "Mac" Frazier  
Pastor, Washington New Church

*From the Board of Trustees:*

The Board met for our regular monthly meeting on February 13. Regular reports were provided by the Pastor and Principal. The monthly topic was the Investment Committee, with George Cooper reporting that the committee met with the investment advisor in February, and that the fund is overall doing very well. The advisor will make a few adjustments to the portfolio based on performance. The board spent some time discussing the recent Society meeting, with the School Board planning to further review and discuss feedback received. The Board will be forming a Nominating Committee for the upcoming May Annual meeting, where Trustees and School Board members will be elected. Anyone who is interested in serving on either of the Boards should contact the Pastors or any board member. With many thanks to Kathy Johns and Stewart Smith, we can report that the renovation of the front bathrooms will begin – soon! The Pastor also expressed appreciation to Aubrey Hernandez for volunteering to lead the musical Coffee House, which was a smashing success on Feb. 24.

The next meeting of the Board will be March 12, and the monthly topic will be Grounds/Acton Park.

~ Sharon Cooper - Secretary, WCNJ, Inc.

## **Acton Park, our Treasure**

*By Bonnie Cowley*

In just a few weeks [Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup> right after church] Acton Park will be holding its annual corporation meeting. At this meeting, all attendees will be updated on the recent happening with Acton Park – the solar field update, By-laws updates, among other business and elections for the 3 board members to fill the next 3-year term.

Of course, you plan on attending that meeting, right? ... oh, you are not a member of the Acton Park Corporation, and you don't live in Acton Park so why should you? The facts are that you do not have to live in Acton Park to become a member, you only need to be a member of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem to be a member of Acton Park Corp. As far as I can tell, only about 40% of Washington Society members are actually signed members of AP Corp. Why is that?

A few years after the Church purchased this land and moved here to form a community, the church realized that, as a nonprofit, they needed a taxable corporation to manage developing and selling land. It was formed completely separate from the Washington Church, however, only members of the church could be members of the corporation or sit on the Board of Directors thus protecting this asset for future use by the church.

For the last 60 years Acton Park has worked hard to develop and sell lots as well as maintain the green spaces that were to be reserved for society use... the soccer field, the wetland and nature trails and the unsold land. Hard working elected volunteer board members kept up with the finances – the taxes, the lot sales, and the often-complex work with the County to develop the land.

Over the years the common areas like the soccer field and nature trail were used regularly by the society, not just Acton Park residents. When I moved here 37 years ago there was a regular Sunday soccer game after church. New Church Days, Independence Days and sometimes Labor Days brought large picnics, complete with softball, horseshoes, volleyball etc. At the time I thought it was so

nice for Acton Park to host these events and because I lived closer to the city not Acton Park, I did not realize then that as a member of the Washington Society I could become a member of the Acton Park Corp.

This nearly 84 acres of land is extremely valuable! An incredible future asset for the church that you belong to, an insurance policy for the future. Sure, it has been many years since we have been able to do more than map out a few new lots. The vision of a larger community of New Church homes and some quads has yet to materialize. But land rarely loses its value. Besides, the common areas alone are a real treasure.



Do you realize that there is a mile or more of trails that have been created and maintained by volunteers throughout the woodlands that snake around the upland portion of a protected wetland - a 100-year flood plain which includes a branch of the Patuxent River that eventually flows into the Chesapeake Bay? There is also a lovely meditative worship center on the hill built by the school, and lots of woods to explore where you can see deer, tur-

keys, red tailed hawks, beavers and so much more. Nesting Piliated Woodpeckers are sighted regularly and even bald eagles on occasion, not to mention a variety of songbirds. This land belongs to all of the Washington Society not just Acton Park (though AP manages it). We need more than just the few people who love these woods to enjoy them and also to care for and protect them as well.

You are welcome to this annual meeting [Even if you are not a member]. Take some time out to listen and learn about “the State of the Park.” Or consider becoming a member of Acton Park as well. And if you’ve never walked Acton Park trails... give it a try. Or drop me an email and I will give you a tour.



## Announcements



### **Job Description: *Full-Time Teacher, Mixed Responsibilities***

Washington New Church School (WNCS) is seeking applications for a teaching position which will comprise various duties across all our K-8<sup>th</sup> classrooms for the 2024/25 school year.

This position will include duties in multiple different subjects and age groups as well as the flexibility to teach with other teachers.

***Responsibilities:*** The exact duties will be determined through a negotiation between the applicant's interests, abilities and WNCS specific needs but likely duties include kindergarten aide, Grades 1-8<sup>th</sup> PE, Grade 3& 4 art, 7-8<sup>th</sup> grammar and geography, 5<sup>th</sup> grade math. All teaching responsibilities include prep and planning, managing student behavior, record keeping, assessments and communications with families and other faculty.

