

February 2025

ECHO

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Newsletter of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

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## From the Pastor

“The only reason for time is so that everything doesn’t happen at once.”

- Albert Einstein, probably

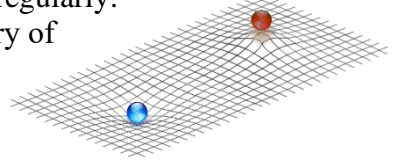
January seems to me to have lasted several months, and then suddenly ended in a rush. That’s weird, I know. But it’s how things

felt. Maybe it was the intense cold. Or the lack of sunlight. Something seemed to warp my perception of it all as it trudged forward. I've heard others say the same, so if I'm crazy, it's a popular form of crazy.

Our perception of time is quite malleable. It gets twisted and stretched, compressed, and cut short, depending on our internal states. It's almost as if *real* time is a measure of the spiritual engagement of our intellect, and not a fixed pulse of the physical universe. Imagine that.

Right up there with inconvenient aspects of the universe alongside time is, of course, space. Get in your car to go to work and you will find yourself in a sea of people grumpily trying to get to some different position in space than the one they started in. And at the same time, you will notice many other people leaving where you are going and trying to get to where you have just come from. Can't we all just find a good spot and stay there? But no, life requires that we adjust our location quite regularly.

Again, it's almost as if the very geometry of space itself is, on a fundamental level, actually a measure of our internal states. Specifically, where we are physically has some correlation with where we are regarding our goals, our desires, and our affections.



Weird, huh?

Anyway, as I write this, I am experiencing an extreme challenge of space and time. I have too many things to do in too short a span of hours, and too many places that want me to be there all at once. Perhaps if we could decouple space from time this sort of scheduling challenge would never happen. If only there were a place where our internal states and our external circumstances weren't so often in conflict. Hmm...

I hope you are having a good time in whatever space you find yourself in. February can be hard, but thankfully it's short. Stay warm, love one another, read the Word, and keep striving to be useful. The Lord is in charge and things really do work out in the

long arc of things. He’s also in the finest detail of everything, so don’t forget to look for him right where you are, at whatever moment you find yourself in.

Divine providence focuses on our eternal state at every step of our journey. It cannot focus on anything else because Divinity is infinite and eternal, and what is infinite or eternal or divine is not in time. It therefore sees the whole future as present. Since this is the nature of Divinity, it follows that there is something eternal in everything it does, overall and in detail. People who think in terms of time and space find this hard to grasp...

### **From the Principal**



Happy February from WNCS! It’s hard to imagine that February is anyone’s favorite month, but surely it must be for someone. For school, it is the start of the second semester.

This year, it will also be the start of preparation for the school play, with a performance on April 11<sup>th</sup>. Other dates to look forward to including: the school choir at church on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, the plant sale on April 26 and the School-community BBQ on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

I’m pleased to announce that our teacher search was successful. Jana Sprinkle has accepted our full-time teaching job starting next year. We are excited to welcome her back, and grateful that she already knows WNCS like the back of her hand. Jana’s focus will be the first and second grade classroom, but she will also have a small portion of her time given to support our marketing and admissions efforts. She begins this work in a part-time capacity this spring.

To address WNCS’s low enrollment, we are working to systematically review and improve our marketing efforts. We have delegated specific roles and areas of focus to “captains” in the hope the more of the details will be successfully tracked and executed. This approach also makes it easier to make use of people willing to help with specific projects. Let me know if you’d like to help and want to hear a catalog of activities where we could use you.

We hold the view that our target radius (about 10 miles) still include many families who are a strong fit for WNCS but who either don't yet know that we exist or don't yet have a clear picture of the value we offer - a spiritually-guided, family oriented, learning environment. It is this lack of knowledge that we hope to address with a more consistent, thorough marketing effort.

That said, I talk with some of our peer schools at school expos, and many are reporting that they too are facing enrollment challenges. I don't know the reasons for these structural challenges that are facing many private schools in this area. The county has seen a decline in the total number of school-aged children so perhaps this is starting to be felt by the schools. Regardless of the reasons for the enrollment challenges, we want to be confident that all families in our area know that we exist and have a positive, clear view of how a WNCS education could powerfully support their goals.

Our primary method for finding strong-fit families is word of mouth, especially from current parents. To this end, we are increasing the tuition benefit awarded to families who make a successful referral. 2025/26 tuition is \$9,700 and each student successfully referred reduces tuition for the year by \$1000.

Our hope is that the opportunity for cash keeps families focused, but that love for the WNCS experience is what inspires them to easily and authentically invite friends to take a tour. One of the things I like to highlight to new families is how incredibly dedicated the teachers are. Teacher morale is an important measure to consider when school shopping. I am daily blown away by the mutual respect and support among our staff and their love and focus on the work they do. This makes me a happy parent – pleased with quality of education my children are receiving.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name, possibly "Brian Smith".

