

October 2025

ECHO ECHO

Newsletter of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

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From the Pastor

I don't know exactly what's wrong with me. But I find I am drawn to questions around the darker side of humankind more than to those that highlight the better side of the human condition. In theological school, I wrote a dissertation on the nature and operation of falsity—how it interacts with good, with evil, and with truth, when it matters and when it doesn't, and what, exactly,

defines it. It turned out to be a rather-too-broad topic, but I'm glad I did the study.

I was initially drawn to it after reading the following in *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine*:

Truths which are not genuine, and also falsities, may be consociated with genuine truths; but falsities which contain good, and not falsities in which is evil. Falsities which contain good are received by the Lord as truths. The good which has its quality from falsity is accepted by the Lord, if there is ignorance, and therein is innocence and a good end. (NJHD 171)

What an amazing idea! And let me say that it was one I personally needed to wrestle with on many levels, and in fact had wrestled with most of my life. You see, I love to be right. I mean I really love it. Being right was very important to me as a child. I was blessed with a brain that is good at fast processing, and a certain kind of recall, and so early on I found myself to be quite talented at finding the small logical and factual flaws in other people's statements. I'm surprised none of my siblings killed me before I reached adulthood.

But what if being right wasn't the most important thing? What if being flat-out wrong, even about important, deep theological matters, was no big deal to God? Well, why would it be? Is the Lord so limited that he can't work with our intellectual flaws? I mean, if he can work with our sin, why can't he work with what really amounts to not much more than our mental errors?

So, when I read that, I knew that was a topic I wanted to dig into. Also, in that same book, I came across a sort of taxonomy of types of falsities, and that really appealed to my particular style of categorical thinking.

But there was another motivation for asking how, what, and why, with regard to spiritual falsehood: the question of evil. In part, understanding how falsity works in human minds unlocks part of the answer to the question, "Why is there evil?" I have often said, by way of example, that Adolf Hitler didn't just get out of bed one

day and say to himself, “I think I’ll be evil now.” Everyone, no matter how sane or crazy, no matter how big or small, has a (to them) perfectly reasonable justification for everything they do. Whatever anyone chooses to do, by definition, on one level, is to them the very definition of “good.” Even when at the same time the same person also labels it as “evil,” there must be some level on which it is good to the person, or they (we) wouldn’t do it.

And for me, the question, “Why do seemingly good people sometimes do seemingly evil things?” is one I can’t stop poking at. It’s one of my three persistent “why”s. (The other two are variants on the standard “Why do bad things happen to good people?”)

So anyway, the question of evil has been one that has been on my mind for many years. But the more life I experience, and the more pain I witness through my pastoral care for others who are experiencing some amazingly hard things, the more important this question becomes to me on a personal level.

I’ve wanted on and off for years to write a book—a popular book, not just an academic treatment—on the subject of evil. Just that word, “evil,” is filled with all sorts of complicated baggage accumulated over the ages, and to a certain degree I think we have turned it into something other than what it really is. If the word “evil” is too covered in cultural barnacles for it to work for you, instead consider the question, “Why do seemingly good people hurt one another?” And its more personal variant: “Why do I hurt people?”

*I don’t wrestle with these questions because I’m fascinated by darkness for its own sake. I wrestle with them because, as a pastor, I have seen how real and destructive evil can be ...*

There. That’s the big one. Not everyone’s ready to go there, I know. But for those who are, I want to maybe someday write something that offers hope, insight, and healing on the topic.

When I selected my dissertation subject, one of my advisors cautioned me about “not giving the devil more than his due.” He suggested that there were many positive subjects I could pursue instead. And maybe there’s some wisdom in that, but I still find myself drawn to the hard questions about bad things.

I will say this, though. A while back my brother Scott did a lexical analysis of the Heavenly Doctrines, using software to determine the frequency with which each term appeared in the theological Writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg. In every case, the positive member of each good/evil pair was mentioned *far* more frequently than its counterpart. “Good” was more commonly referred to than “evil,” “truth” than “falsity,” etc. There is spiritual equilibrium in the world, but the Lord Himself has a bias in favor of what’s good. Of course He does!

