

January 2026

ECHO

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Newsletter of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

www.theWNC.org • 301-464-5602

Pastor: Rev. Glenn (Mac) Frazier
11801 Chantilly Lane; Mitchellville, MD 20721
Mac.frazier@gmail.com

Asst. Pastor, Principal: Rev. Brian D. Smith
11503 Chantilly Lane
Mitchellville, MD 20721-2126
Brian.smith@washnewchurch.org

WCNJ Inc. Treasurer

Mr. Brent Hyatt
bhhyatt@verizon.net

WCNJ Inc. Co-Treasurer

Mr. Chuck Quintero
c.quintero@alum.mit.edu

WCNJ Inc. Investment Treasurer

George Cooper
cooperpatents@verizon.net

WCNJ Inc. Secretary

Sharon Croft
croft.cooper@verizon.net

Echo Editor

Bonnie Cowley
Bonnie.cowley@washnewchurch.org

Echo News Notes Editor

George Cooper
cooperpatents@verizon.net

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From the Pastor

If you ever notice yourself feeling like you would be happy if only someone would stop doing something, or do something more often, or for once do that thing for you—then know that you have chosen a doomed path.

The Word has a lot to say about happiness, joy, peace, and delight. The joy of heaven comes from a life of purpose in service to the

good in others. Heavenly delight comes from loving another person deeply and fully. We enter into our Lord's happiness when we allow Him to change us and conjoin with us. When we repent, we give up short term comfort in exchange for progress in our long journey of spiritual rebirth leading ultimately to eternal happiness.

But do you know what the Word never tells us about happiness? That it comes from other people. Because it doesn't. Yes, we need other people in order to be happy. But our happiness is entirely built out of how *we* feel about, think about, and behave towards others. *Their* motivations, beliefs and actions are not in it at all.

Yes, a friend, a loved one, or even a stranger can do something to make you smile, to lift your heart, and even to give you a moment of immense joy. But you have no control over that. So, it is perhaps not surprising that the Lord doesn't waste time trying to explain to us how to get other people to do nice things for us.

“It drives me crazy that she keeps doing that!” Yes, well, my friend, she probably won't change. So, if you sit around waiting for her to change, I have bad news for you. You've chained your happiness to something you have no control over, and you wanting that person to change super-duper badly isn't going to make it happen.

“Why does he always say things like that? Doesn't he realize how it makes me feel?” If you've told him, then yes, he does. And if he keeps doing it, it doesn't necessarily mean he doesn't care about how you feel, but perhaps there are reasons he struggles to change. It sure would be nice if he did.

But why are you anchoring your future prosperity and peace on his success? Get on with your own choices. Do good things. Learn to be wiser. Put aside wanting things to serve you and figure out how you can find fulfillment as a servant yourself.

“If only people would do this one thing...” Friend, they don't. Maybe someday they will, but maybe not. Either way, don't invest yourself in that outcome.

*Turn to the Lord.
Listen for His voice in
His Word. Answer
His call and focus not
on what you get but
on what you give.*

Turn to the Lord. Listen for His voice in His Word. Answer His call and focus not on what you get but on what you give. Not only is it the only thing you have sovereignty over, it is, in fact, a path to truly lasting joy. The one and only path.

The delight itself that is found in doing good with no goal of getting something in return is the reward, a reward that lasts to eternity, because heaven and eternal happiness are instilled into that kind of goodness by the Lord. (*New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 156)

Rev. Mac (Glenn) Frazier, Pastor
Washington New Church, 2025.12.30

New appointment to WCNJ/WNCS

In case you didn't get the email, below is a letter from Bishop Heinrichs about the appointment of our new assistant pastor/principal.

Dear Members and Friends of the Washington New Church,
It is my privilege on behalf of the Episcopal Office, in consultation with your Pastor and Board of Directors, to appoint the Rev. Howard Thompson as the Assistant to the Pastor at the Washington New Church to help fill the role of the Principal of WNCS which Rev. Brian Smith will be vacating on June 30, 2026. The reason for the appointment is because it will take a while to repatriate Howard and Debra back to the United States after spending seven years in Australia, so time was of the essence. You will have the opportunity to officially call Howard as an Assistant Pastor later if you wish to do so.