### **Personal and Professional Requirements:**

- Love of students
- Knowledge of New Church Educational principles
- Baptized in the New Church
- Active Participant in the Organized New Church
- Ability to collaborate with other teachers, parents, and community groups.
- Commitment to marriage as defined in the Word and Heavenly Doctrines
- Strong classroom management skills
- Bachelor's degree

### **Helpful Experience and Skills:**

- Conventional classroom teaching
- Strong written, oral communication skills
- Strong interpersonal/networking skills
- Firm and friendly boundary setting and classroom management ability.
- Strong organization and follow through.

- Specialization in any of the following: PE, art, performing arts and math.

Please submit resumes and/or questions by March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, to:

Brian Smith, Principal - [brian.smith@washnewchurch.org](mailto:brian.smith@washnewchurch.org)  
 301-850-3029 (cell), 301-464-5602 (office)  
 11914 Chantilly Ln, Mitchellville, MD. 20721

## General Church Assembly – June 27 – 30, 2024,



**Gather and Grow at the 2024 Assembly:** You are warmly invited to a summer gathering for adults, both young and seasoned, as well as teens and children, to remind us of what draws us together: the messages we have been given from the Word, and

our efforts to lead lives of devotion to them.

More information is on our lobby bulletin board or go to this website: [www.gcassembly2024.org](http://www.gcassembly2024.org) for info. And registration.

**Your Input Wanted: What does having a relationship with the Lord mean to you?** In the 1st plenary at the General Church Assembly in June we will hear from people around the New Church talking about what having a relationship with the Lord means to them. In order to do that, the minister facilitating the plenary (Malcolm Smith) has put together a survey to collect people's input. The survey includes questions like “What daily, weekly, or yearly practices do you do to connect with the Lord?” “How has your relationship with the Lord changed and evolved over the course of your life so far?” “How have other people played a role in your evolving relationship with the Lord? What have people done that has felt useful or not useful?” Find the survey at [gcassembly2024.org/survey](http://gcassembly2024.org/survey). Read through the survey and pick one or two questions to respond to. It will be a great help. Thanks!

**Acton Park Corporation Meeting Notice:** The annual meeting of the Acton Park Corporation will be held after church (12:15) Sunday, March 10, 2024.



## Theta Alpha Guild Banquet

You are cordially invited to the Theta Alpha spring banquet! Join us on Saturday, March 16th at 7 pm to enjoy dinner with friends followed by a presentation with Greg Henderson, who is currently Assistant Coordinator of New Church Schools. Here is what he says he will talk about – **“Why is New Church Education Special?”** A summary look at nine aspects of New Church education which help shape its unique approach including quotes from the Heavenly Doctrines, leaders of New Church educational philosophy, teachers, and parents as well as photos from our eleven General Church schools.

Tickets will be \$12/adult, \$8/student with advance reservations and \$15 & \$10 at the door. Contact Bonnie to reserve!

## Jacob’s Creek Family Retreat July 25 – 28, 2024

*“Charity: The First  
of the Church”*



This is a very popular family camp – it takes place at the Laurelville Retreat Center in the beautiful Laurel Highlands in Pennsylvania.

For more information pick up a brochure in our lobby or go to their camp website: [jacobscreekfamilyretreat.org](http://jacobscreekfamilyretreat.org) no computer? Call 412-788-2710.



**Plant Sale:** Dear Friends, The Plant Sale will be upon us before we know it – Saturday, May 4, 2024. We are hoping to beat last year, and I think that is very possible. Our nursery sponsors are back again this year. Homestead Gardens is providing us with a raffle plant, and Patuxent Nurseries is giving us our plants at wholesale rates.

The students plan to have a craft table and are starting seeds even as we speak.

We may have a guest speaker. We have a grant application in To Glencairn Foundation...we will see...

I am continuing to look for people who are interested in offering a match. Even a small match is very helpful.

I am still looking for lots of helpers as well. The date is May 4th, but there's a list of things that can be done beforehand. We especially need man hours for signage. Yolanda Wallace has kindly offered to be in charge of concessions again. She will need help both before and on the day of the plant sale.

Lincois Anderson is returning to man the potting and planter station. He will need help too, as do people in sales to help load plants and anyone who might have an interest in finding sponsors. I am hoping to get more donations this year as well.