***From the Board of Trustees***

The Board met for its monthly meeting on January 14, 2025. Normal business discussed, including a financial report reflecting lower contributions compared to last year. Rev. Brian Smith reported on the status of the school, including his efforts to recruit

volunteers for specific tasks related to the marketing of the school. Brian shared his thoughts and comments on the deeply felt loss of our former teacher Carina Heinrichs and reflected on Carina's impact. Staffing planning continues for the coming school year. A small committee was formed for the submission of grant requests for various church and school needs. Planning for the Winter Society meeting was a topic of discussion, and topics deferred to the next meeting were Building and Facilities, and the Building Use Policy.

Thirty-two members of the Washington New Church corporation along with some participants of the Congregation gathered on January 24, 2025, for the Winter Meeting of the Society. The sole topic was a presentation and discussion of the Relationship Statement which has been developed by the General Church, with a request for input from the congregation prior to a vote on whether to approve and sign the document planned for the Meeting in May.

~ Sharon Cooper

Secretary, WCNJ, Inc,

## **Letters of Thanks**

*Dear Washington New Church Community,*

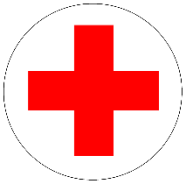
*We want to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who helped us navigate a very challenging 6 months. Your cards, meal delivery service, and other support are very much appreciated. Amanda Hyatt deserves special recognition for organizing the meal program. We also thank Janna Z., Sharon K. & Mom for the deliveries AND everyone who prepared those wonderful meals! Your cards (and gift cards) have also made us feel cared-for and supported.*

*Melissa is slowly recovering her strength and cognition after several months of difficult cancer treatments and multiple hospital stays. We are still dealing with complex side effects from ongoing chemotherapy and many associated*

*medications, but the cancer is controlled so we are focused on keeping an upward trajectory. Thank you all again, and we pray for a joyful 2025 for us all!*

*With great gratefulness ~ Melissa, James, Meghan & Ryan Cooper*

[To Jeannette Roscoe regarding our January 20<sup>th</sup> blood drive.]



“The Red Cross would like to sincerely thank you and Washington New Church for hosting an amazing blood drive!

With a goal of eighteen we collected thirty-five units. A total of thirty-six donors registered and three were deferred. We also registered twelve first time donors! Outstanding results for a first-time blood drive!

A few things to note:

\* First and foremost, I'd like to apologize again for the long wait-times and the fact that we had to turn a few donors away (including yourself). This is not ideal at all; however, we were extremely short staffed for most of the day with only three staff members and by the time we got a team supervisor to show up to help we were already extremely behind. This drive (technically) should have had five staff members, which would've allowed the operations to flow much smoother.

\* Since you exceeded the goal by far, we'll increase the goal for your next drive which will allow us to open even more appointment slots and get more staff members.

Otherwise, yesterday was amazing and we look forward to the opportunity to partner again Thursday, June 19, 2025.

Regards, - Sherman Roy  
Account Manager II | Donor Recruitment  
American Red Cross Blood Services

## Announcements

### “Chili” Sunday Coming to You on Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>:

Along with our fall and winter “Souper” Sundays, the Theta Alpha Guild has a “Chili” Sunday on Super Bowl Sunday. We gear up our makers and bakers to provide a variety of Chili (beef & bean, vegetarian, chicken, spicy etc.) and cornbread (muffins, skillet, Jalapeño or pan bread) for us to sell. Since many of you plan Super Bowl parties, we are happy to take “pre-orders” of chili and cornbread. You can pre-order and we will do our best to have the chili and bread available Saturday February 8 for pickup or at least in time for you to pick it up after Sunday services February 9<sup>th</sup>.



Contact Bonnie Cowley – [bonnie.cowley@washnew](mailto:bonnie.cowley@washnew) church or 301-518-3628 to place your order of type and quantity of chili.

**Dessert and Hors d’oeuvres Contest:** Close to 25 years ago, Brent and Amanda Hyatt started the Annual Dessert and Hors d’oeuvres Contest not only as a fundraiser to help fund our 2014 addition but also as a great social get together.



We have had a few years without this tradition, but it is finally back again! **Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> begins at 7pm** at Brent & Amanda’s house. To enter the contest, just bring your special hors d’oeuvres and/or dessert. If you just want to enjoy the fun, bring a snack to share and come join us! BYOB. College age and up!

### *News Notes:*

Our first – and most important news is that you are stuck with the News Notes written by a less professional and less entertaining News Notes Editor (Me). But I will fumble along. ~ Bonnie

***A Celebration for Carina*** – On January 4<sup>th</sup>, a memorial celebration was held linking two societies of the New Church. The memorial service for Carina Heinrichs was held at Boynton Beach New Church, in Florida, the original home for Carina. At the same

time, the Washington New Church and School held a service in the sanctuary streaming the service directly from Boynton Beach, because twelve of Carina's brief years were spent in Washington as a very beloved teacher and friend.

Pastor Chris Barber officiated the service calling out to the special connection our two societies have as we all watched the service together. Our sanctuary was filled with not only society members but also families who attended WNCS.

Following the service in Washington we held our own reception in the multipurpose room complete with food to share and a special time for anyone who wished to share how Carina touched their lives and their children's lives. A recording was made of these shared recollections and given to Carina's parents.