Howard comes to you as a second career minister with an interesting portfolio of experience. Prior to entering theological school, he was the Vice President of Schools Risk Management for Willis Towers Watson, a global insurance provider. After theological school, he spent one year serving as an Assistant Pastor and the Director of Enrolment for the Bryn Athyn elementary school. Next, he served six years overseas as Pastor of the Colchester New Church in the U.K. Then he went even further overseas, to work for our sister organization in the Australian

Conference and became the Pastor of the Sydney Society of the New Church in Roseville, where he has served for the last seven years.

Howard and Debra are excited to start this new chapter of their lives with you, and I pray that the Lord in His Divine Providence will bless this placement! If you have any questions, feel free to email me at brad.heinrichs@newchurch.org or give me a call at work 267-502-4944, or on my cell at 215-870-0591.

Sincerely,

Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs
Assistant Bishop of the General Church of the New Jerusalem

TAG Corner:

Ladies! Plan to attend the Theta Alpha Guild meeting on Monday, January 12 at 7:30 in the school library.

We'll be starting plans to host the Regional Clergy meetings in April. We look forward to seeing you!

Lauralyn and Sharon ~TAG co-presidents

Christmas Centerpiece Fundraiser

Many thanks to all who purchased centerpieces this year! You helped **raise \$475** for the WCNJ operating fund.

As always, if you do not particularly wish to keep the materials from the arrangements, we would be very happy to have any non-perishables donated back to us for future efforts.

Thank you, and Happy New Year! ~ Mary Cooper

SprinkleBerry Farm & Education Center Update

I am excited to announce the addition of a high tunnel at the farm. For those of you unfamiliar with the term, a high tunnel is a structure often made of metal bars, covered in plastic, with doors at either end. It allows a grower to grow earlier and later during the growing season, and potentially year-round. I am going to start with a few cold crops - spinach, kale, and carrots - Yum!



Coming soon - sheep and goats! Thanks to my brother, Wynne Hyatt, I now have a shed to shelter a few sheep and goats until I get the "pasture" fenced. In the meantime, I will be using an electric fence and house the sheep and goats in the shed at night. If you would like to come visit the animals, in February and beyond, I will be asking for a \$5.00 donation/ticket price per person for up to 45 minutes with the animals. Call or text me at 410-220-9003 to arrange a Saturday or Sunday visit.

Don't know what to do with your children for Spring Break? I am offering a Spring Break Camp from Monday, March 30th through Thursday, April 2nd for children in grades 1-6. Activities will include walking on our nature trails, gardening, learning about our farm animals through interaction and observation, art projects, cooking and even some building projects. Camp will run from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. with an option to purchase aftercare until 5:30 daily. Camp cost is \$300 per child, and aftercare is \$20 per day per child. Space is limited so sign up now!

To sign up, simply send an email to Residentagent@sprinkleberryfarm.com with the names of the children you would like to enroll, and I will send you confirmation once payment has been received. Payment can be made by check made out to SprinkleBerry Farm or either Zelle or Venmo to Jana Sprinkle.

I am so excited about this coming year! ~ ***Jana Sprinkle***

GLENCAIRN AWARD: On January 5, 2026, the Glencairn Award Committee will begin accepting written nominations for the 2026 award.

The award is given to an outstanding teacher or a member of a New Church community for past achievements and/or contributions in the fields of religion, science, education, the arts,

literature, or community service. Such achievements are the sole criteria for the award. The award may not be given as compensation for service or as a supplement to salary or based on the financial needs of the recipient.

All nominations must be made on a nomination application form and submitted electronically or by mail to Committee's Secretary, Phillip R. Zuber, Esq. (address, email, and phone number below). The Secretary is not a member of the Committee and has no input on who receives the Glencairn Award.

You may obtain a nomination application by either **BY DOWNLOADING** the document using a link given to you by the pastor's office or you may request a nomination application form from the Committee Secretary.

Nominations must be submitted to the Committee Secretary by **March 27, 2026.**

All nominations and any other information provided to the Committee about the nominee will be kept in strict confidence by the Committee.

Philip R. Zuber, ESQ. ~ Secretary to the Glencairn Award Committee
PHONE: 301-518- 7115 • EMAIL: phillip.zuber@anc-gc.org

Belonging

By Bonnie Cowley

2025 is now a thing of the past. Christmas holidays with all its parties, presents, gatherings, family, connectedness, promise and much more have wound down. Still, there are many people who struggled during this time to find connection, to be with family and yes feel part of a community, especially for those, for whatever reason, find it hard to participate, hard to belong, even hard to feel as if they are part of a community, or feel left out.