We need actual "Stuff" too: Plants, garden tools, planters, pots, baskets, sectional plastic fence pieces, plant tags, stakes, tomato cages, iron plant stands or holders. garden statues, bags of potting soil... ESPECIALLY POTS! Our pots did very well last year, and I would love to have people scour their sheds and local yard sales for good deals. I find it helps a lot to tell people that you are raising money for a playground. Deals are to be made when you pull the "For the Children" card.

~ Erin J. Stillman

**A New Church Camp for Teens  
Held at the Ecology Retreat Centre  
in Mono, Ontario  
July 5 –July 11, 2024.**



Our theme this year is HOPE: *"You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your Word."* Psalm 119:114

To register or get more information? visit [maplecamp.com](http://maplecamp.com) or contact **Stephanie Kuhl, Camp Director**, regarding any questions at [gcic.mapleleafcamp@gmail.com](mailto:gcic.mapleleafcamp@gmail.com).

Maple has been serving New Church youth since 1969; it is sponsored by the General Church in Canada and is staffed by experienced volunteers.

## Spring is Nigh News

The snowflakes are gone,  
But the snowdrops have riz.  
Now I wonder  
Where the daffodils iz.

By Fortu Nately Anonymous

Sixty-degree weather in February was good for the utility bills, but sort of blurred the difference between winter and spring. We hardly had a chance to use our cross-country skis, and now it's almost time to gas up the lawn mower. But there are compensations, like pollen allergies and muddy boots. So, get out the lawn chairs and enjoy the sun.

Another sign of spring: the foundation for a traffic signal has been completed. Soon a pole will be sprouting and overhanging the Chantilly Lane and Enterprise Road intersection and red-yellow-green fruits will be dangling overhead to control our lives a bit more. But in a good way, one hopes.

### Message Time:

Did you know that there is such a thing as an **Investment Committee** for the Washington Society? It is made up of unsung heroes who keep watch over the expansion and occasional contraction of the Society's investments by meeting once a year or so to discuss esoteric financial stuff with a financial advisor and to make actual decisions. So, is this news? It shouldn't be. But what it is, is an opportunity to remind everyone (as in "you") that the committee needs to have investments to commit, and that the approaching end of the Society's fiscal year provides another really great time to add to those investments so as to keep the committee busy. This is easily done by writing a check to the Society Treasurer, identifying it as being for the investment fund. Thanks!

### Newsy Stuff:

It turns out that the All-Purpose room (formerly known as the "supper room") makes a really great "**Coffee House at Washington New Church,**" and if you missed it that's a shame.

Last month's edition featured music by three talented musicians: **Grayson Zuber, Reade McCardell, and Ethan Daum**, who kept us well entertained between bouts of majestic deserts overflowing with calories, and marvelously crafted coffees of various kinds and flavors. Grayson is our own locally grown guitarist. Reade is an amazing musician and singer who has treated us with his home-made songs for many years. And Ethan was known as the head of the amazing music program for the church in Austin, many years ago. Thanks to Aubrey Hernandez for arranging and hosting this, and we hope this will happen again before too long (in spite of the hard work required).

We are saddened at the sudden demise of "Souper Sundays" for this season. They were really successful and popular, but it turned out that the last one of the year had to be "Chili Sunday" (otherwise known as Super Bowl Sunday) because of crowded calendars by those doing the work. Many thanks to all who so faithfully participated, and we look forward to a restart in the fall.

- *We hear rumors that the restroom remodeling project is still alive.*
- *Did you notice the new banner at the top of Chantilly Lane? It is being overwhelmed by the traffic light project at present but will soon be visible in all its glory.*

### **You Are Invited:**

**Kay Caldwell** writes that she will be having a "one woman" art show from March 4 through March 25 at the Shenandoah Lodge, location of the Regions 117 Restaurant, 180 Bald Eagle Drive, Lake Frederick, VA 22630. You are welcome to attend her opening reception on Thursday, March 7, from 4:00 to 7:00.



### **Congratulations:**

To **Sophie Hyatt**, who has been admitted to Salisbury University's honors college, and will start there in the fall.

And to **Erika (Hyatt) and Patrick Linehan**: 1st child Bjorn Cedric, born on February 2, 2024.

### **Condolences:**

And get-well-quick wishes to the several, or even many, folks who have succumbed to winter woes in the form of Covid, Flu, and worse, and who found uncertain footing leading to broken bones. Spring brings better-feeling times, we hope.



### *March Anniversaries*

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

*~ Emanuel Swedenborg CL 214 ~*



*Mar. 12<sup>th</sup> ~ Bill & Dorothy Radcliffe ~ 64 yrs.*

*Mar. 15<sup>th</sup> ~ John & Jean Allen ~ 55 yrs.*

*Mar. 30<sup>th</sup> ~ Aaron & Eva Smith ~ 28 yrs.*