**Condolences – George Cooper** is spending a little time in the hospital due to a bout of pneumonia that made it difficult for him to breathe [fine excuse to get out of the February News Notes.] Mary says he hopes to come home soon. Hope you heal quickly.

I'm sorry to report Jeannette's and my dear brother **David Alden** passed away on January 20<sup>th</sup> of a heart attack. He was 73 years old. His memorial service was held on Monday January 27<sup>th</sup> at the Pittsburgh New Church. The church was packed with family and friends from all over the country. He is survived by his wife Janet, four adult children – Burgandy Smith, John Kelley, Briggs Alden & Kim Kelly, several grandchildren, and a great grandchild. Jeannette and I were lucky to spend this sad time with all our remaining 10 siblings except Rev. Glenn Alden who is pastor in Buccleuch South Africa and not able to attend.

**Another passing** - We are just hearing that our friend and member of the Washington New Church, **James (Jim) Karl Needer** has passed into the spiritual world at the age of sixty-four after a battle with heart disease.

Jim grew up living in Acton Park and was in the very first classes at the Washington New Church School, opening in September 1970. He was also in the 1<sup>st</sup> WNCS class to graduate from 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Jim is survived by his sisters Nancy, Linda, Ellen, brother



Jay and several nephews and a niece, and great nieces and nephews and two great great nephews.

Services for Jim will be held at the Washington New Church, February 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm, with an open reception at Jason Smith's home -13845 Willoughby Road, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772.

**Replacements** – Andy Cooper writes, “Pam Cooper just had a successful replacement of knee #2 with our friend Dr. King at AAMC. She should be moving more comfortably soon.”

**Travel - Brad and Kathy Johns** spent about two weeks



exploring Costa Rica. They went sport fishing and took every possible nature tour to see tropical birds, sloths & monkeys. They fed a jaguar & patted a Puma- through bars. All captured on Kathy's phone since Brad's phone took a dive in the Pacific Ocean. You can still have a fabulous time without a phone in your hand.

**A Little Travel and a Misshap** – From Hanna Hyatt, “my only news (other than a wisdom tooth surgery for me, yuck, and a very fun work trip to Seattle for **Derek** so that he could see the Microsoft campus) is that **Lila** broke her foot sledding during the snow days! She rode our feisty, speedy pink sled right into a tree. So now she is rocking a boot for the next few weeks until it heals. She (mostly) likes it. Enough to say “because I have a broken foot” as a reason for why she can't clean up her crafts before dinner time. Hugo loves that joke. (Just kidding. He hates it.)

The kids all still talk fondly of sledding, so no long term harm done there. :) “

**Retirement - Air Croft** – Cleared for departure!

When my dad was well into his seventies, he would often tell us kids that he still wasn't sure what he wanted to be when he grew up. We just rolled our eyes—seniors don't have those kinds of doubts, do they?

I'm happy to report that this apple didn't fall too far from the wanderlust tree. After four different careers over more than four decades, I decided in November at the age of 64 to launch yet another profession—the one that starts with an 'R'.

As of January 21, I'm now enjoying the fruits of a government pension plus social security and taking up a bit of part-time work of my choosing – flight instructing, writing, construction manager (for a multitude of house projects), with a side order of public service and whatever else tickles my fancy.

I'm grateful to my father and my mother, who both insisted back in 1978—despite my strenuous objections—that I don't skip college. Being in school and working toward an aerospace engineering degree ultimately led to my first career, as a guidance and controls engineer at NASA, and the fateful encounter in the mid-1990s with a certain eye-catching mechanical engineer, with whom I became smitten (still am today). Her dowry was this amazing religion that I'm now proud to call my own.... I thank Sharon for the support that enabled me in 2000 to transition into Career #2—aerospace journalist—which I enjoyed for about 20 years, traveling all over the world in all kinds of aerial contraptions.

In the late 2010s, it eventually occurred to me that it would probably be a good idea to have a plan for retirement and being that I had not much of a plan at the time, getting back into government service was quite enticing. I thank my friend Dave Hughes (a former boss of mine at Aviation Week & Space Technology magazine) for helping me score a job with the Federal Aviation Administration in 2017, where I started as a writer, then transitioned to career #3—speechwriter (I wrote for three different FAA Administrators and Deputy Administrators from 2019-2022)—and then in 2022, career #4—aviation safety analyst. It's been quite the adventure so far—and I look forward to the new horizons to come! – John Croft

**Mark Your  
Calendars  
For the**

**Annual Dessert and hors  
d'oeuvres Contest**

**Saturday February 22<sup>nd</sup>  
7:00pm**

**At the home of Brent  
& Amanda Hyatt**

**College Age and Up**

*Bring a dish to enter the contest or  
just bring something to share [BYOB]*



*February Anniversaries*

*Feb 12<sup>th</sup> ~ John & Mary Ellen Kern ~ 48 yrs.*

*"When friendship and mutual trust join together  
with the first love in marriage,  
conjugal love results."*

*Emanuel Swedenborg, CL 162*

