

June 2024

ECHO ECHO

Newsletter of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

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## From the Pastor

So, let me tell you the first half of the dumbest joke I've ever made up:

“When I was a kid, I always wanted to own a monkey. I thought owning a monkey would be the greatest thing in the world. Along with all the obvious benefits of owning

a monkey, one of the nice things is that you would then have somebody else to blame all of your dumb activities on. ‘No, Mom, it was the monkey that dumped the Legos all over the floor.’ ‘It was the monkey that ate the cookies.’ ‘It was the monkey that stole your credit card and ordered the pizza.’”



There's more to it. I'm going to stop it there, though, because the reason I'm sharing this joke is to illustrate a concept that you find in comedy writing called the Rule of Three. Basically, the idea is that the way a lot of comedy works, particularly joke writing, is you set up an expectation, and then the punchline is something that forces the listener to reevaluate their assumptions derived from that expectation.

The longer the setup and the longer the distance the audience has to travel to get to that punchline, the weaker the joke, generally speaking. The shortest distance you can go to create a true expectation is two steps. With one step, who knows where it's going? Once you have two steps, you can draw a line between them and say, "Aha, we have a pattern. I can predict where the third point on this graph is going to go." But then the third step, instead of being where it's expected, shows up somewhere else, which causes people to say, "Oh, wait a minute, that's not what I expected." That sudden disjoint from reality causes laughter, or so the theory goes.

Now, the reason I shared that with you is that I wanted to share my favorite example of a kind of “metajoke.” Ready?

“Three hockey fans—a Capitals fan, a Flyers fan, and a Penguins fan—are walking along a cliffside and arguing about which of them is the most dedicated fan. The Capitals fan, to prove their love of Washington, shout, "ALL CAPS!" and dives off the cliff to their death. The Flyers fan shouts, "LET'S GO FLYERS!" and shoves the Penguins fan off the cliff.”

That's the whole joke.

What I love about this joke (besides the demise of the Caps and Penguins fans) is that it subverts the Rule of Three. It sets up an expectation (based on your experience with lots of jokes that follow the Rule of Three) that you are going to have three people each do something, with the third one being the funny one. But you never get to the third person because the third person, the Penguins fan, is already dead by the time their part of the joke comes up. That's hilarious. (In my opinion.)

Why am I sharing this with you? Well, this makes me think about a useful activity in life, which is to try to find what the normal pattern would be if you charted out your life, and then subvert it.

Look at the pattern of your life. Look at where you've been. Look at where you are now. Then draw a line between those two points. Now ask yourself: "Where are things headed, based on where I've come from and where I am right now?" Then decide: Are you going to let that pattern just continue? Or are you going to subvert it in some way?

*Secrets of Heaven*, after noting that angels don't really focus on—let alone worry about—the past or the future, makes this interesting statement:

But although angels have no care about things of the past and are not worried about those of the future, they nevertheless have a most perfect recollection of things of the past and a most perfect insight into those of the future... (n. 2493)

I imagine that an angel's superior insight into the future comes in part from the clarity of their thinking and their wisdom when living purely in the present. Because they can see and think so clearly, their memory of the past and understanding of the present allow them to see patterns in their lives.

But why would an angel ever need such an ability, if they are never anxious or even particularly focused on the future? Well, consider this, also from *Secrets of Heaven*:

Rebirth is continual because we start regenerating but never stop. We are constantly being perfected not only

while we live in the world, but also in the other life forever. Yet we can never arrive at such perfection that we can be compared to the Divine. (n. 8326)

What a statement! “We start regenerating but *never stop*”! The Lord is good!

But back to our topic (if this meander can be said to have “a topic”): I suspect that angels are given superior insight into the future for the sake of their regeneration. To cooperate with the Lord’s continual perfecting of their minds, angels must from time to time be examining “where they are headed” so that they can change course, even if only by small amounts.

So, look at your past and present, with an eye to what sort of future you are building with your current habits of thought and behavior. Not to be anxious about the future, but in order to break bad patterns. And write good punchlines.

Rev. Glenn “Mac” Frazier, Pastor  
Washington New Church, 2024-05-31

**The Annual Meeting of the Washington Society** is scheduled for June 14, 2024, at 8:00 PM. The purpose of the meeting is to hold elections for the Board of Trustees and the School Board and hear reports from the Boards and committees of the Boards.

A meal will be provided beginning at 7:00pm.

