

March 2025

ECHO

**Newsletter of the
Washington Church of the New Jerusalem**

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## From the Pastor

I just got back from a quick round-trip by car to Pennsylvania. My daughter's college spring break has just begun and she's spending it at home with us here in Maryland. It's about a three-hour trip, plus or minus thirty minutes (depending on traffic, weather, and

giant container ships ramming into things), and while driving I got to thinking about how I use these sorts of “down” times.

By downtime, here I mean times when I have lots of extra mental cycles to spend that aren't needed for the task at hand. Driving familiar routes, physically exercising (as in running, skating, biking, not playing a sport like hockey), mowing the lawn, folding laundry, doing other repetitive chores—these are all things that with experience one can do while thinking about other things. And there are a lot of different ways to use your mind.

Some might say, “But why do you need to think about anything at all? Just enjoy the time.” See, I can't do that. I know there are some that do, but I've never been able to just “turn off.” I often wonder what sunbathers are thinking about if they're not just falling asleep and getting burnt. This makes falling asleep in bed challenging, because just lying there and waiting for unconsciousness feels weird and foreign to me. I almost always read a book until sleepiness pummels me into putting the book away at last.

But you can't always read a book. It's not a good idea to read a novel while driving 65 miles per hour on the highway, for instance. (Although, when I was getting my MDiv, I taught myself to read a book while speedwalking so I could get outdoor exercise while doing the massive amounts of reading homework I had. This led to some interesting random conversations with strangers, but that's the topic for a different article altogether...)

For times when not only my hands but also my eyes need to be on-task, music is a good thing to focus on. But I can only go so long just listening to music without more to think about. Some music gives you more to ponder, of course, but usually I end up using the music as background for other mental activities. Sometimes I do early drafts of sermon outlines in my head while driving, with or without music. Or think through worrisome problems.

More often than music, I turn to the recorded spoken word. News radio and talk radio years ago, and podcasts and the occasional audiobook, now, have been my favorite mental activity while driving. I've learned a lot on solo road trips this way.

Driving up to PA, I was all alone. But on the return trip I had my young adult daughter with me, and we ended up talking the entire time. Talking with another human being—especially with one who is really smart, creative, and fun and whom you love—is an excellent way to engage the mind when you’re stuck sitting in a car anyway. And we talked about all sorts of things, some important and some not, and it was all great.

But I want to go back to what to do when you’re alone. Sometimes I find the best thing to do is to turn off the radio, pause the podcast, close Spotify, and just think in silence. It can be extremely useful to use a three-hour time alone in a car to work through stuff. Look at yourself. Do some self-examining, some praying, and yeah, some repenting. Or to make plans. To assess projects. To take stock of where you are in life.

But I resist this. Why? Why is it so much easier to play music, listen to a podcast, or talk to another human being—if not in person, then on the phone? Part of it (not all of it) for me is that when I am totally alone with my thoughts, with no extra mental input, I don’t always like what comes up. It’s hard to ignore your flaws and mistakes and worries and regrets when there is nothing external to focus on. When it’s just you in the car, it’s hard to escape...well, YOU.

*But it doesn't have to be uncomfortable... if you make a routine of quiet reflection the territory becomes familiar.*

But it doesn’t have to be uncomfortable. Experience has demonstrated to me what the Word teaches and what teachers of meditation techniques have often confirmed: it gets easier. The longer I go without times of serious quiet reflection, the harder it is to do. But if you make a routine of it, the territory becomes familiar. There’s less worry about what you’ll have to face because you KNOW what you’ll be facing. You know your demons, your weaknesses, your evil tendencies, and selfish desires. Like knowing the ins and outs of a road trip you’ve made a dozen times, quiet time in your mind can be made into a well-understood journey.

Spiritual practices—self-examination, repentance, prayer, reading the Word, worship—should be treated not as isolated activities but as disciplines. Habits are the key to so much when it comes to self-improvement and growth. If you meditate regularly, the mind becomes more familiar, even in times of confusion or fear. If you exercise at the same time each day, it stops becoming a decision of whether to go running and transforms into something that just happens. Pray regularly, worship regularly, read the Word regularly, so that the activity itself stops taking effort. Then when you really need it—when you are in a time of spiritual crisis or temptation—you have the muscle memory to just tackle things head on. You know your own mind and you know the mental mechanics backward and forward and can better concentrate on what actually matters.

So don't avoid silence. In fact, make a practice of it. Schedule quiet time.

But also, don't turn down the opportunity to have a long car ride with someone you care about. That's good too.