I don’t wrestle with these questions because I’m fascinated by darkness for its own sake. I wrestle with them because, as a pastor, I have seen how real and destructive evil can be—and I believe the Lord calls us not to look away but to understand it, so that it loses its power over us. My hope is that by naming it and studying it, we can also help one another to choose differently, and to heal. Because in the Lord’s hands, as weak as we are, our struggle against evil can become part of His work to end it, so that good may rush in.

Rev. Glenn “Mac” Frazier, Pastor

## **From the Board of Trustees**

The Board held the first meeting of the new fiscal year on September 9. Officers were elected as follows:

Chair - Steve Ball

Vice Chair - David Radcliffe

Secretary - Sharon Cooper

Treasurer - Brent Hyatt

Rev. Frazier reported that he is reviewing the governance structure for the Church and looking for improvements in our structure of committees, councils, etc. This will be a topic for discussion at the Winter Society meeting. The Treasurer reported that we ended the last fiscal year with strong contributions and although we still finished with a deficit, it was far smaller than expected. Thanks to everyone who pitched in! Rev. Smith commented on the new school year, including planning for future staff changes, marketing, and other school planning. David Radcliffe noted that volunteers are needed for maintenance of the cemetery and other church grounds. The next meeting will be on Tuesday October 14.

Respectfully ~ Sharon Cooper, Secretary, WCNJ, Inc.

## **From the Marketing Committee**

Dear Friends,

In support of our marketing efforts to increase enrollment in the school, we are continuously seeking weekly donors to augment our grants to fund social media outreach. These donations go towards weekly advertising on Facebook, Instagram, and other social media platforms. These advertisements reach from 5,000 to 8,000 users per week, resulting in hundreds of visits to our school website. Any donation is greatly appreciated and will help us increase our school's reputation and visibility. Ideal donation amounts are multiples of \$10. If you are interested in donating, please contact Brent Hyatt at [brent.hyatt@icloud.com](mailto:brent.hyatt@icloud.com). To learn more about our social media and advertising campaign, or to see examples of outreach materials, contact Anders Croft at [andersscroft@gmail.com](mailto:andersscroft@gmail.com). Lastly, if you are not connected with the school on social media, scan this QR code with your cellphone to find and follow our pages!



Anders Croft

## Announcements



**Plant Sale:** I know that the plant sale is months away, but you may have in-ground plants that you are digging up as you thin out your garden. Keep us in mind. Please consider potting up some of those plants for the plant sale. They can live on my property, and I will get them started in the greenhouse, so they are well sprouted for the spring sale.

~ Thanks! Erin Stillman



**“Souper” Sunday – Kick-off Luncheon:** It is “Souper” Sunday time of year... think cool Autumn days and a warm bowl of soup and crusty bread... *that you did not have to make!!*

Beginning on Sunday, October 26, the TAG ladies will be making soup and bread. The **first** “Souper” Sunday of the year we traditionally like to offer the soup and bread at a lunch after church. There is no cost, and all are invited [there will be a donation basket] for those of you who like to support our effort.

There is something special about the **October 26 “Souper” Sunday Kick-off** this year... the Kempton Youth will be visiting along with several chaperones, and we have invited them to join us for this luncheon. There will be soup, bread, drinks and desserts and good company! ~ Bonnie Cowley

PS – if you would like to help, make, bake, provide dessert, paper goods, or even help with setup and cleanup, TAG will be ever grateful! ~ contact [bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch.org](mailto:bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch.org).

**Work Party: Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup>** at 8am we will be having a pancake breakfast. This breakfast is to give you the stamina to help at the 9am work party.



***We have lots of outdoor work planned.*** Primarily we will continue to keep up with the gardens and grounds and this will take a lot of people young and old!



***If you don't like gardening,*** Bill Kunkle and Eric Genzliner have been preparing the north side of the building for a fresh coat of paint. They have cleaned, scrapped, and caulked all the joints and are ready for some volunteers to roll on the paint.



***If you can't make the work party,*** Erin Stillman is weeding at the church on Wednesday mornings from 8am – 8:45am come join us and keep Erin company.