~ Sharon Cooper, WCNJ Secretary

*From the Board of Trustees:*

The Board met for its monthly meeting on May 14. Beside discussions on normal business, special topics included a discussion led by Bill Kunkle on planning for the upcoming Society budget, which will be presented at the Annual Meeting in June, and a discussion with Phil Zuber on a draft Statement of

Relationship between the Washington Society and the General Church. This document has been circulating for a while, and the Board took the action to schedule additional meetings to further study and discuss, and also engage the membership. A brief presentation on this topic is also planned for the Annual Meeting.

The Annual Meeting of the Washington Society will be held on June 14, 2024. Updates on business, election of Board members, and approval of the Society budget for Fiscal Year 24-25 are primary topics.

~Sharon Cooper, Secretary, WCNJ, Inc.



**New Church Day BBQ:** Mac is at it again...On the actual New Church Day, Wednesday **June 19<sup>th</sup>** we will be gathering together at **4:00 p.m.** for a potluck picnic. A time to gather as a community, to share in the warmth of fellowship, and to have

fun together as a community. And yes, Mac will again be providing an abundance of smoked barbecue. [Is this a tradition now??]

You are also encouraged to bring a food offering. Vegetable dishes, sides, drinks, and desserts are especially welcome, but more meat entrees are good, too! Thus, we will be sending out a “Perfect Potluck” via email so you can sign up and let us know – 1. If you are coming and 2. What you can bring to share.

### **Acton Park**

In last month’s article about Acton Park Woodland Use, I mentioned the work that David Radcliffe has been doing to upgrade the trails. I also noted that he said that two of our bridges over the wetland streams were in need of desperate repair.

Since then, I got an offer from David Stebbing (our long distant member who lives in Ashville, NC) that he would help foot the cost of materials for a group of us to replace or renew these bridges. Thank you, David Stebbing!

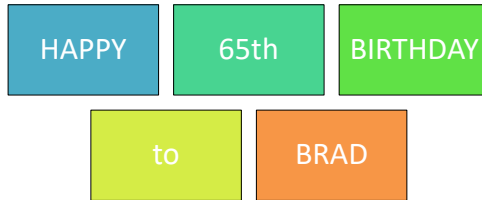
Now we need a few of us to get together to design, obtain the materials and replace/fix these bridges. If you are at all interested in either the design and or construction party, please contact me – Bonnie Cowley



[\[bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch.org\]](mailto:bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch.org). I hope we can get these built over the summer.

## Announcements

No July 4th celebration at Stillman's this year, due to prepping for renovations. Shall I/we plan something fun at the church? Call me if you are willing to plan with me ~ Erin J. Stillman 301.801.3905



## 2024 Time to Celebrate BRAD!

Reaching out to all friends who have crossed his path in the last 64 years. We would love to have you come to our Open House at our new home in Highland, MD.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 15 Any time between 3pm & ??**

Food & drinks all day – Celebration at 7:00 p.m. Say a few words or share a poem, make some new friends, play some games & have fun visiting.

Please RSVP to Kathy @ [kcjswim@aol.com](mailto:kcjswim@aol.com) so we can adequately feed and hydrate you. If you can't make it, Brad would love to hear from you. [brad@americanvoicepower.com](mailto:brad@americanvoicepower.com).

7021 Mink Hollow Road, Highland, MD 20777

## NEWS THAT HAS BEEN NOTED:

*(My) work shall not be wholly lost: it will, I believe, appear once more, in a new & more perfect Edition, corrected and amended by the Author. (Benjamin Franklin)*

It is graduation season and watching all these accomplished young people walking across their respective stages (yes, the stages of life passing before our eyes) reminds us that we, too, are moving along. Hopefully all this motion represents progress; otherwise, it is just wasted effort. So, enjoy June and remember that you are halfway through the year and your New Year's resolutions are still waiting for you.

### **Reminders that time flies:**

**Noel Klippenstein** reports that after 32.5 years teaching and 30 years coaching, including 22 years as head basketball coach and 3 as head volleyball coach and including 27 years serving Fairfax County Public Schools, she is retiring. She will be moving back to Missouri once everything settles down and will work part time developing and presenting Health and Physical Education material. Congratulations, Noel!

It was a big month in the **Croft** family! On May 17<sup>th</sup>, **Anders** walked across the stage at the Georgetown University commencement ceremony. Although he won't finish earning his Master's of Science in Environment and Sustainability Management until July, the University only holds commencement once per year, so after celebrating, he went back to class. Then, on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, **Ivan** graduated from UMBC (University of Maryland, Baltimore County) with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in the Visual Arts program, Cum Laude, with a concentration in animation. His senior project was a 3D animated character. Ivan actually *is* finished and will continue his internship at the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) for the summer. Congratulations to all authorized personnel!