I ran across this quote recently -

“Community is much more than belonging to something; it's about doing something together that makes belonging matter.” ~ Brian Solis

So why are there people who do not feel like they belong?

Has any person or pastor of any church ever said, “We have all the help we need.” Or “We’ve got it here; we don’t need your ideas or even help.” … of course not!

Perhaps we have given that impression. Our words may say, “we want your help” but our actions say, “We like the way we do things around here.” Maybe the way we take charge makes some people feel unwanted, intimidated, or inadequate to participate.

Yet we all know that organizations need everyone’s help, we need participation to become a real community.

There is this subtle hierarchy that takes hold in organizations and churches particularly. It develops because of the very lack of people involved. The burden becomes heavy on those few people who do contribute their time and money. They do the same job year after year. They get really good at what they are doing. The perception that “we always do it this way” takes hold and becomes intimidating to those who are new or wish to help or even people with different (shall I say even better) ideas.

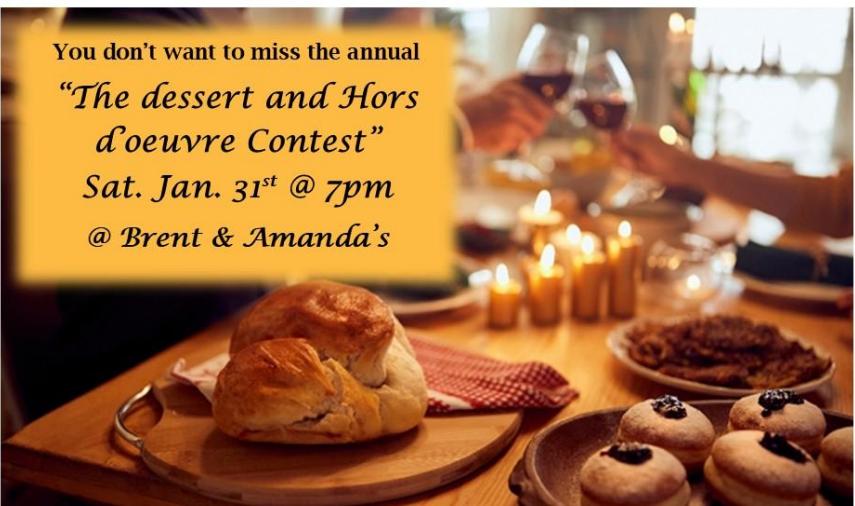
This year’s Tableaux was a notable change in this model. From the beginning a consortium of individuals created original music. Lots of it! One or two pieces for every one of the 15 scenes. Musicians were needed. A choir, trios and soloists learned all the new music and spent weeks practicing. Pianist, Guitarists, violinists, drummers were all enlisted to participate. Recruited, Of course, were the usual volunteers that portraited the story characters and the costume, stage, lighting directors. This year’s Tableaux was an enormous undertaking which allowed so many in our community to participate. From the Tableaux director to the volunteers who dismantled the stage at the end there were so many people, young and old involved.

I hope that this is the beginning. An opening for others who have been timid to share their new ideas. For those who have wished to be included to step up and join – to share what they have to offer.

I hope that those of us, who have carried the ball for years, to continue to reach out to everyone, to welcome them and any

innovative ideas – to never even subtly hint that “we always have done it *this way*.”

As for me – the stage and lighting director for the last many years, I will be more than happy to hand this over to a new volunteer. I will help you get started and welcome any ideas you should have. I do believe that there are others who feel the way I do.



You don't want to miss the annual
“The dessert and Hors d'oeuvre Contest”
Sat. Jan. 31st @ 7pm
@ Brent & Amanda's

All welcome – college age on up – *see below for details...*

Dessert and Hors d'oeuvres Contest details:

Where: Brent & Amanda's: 11916 Progress Lane, Bowie 20721

Who: All welcome – college age on up

When: Saturday, January 31st at 7:00pm

Do I need to bring anything? Yes – 2 choices: Bring a snack (chips, crackers etc. to share), or enter the contest by bringing your signature hors d'oeuvre or dessert for all to share, and to be judged by all. [oh yea, BYOB.]

Are there prizes? Maybe, mostly bragging rights!

We need some new participants, however, to unseat a few of our frequent prize winners (you know who you are – Lisa, Candy....