I'll leave you with True Christian Religion 563 as a parting thought:

*It is well known that habits form a kind of second nature, and therefore what is easy for one person is difficult for another. This applies also to examining ourselves and confessing what we have found.*

*It is easy for manual laborers, porters, and farm workers to work with their arms from morning till evening, but a delicate person of the nobility cannot do the same work for half an hour without fatigue and sweating. It is easy for a fore-runner with a walking stick and comfortable shoes to ply the road for miles, whereas someone used to riding in a carriage has difficulty jogging slowly from one street to the next.*

*All artisans who are devoted to their craft pursue it easily and willingly, and when they are away from it, they long to get back to it; but it is almost impossible to force a lazy person with the same skills to practice that craft. The same goes for everyone who has some occupation or pursuit.*

*What is easier for someone who is pursuing religious devotion than praying to God? And what is more difficult for someone who is enslaved to ungodliness?*

*All priests are afraid the first time they preach before royalty. But after they get used to it, they go on boldly.*

*What is easier for angelic people than lifting their eyes up to heaven? What is easier for devilish people than casting their eyes down to hell? (If they are hypocrites, however, they can look toward heaven in a similar way, but with aversion of heart.)*

*We are all saturated with the goal we have in mind and the habits that result from it.*

Rev. Glenn "Mac" Frazier, Pastor  
Washington New Church, 2025-02-28

## **From Acton Park Board of Directors**

The nominating committee for the Acton Park Board is on the lookout for potential candidates to join the board.

We will possibly have 3 vacancies, so we need to find those who wish to join the board.



To be nominated for a position on the board you do not need to live in Acton Park. However, you must be a member of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem [which requires you to become a member of the General Church]. Not a member? See Bonnie for the necessary forms to fill out and join! Once you are a member of the local church a simple request to the current Acton Park board will allow you to become a Corporation Member.

Please contact this year's nominating committee - either **Wynne T. Hyatt 410-320-0813** or **Lisa Martin 301-518-3066** if you would like to be considered for nomination.

**Plant Sale:** Dear Friends, The Plant Sale will be upon us before we know it starting Saturday, April 26, 2025. We hope to have our nursery sponsors back again this year - Homestead Gardens and Patuxent Nurseries



The students plan to start seeds even as we speak.

We may have a guest speaker.

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

I am still looking for lots of helpers as well. The date is April 26<sup>th</sup> 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.

We will need help in the potting/planting section, people in sales, people 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. Contact me, if you can help in any way.

Erin J. Stillman 301-801-3905

### **Special GC Appeal – Supporting Worship and Clergy in Africa**

On Sunday, March 9, 2025, the General Church invites you to participate in a special offering to support worship and clergy in Africa. Your needed support for these uses will help the General

Church to grow and serve internationally. Consider a gift today to foster our fellow New Church friends.

For more information, check out the poster on the lobby bulletin board or contact: **Mark H. Wyncoll** - Manager of Giving Operations – 267-502-2423

**Greg Clay**, GC Advancement Chair – 248-628-7080

*Theta Alpha Guild*



## *Spring Banquet*

**Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm**

You are invited to the annual Theta Alpha Guild Spring Banquet, on Saturday, March 29th at 7:00 p.m. at the church. This year, our speakers will be Rev. John and Lori Odhner.

Their presentation is called "**Listen Well and Often**". Come partake of a delicious communal meal and enjoy John & Lori's delightful talk!

Tickets are \$15 [\$12 students] at the door or \$12 [\$9 students] with advance reservation by March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Email or call Bonnie to reserve your seat.

### *March Anniversaries*



*Mar. 12<sup>th</sup> ~ Bill & Dorothy Radcliffe ~ 65 yrs.*

*Mar. 15<sup>th</sup> ~ John & Jean Allen ~ 56 yrs.*

*Mar. 30<sup>th</sup> ~ Aaron & Eva Smith ~ 29 yrs.*





Calling all WNCS Parents, Future Parents, Past Parents, Friends of Parents, and Alumni,

The school kids are currently having their ping pong tournament fun, now it's time for YOU to have fun! **Come to WNCS on Sat March 22nd for a School Parent and Alumni Ping Pong**

**Tournament!!!!** Bring a friend too! The tournament will take place between 2:30-5:30 pm. First and second prizes to be awarded. We will have drinks and snacks. This is as much a social time as a tournament, so please come to visit and cheer others on even if you don't want to play. Kids are invited to come and socialize but they must come accompanied by an adult.

If you have an older kid who can be a babysitter for the younger ones outside, let me know!

If you would like to bring a drink or snack, please contact me.

RSVPs [to Janine Smith 240-334-8454] only required if you want to play in the tournament.

Hope you can make it! I think it will be an enjoyable time!

Best, Janine

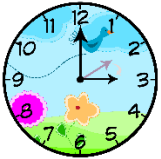
## **End of Winter News:**

“Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.”

Robert Frost must have had this past winter in Acton Park in mind when he wrote those famous words. Depending on how accurate the yardstick was, we had the pleasure of watching 8 – 10 inches of that flurry rain fall on us in January, and bits more on other miscel-



laneous days, and it was beautiful in its falling. “The only other sound's the sweep of easy wind and downy flake” he noted, and the quiet was everywhere. But he forgot to mention that the fluffy stuff



also fell on sidewalks, stairs, and driveways, oh my! We hope your collective backs survived. It was a cold winter, according to our fuel bills, but a few warm days at the end of February brought the promise of springing forward before long.