Anders and Ivan's famous cousin, **Meghan Cooper**, in order to keep this graduation business balanced, walked across the graduation stage at Washington College (In Chestertown, MD) on May 19<sup>th</sup>, even though she actually graduated last December. It seems that Washington College also only has one commencement ceremony per year, so she had to wait for her share of applause.

**And we keep on moving along:**

The Community BBQ on May 19<sup>th</sup> was one day late but a huge success. The originally scheduled Saturday date was full of falling water (it rained 6 weekends in a row!) but Sunday was a perfect date to be outside enjoying sunshine, conversation, companionship,



volleyball, running around, sitting around, and also eating parts and pieces of the copious amount of delicious

food. Thanks to the planners, the purveyors, and the attendees. It was a great start to a summer that is to be filled with outdoor activities.

Speaking of rain – the plant sale was hugely successful even though it occurred on one of those damp days. But plants need watering, so it was OK, and a good time was had by all.

It was nice to see the kids – and chaperones - from the Oak Arbor school. We trust they will visit again one of these days.

In a previous Echo we mentioned that our school kids were building some benches. Well, one has been completed, and two are in the process. Take a look at the completed bench by the trees along the edge of the playground.



The **Phil Zubers** were happy to have Janna's sister **Karen and Steve Delue** visit for 5 days earlier this May. They got the Delues' stamp of approval on their new home. They also had a brief visit with son Devin as he passed through the area on his way to Swedenborg Foundation meetings.

The **Cowley/Hernandez clan** had a great 50th birthday party/picnic for **Avi's 50<sup>th</sup>**. Attending from out of town were **Charles, Angela, and Vivian Radcliffe, Will Cowley and daughter Maisey**, and Avi's mom (who arrived the day before from Honduras to visit for a few months). Also attending were Avi's nephew and his family plus several other friends of the family.

Though it was a hot, sunny day, the lovely shady picnic grove down at the soccer field was breezy and pleasant. Even a rousing soccer game failed to produce signs of heat stroke. (Why is it we rarely use that wonderful field and picnic grove?)

**Hanna Hyatt** reports that she took her kids to see the Blue Angels fly in Annapolis for the Naval Academy graduation. Besides the excitement of seeing these jets roaring down the Severn River, she said the excursion "was full of very sweet moments. Lila and Hugo were sitting in chairs on the beach while I made sure that Ruthie didn't go up to her chin in the water (read: she DID go up to her chin in the water)". If you haven't seen this aerial display, you should try it.

Be sure to check out the school yearbook. And Bonnie might be able to tell you how to get one.

And by the way – don't forget to tell everybody in sight about our unique school. We have it to provide kids with a great religious education, but they can only take part if they know about it.

And don't forget to attend the Society annual meeting on June 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **Health Reports:**

We are saddened that **Carina Heinrichs** has had to take a medical leave from her teaching at WNCS. She is staying with her parents

in Florida until she recovers. Get well soon, Carina - we miss you already.

And **Bob Newkirk** is back home from a week or so at Johns Hopkins Hospital, bringing with him a few extra parts and pieces for his heart to ensure continued operational vim and vinegar. Get well quick, Bob, and tell us how that vinegar works out.

**Kira Zuber Jenkins** is still on crutches as she recovers from breaking her left foot. 3 weeks so far on crutches and 3 more to go. Someday maybe she might laugh over this challenge.

Did you know that there is a nasty summer cold attacking unsuspecting people? We have discovered that the rumor is true. Take care!

### **Close Call:**

**Bonnie Cowley** reports that she received a frightening text while locked in as an election judge this past primary election. The message? "Your granddaughter, Ariela has been in a bad auto accident on the PA turnpike." Though it took a while to get all the scoop it was a huge relief to find out that even though a semi-truck and 4 other vehicles were involved and the sedan that they were driving looked like no one could have survived, **Ariela** and her friend **Ben** were Ok. Ben suffered only a mild concussion and Ariela a concussion and a badly beaten leg - no broken bones! It was a miracle they both are still with us. Thanks to crash dummies.



## *June Anniversaries*

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*“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 ~*

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*June 10<sup>th</sup> ~ David & Heather Radcliffe ~ 29 yrs.*

*June 21<sup>st</sup> ~ David & Amy Glenn ~ 39 yrs.*

*June 25 ~ Brian & Janine Smith ~ 18 yrs.*

*June 27<sup>th</sup> ~ Derek & Hanna Hyatt ~ 9 yrs.*

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