News Notes: HAPPY NEWS YEAR

Wow! Another Auld Lange Syne Day has arrived. Did you get all the words right during that midnight celebration? Just in case, here are some of them, according to an English translation of the Scottish version by Robert Burns:

Should old acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
And old lang syne?
... We two have paddled in the stream,
From morning sun till dine;
But seas between us broad have roared
Since auld lang syne.
And there's a hand my trusty friend!
And give me a hand o' thine!
And we'll take a right good-will draught,
For auld lang syne.

One has to be careful at this time of year, or nostalgia will creep up on you. After one has been around for more than a few years, that can be a heavy load. But it can also be really uplifting. So, let's all work on that last version:

Nostalgia for Today:

The Washington Society has been presenting the Tableaux for over 60 years as a joyous part of the Christmas season. This year's version involved 22 actors and 23 singers and musicians. The program was directed by **Janine Smith**, with costumes by **Gillian Frazier and Amanda Hyatt**. **Shaunti Smith** served as music director, **Marcellus Smith** was accompanist, **Jana Sprinkle** was stage manager, and staging and lights were provided by **Bonnie Cowley** and **Elias Hernandez**. A unique feature of the program was the 20 songs created by seven members of the Society. It was

a marvelous production, and the hard work and talent of the many people involved have our thanks and appreciation.

And then there was the traditional candlelight Christmas Eve service. The lovingly decorated chancel served as a perfect background for the celebration of the Lord's birth. Thanks to **Mary Cooper, Jana Zuber, Amanda Hyatt, and Gillian Frazier.**

Anniversary:



How many of you noticed the recent anniversary of that November of 1965 when we held the dedication of the current church building – 60 years ago! Some of us

remember the excitement of that weekend, with the last-minute installation of ceiling tiles to hide the wires hanging down from the lights in the nave, the scramble to find folding chairs for the nave when the manufacturer of the pews faced a delay, and the awe at seeing the completed nave for the first time on the Friday evening of that weekend. We remember the banquet where we squeezed almost 200 people into the original (smaller) Supper Room, and the joy of the first service in our new building to celebrate its dedication. We remember weekends spent painting the building, evenings spent building the kitchen cabinets, hours spent building the chancel furniture, and innumerable evenings and weekend days spent planning and worrying. Remember that?

School News:

On Thursday, December 18th **WNCS** put on their annual school Christmas program. This was a lovely variety show with each

group of students performing on bells or recorders, guitars, or voices. As always, one of the highlights was the Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten rendition of "How far is it to Bethlehem?" complete with lanterns and so sweet voices. An



enormous crowd of parents and relatives and a special visit from a former student **[Ray Ikome]** and his mom **[Florence]** whom we have not seen in many years. They took the time to look on

the Internet calendar to find this annual performance so they could come. The evening was rounded out by a hilarious WNCS Staff song wishing all a Merry Christmas.

Visitors:

It was great to have **Bishop Bradly Heinrichs** and his wife **Cathy** visit us with, and to have him preach.

We also welcomed a ton of visitors (well, maybe; – a full house anyway) for the Tableaux and for the Christmas Eve service. It was great to see you all.

Acton Park News:

Nature Trail Reroute. Acton Park will be rerouting parts of the nature trail away from a perennially wet and eroded section originally placed in the floodplain. Engineering flags will mark the proposed route that will run from the picnic area across the bridge Washington New Church School students are building. Contact

David Radcliffe if you would like more information or would like to offer recommendations or changes to the proposed route. He'd be happy to walk it with you if you'd like.

Other good News:

Bowie Food Pantry Donations. David Radcliffe makes a weekly Monday morning run with donations to the Bowie Interfaith Food Pantry. If you have items you would like to contribute, contact David to arrange a pickup or handoff.

Moving thoughts: Erin Stillman is restored! After a year and ½ of life in a hotel while her house was being reconstructed and regenerated and otherwise renewed in spite of the County's best delaying efforts, she managed to relinquish her temporary-but-feels-like-forever rooms just before Christmas for a triumphant return home. Hoorah!

Anniversaries

Funny thing... so far, we have never had anniversaries for **January** in the Echo. In fact, I know some of you never see your anniversaries in the Echo at all.

Why? Probably because I don't know the date of your anniversary. The Washington New Church believes in the importance of supporting marriages and wants to honor every married couple's journey.

Please let us know if we are forgetting you.

“Marriage is most holy, not only from its origins in a heaven from the Lord, but also from this, that it is the seminary of the human race...and of the angelic heaven.”

Emanuel Swedenborg, AC 2733