### Condolences:

We are saddened by the passing of **Melissa Anne Conine Cooper** on February 20<sup>th</sup>, at the age of 54, after a 12-year battle with cancer. Our condolences to husband **James** and their children **Meghan** and **Ryan**, to their family, and to her many friends and relatives. Missy was a graduate of the University of Maryland and a long-time teacher in Annapolis elementary and middle schools. As her battle neared its end, she fell into a coma but waited for son Ryan to return from Australia before passing quietly into the other world. A private service for her immediate family will be held on March 1<sup>st</sup>, and a Celebration of Life event will be held in the Spring.

### It's not always a small world:

**Ryan Cooper** was in Australia for a good reason: he used his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday as a reason for a semester of study at James Cook University, which happens to be a 27-hour flight away. As in Townsville, Queensland, Australia, which is convenient to the Great Barrier Reef, which in turn is convenient to his studies of coral growth, marine mega-fauna, coastal ecology/management and other mysterious subjects that might possibly include surfside tanning, if they would just stop the monsoon from raining.

### But Some of it is:

**Sharon and Bill Kunkle** recently went to Atlanta to help Sharon's Sister Dina and husband Rev. Patrick Rose pack up for a move to BA. Much better than shoveling snow.

## **An Invitation:**

This isn't exactly news: the church needs your help. Or at least a few of you, one at a time, to solve the following:

*Problem:* water. More specifically, water overflowing gutters along the back wall of the church building due to leaves and other material accumulating in large quantities. The overflow is damaging the walls and windows along the west side of the building.

*Solution:* People who are willing periodically to check the gutters. More specifically, every month someone needs to check the gutters for clogging and overflow and clean the gutters (preferred) or tell a designated person (to be determined) about the problem so cleaning can be arranged before damage is done. We wish to establish a crew of volunteers, and the more people who volunteer, the less often each person will be on check-up duty. Will you help? (Tell Bonnie when your answer is yes.) *[or even if it is no so we can twist your arm ~ editor].*

## **Getting Well:**

It seems our region is attempting to set a record for flu-like diseases, often including pneumonia for good measure. This means there are a lot of people in the process of getting sick or getting well – or trying to decide which it is. We prefer a “none of the above” choice, but if you are caught up in following the crowd, we wish you a quick recovery soon. And try to avoid visits to emergency rooms, where the flu bug reigns supreme – we know!

## **Welcome Back:**

We are happy to report that **Jana Sprinkle** has agreed to return to teaching next school year. She taught at WNCS for many years across almost all grade levels and in most subjects, before retiring a couple of years ago, and will now retire from retirement to take on the grades 1 and 2 classroom.

## **Good News:**

**Avi Hernandez** has received his work authorization card, which is greatly pleasing for his family.

Did you notice in the call for news email about the latest craze? It seems that lemonade with whipped cream is in.

**Ruthie** loved it.

And then there was a Dessert and Hors d'oeuvre contest: After a 4-year hiatus and back by popular demand (and according to **Sophie Hyatt** due to her begging her mother) the Annual Hyatt Dessert and Hors d'oeuvre contest made a fabulous comeback! The 2025 contest was well attended, with plenty of tasty entries in both categories. There were also plenty of good conversations with old and new friends. A small college crowd joined in for the fun, and seemed to very much enjoy every minute. There was a puzzle to work on while chatting or just contemplating the delicate flavor compositions of each sumptuous dish. In the hors d'oeuvre category **Candy Quintero** entered with her “Mediterranean Mezze” platter which included meatballs and mushroom croquettes, among other samplings; **Lisa Martin** with her “Land and Sea” dish and adult beverage pairing; **Jordan Brunne’s** bacon wrapped chicken; and **Bonnie Cowley’s** chili puffs. For desserts we had **Janine Smith’s** beautifully decorated chocolate Kahlua layer cake, Candy Quintero’s black bottom chocolate mousse cake, **Gillian Frazier’s** Caramel Pie, **James Frazier’s** Matcha Tiramisu, and **Mac Frazier’s** Salted Bourbon Brown butter Rice crispy treats. There was also a late entry in this category by **Anne Ball** with her chocolate raspberry dusted cookies that went unjudged but could definitely have given the winners a run for their money!

As usual, the event was a complete success with close races.

**And the winners were...**

**Hors d'oeuvres:**

In second place, Candy Quintero, and the Mezze Platter, and in First place, Lisa Martin’s Land and Sea!

**Desserts:**

In second place Gillian Frazier’s Caramel pie, and in First place Janine Smith’s Chocolate layer cake!

Thank you to all our participants and most of all to our most wonderful and gracious hosts, **Brent, and Amanda Hyatt!** Until next year!

Don't forget to

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**



8:00am

**Pancake Breakfast**



**Spring Work Party**

**Sat., April 5<sup>th</sup> - 9:00am**

At the church & school

Bring your family  
*(all children must be accompanied by a parent)*

School parents can earn their much needed PSP!