**Bring tools** - rakes, pruners, blowers, trowels, shovels, gloves, wheelbarrows etc. all LABELED with your name.

The background of the entire flyer is a collage of autumn leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and red.A small photo of a person sitting on a roof, possibly cleaning or working.A small photo of a person pushing a yellow wheelbarrow filled with leaves or debris.A small photo of a person in a blue shirt digging in the ground with a shovel.

**Sat Oct 18**

**8am - Pancake Breakfast**

**9am - Fall Work Party**

***Bring your Family!***

Painters A small photo of a person in a plaid shirt using a brush to paint a wall. Needed

## **NEWS-ISH NOTES:**

Did you happen to notice that in the midst of all those 80<sup>0</sup> September days this year's dose of autumn arrived? And it was a beautiful, sunny day – a worthy celebration of the end of summer. And there were a few other such celebrations:

### **Congratulations:**



**Candy, Chuck, and Chelsea Quintero** traveled to Madison, Wisconsin for the wedding of daughter **Stefanie** to **Anthony Marro**. **Emily** and her fiancé came in from Portland, and it was the first time in many years that the whole family had been together!

**Andy Cooper** received a George Warren Fuller Award, which is presented annually by the American Water Works Association (AWWA). The

award celebrates individuals for their distinguished service to the water supply field and recognizes outstanding leadership and contributions within their AWWA section, commemorating the sound engineering skill, diplomatic talent, and constructive leadership demonstrated by George Warren Fuller.

### **More vacations:**

**Dave and Bonnie Cowley** along with **James and Jeannette Roscoe** traveled to a retreat near Grants Pass, OR early in September. The occasion? The 2025 John Alden family sibling reunion. All but one of the 12 siblings and spouses (except for David Alden who passed away in January 2025) came to the reunion, which made 20 of them. With the age spread of 22 years from Glenn (Eldest) to Erin (youngest) their family never has been together until planned reunions. They have had only four reunions before this one, with the previous reunion about 20 years ago. The



Cascade Ranch resort they stayed in was the perfect place with many rooms and lots of space for group activities like cards and meals as well as room for them to spend some one-on-one time. The clan also took a day trip to Crater Lake and was awed by this amazing water-filled Caldera.



**Amanda and Brent Hyatt** had a wonderful trip in Tuscany, along with **Monica and Keith Hyatt** and **Meg Keegan** and **Dave Wedell**. The trip began and ended with a day in Rome for Amanda and Brent, while the rest extended their visit for a week to see Florence and Rome in more detail. The weather was fine, and pasta and gelato were almost a daily occurrence (but not together)!

Over the summer, **Bernard and Shana Plummer** and daughter



**Bailee** visited Japan, the Land of the Rising Sun. During their trip, they visited with family, saw the Meiji Jingu Temple, and went to Tokyo DisneySea, the world's one-and-only Disney Park themed to the sea!

**Janna Zuber** reports that she and **Phil** enjoyed a late summer vacation at South Bethany Beach, DE. Janna says: "We love this time; crowds are gone and this year the weather has been fabulous! But the best part is that for 2 days we had all

our kids here! (But not all spouses or grands). The big surprise was having son Devin, who was in NYC on business, make a detour here for a short time. Lots of reminiscing, stories shared, and new memories made!”

### **School Notes:**

Do you know what the third and fourth graders did with the exoskeletons they collected by way of metamorphosis? You will have to ask them.

While you are in the asking mode, why not ask Erin Stillman about how much help she needs for weeding the gardens on the church grounds. You will probably discover that the answer is every Wednesday morning at around 8:30.



**Mark your calendar:** a work party will take place on Saturday, November 9<sup>th</sup>. The bait: pancakes!

Then, according to Robert Frost, come “the dark days of autumn rain... the desolate deserted trees, the faded earth, the heavy sky...,” when he “learned to know the love of bare November days before the coming of the snow....” (From “My November Guest.”)



## *September Anniversaries*

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

*~ Emanuel Swedenborg, CL 214 ~*



*Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> ~ Eric & Suzanne Genzlinger ~ 28 yrs.*

*Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> ~ Joe & Kira Jenkins ~ 8 yrs.*

*Oct. 16<sup>th</sup> ~ Pat & Paige Sweeney ~ 32 yrs.*

*Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> ~ Eugene & Nancy Cole ~ 29 yrs.*

