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ECHO ECHO

Newsletter of the Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

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## From the Pastor

This morning, I read a post on Twitter (or “X” if you prefer), by someone who operates a charitable landscaping organization that works with volunteers who do things like mow lawns for elderly people who have fallen on hard times. That sort of thing. The point of their post was to publicly thank someone who gave them their

first lawnmower for free many years ago. The author couldn't remember the name of the donor, as they were someone they had randomly met on Facebook marketplace or something similar. But they wanted to acknowledge the anonymous person for helping start what would eventually become something that helped many people over the years.

And this got me thinking.

Back in early 1996, my wife and I were up in New York City to visit family. At the time, my parents and my youngest sister, Brittany, lived in an apartment in Greenwich Village. My mother's brother, my Uncle Scott, was also in town that week. So, we went up to see everyone and have a fun weekend in New York.

Gillian and I had been married for less than a year, and were very excited because we had somewhat recently discovered that Gillian was pregnant for the very first time. I love visiting New York, and especially liked the neighborhood my parents lived in. Meanwhile, my still fairly new business was starting to really grow in interesting ways. All in all, it was a wonderful time for me.

Until I heard my wife call out in distress.

More than thirty years later, I remember the scene in a series of vivid images, freeze frames from one of the most frightening days of my life. Instead of describing things blow by blow in great detail, I'll just say that holding my new wife's limp body in my arms left an indelible mark in my mind. It also shifted my perspective on life, my marriage, and the world around me in sudden and tectonic ways.

Paramedics arrived around the same time my uncle did. There were suddenly all sorts of people in the tiny apartment. I remember my sister Tabitha directing traffic and doing "crowd control." She was a nurse at Veterans' Affairs Hospital in New York and has always been incredibly calm and competent in times of crisis. I remember feeling grateful to her but also laughing a bit at something funny she said, even in the midst of my fear and shock, while they brought Gillian out on a stretcher.

It was a thankfully short ambulance ride to St. Vincent's Hospital. They admitted Gillian and then told me it could be a long wait. I was in a daze at that point. I went with some family members (I don't recall who was there aside from my mom) to a diner or something that was across the street. It might've been the only time I ate that day, but I don't really recall.

We were there only a short while, but when I got back to the hospital, Gillian was already in recovery. Things had progressed much faster than at first expected. It turned out that what we were dealing with was what was then called a cornual ectopic pregnancy. We lost the baby. But I hadn't lost Gillian, and that mattered more to me than anything in the world.

An ectopic pregnancy is one in which the embryo implants in the wrong location. In around 90% of them ("tubal ectopic pregnancies"), they can be detected in the first trimester through a combination of bloodwork and ultrasound before anything really bad happens. Ectopic pregnancies cannot progress to a successful live birth. Tubal ectopics are, as I said, easy to detect, and so rarely cause life-threatening emergencies.

In rare cases, however, the point of implantation is such that it is much harder to detect (a "cornual pregnancy"), and can go on longer, until finally rupturing, bringing sudden and severe pain, dizziness, fainting, and swift, massive internal bleeding. This is what my young wife experienced, and it nearly killed her. The doctors remarked that she lost a frightening amount of blood in a very short period of time. Thankfully, she had made it to the hospital quickly enough and they had been able to stabilize her and get her a steady blood supply in time.

This is one of the reasons Gillian and I have always been so supportive of blood drives and blood donations. The contributions of blood by



numerous total strangers saved her life, our marriage, and everything that came after.

We don't know the names of the people who donated the blood she needed that day, but we do know the name of the doctor who operated on her: Dr. Milivoje Milosevic.

I will forever be indebted to Dr. Milosevic. He didn't only save my wife's life. He made possible all that came of that life in the decades since. And in particular, we went on to have four successful pregnancies come to term over the years. Four wonderful, healthy babies. Now four young adults I am incredibly blessed to know as my children.

It is common in ectopic cases, tubal and cornual, to lose one of the fallopian tubes. This can happen in cornual cases as well (as it did in our situation), but even more significant is the damage done to the uterus. Even if it is caught before rupturing, there can be structural scarring of the area of implantation. And when it ruptures, it does serious damage. In a large percentage of such cases, the entire uterus can be lost. Even when not lost, the repair can compromise future fertility and make later pregnancies more complicated or dangerous.

Dr. Milosevic saved my wife's life. But he also made it possible for her to have more babies. As you know at this point, we had several more pregnancies over the years. Not without difficulties, but our family of four kids is the happy result. I honestly cannot express how much his work, his skill, and his training have impacted my life, our marriage, our whole family, and everything that I have experienced since. I'm choked up with gratitude even now, just thinking about it.

And Gillian is probably just one of thousands of patients he's served in his life. He might not even remember us at all.

So today I hunted around with some AI assistance plus some more traditional digital searching, and it appears to me that he may still be practicing today or possibly teaching. If he's retired, it would have been pretty recently from what the Internet is telling me. He should be about 80 years old, now.

I'm reaching out to him later this week to let him know of the family he made possible. I should probably have done it sooner. I don't know if I'll be able to reach him if the contact info I've found is out of date. So, I'm also putting his name out publicly here. Dr. Milosevic. Thank you.

He was just doing his job. We only met with him one more time after the surgery. But he has been in some way a part of our life ever since.



When you do your job justly, faithfully, and sincerely, when you give of your time, your treasure, or yes, your blood, and when you do anything to serve another person, you are not just acting in that moment. Your decisions echo into a vast and unknown future that the Lord's providence is constantly guiding. Your kind words and simple acts matter. Who knows who might be able to thank you in thirty years for what you do tomorrow?

Thank you, Dr. Milosevic. And thank you, Lord, for your hand in His life as well as in ours.

Rev. Glenn "Mac" Frazier, Pastor  
Washington New Church, 2026.08.31

## **The Harmony Report: Notes from the Principal's Desk**

After a busy summer of preparation and transition, it was a joy to welcome our students back through the doors of Washington New Church School as we began another academic year.

The classrooms are once again filled with eager learners, familiar friendships are being renewed, and new ones are already beginning to form. There is a special energy that accompanies the first days of school—a sense of anticipation as students, teachers, and families embark together on a new year of learning and growth.

We opened the school year with our first chapel, where we introduced this year's school theme: **Heavenly Harmony**.

When we think of a choir, we recognize that no two voices are exactly alike. Some are high, some are low; some are strong, some are gentle. If each person sang a different song, the result would be confusion. But when every singer follows the conductor and sings the same song, those many different voices become something beautiful together.

The Lord's kingdom is much the same. Each of us has been created with unique gifts, talents, personalities, and ways of serving. We are not called to be the same as one another. Rather, as we look to the Lord for guidance and seek opportunities to serve our neighbor each day, our individual lives come together in wonderful harmony.

Throughout the coming year, we hope our students will discover that true harmony is found not in everyone being alike, but in each person faithfully contributing his or her own unique part while learning to love, respect, and support one another. In doing so, we pray that our school community may become, in its own small way, a reflection of the heavenly harmony described in the Word.

We are grateful for the continued prayers and support of our church family and look forward with excitement to all that the Lord has in store for our students and staff in the year ahead.

~ Mr. Thompson

### **In memory of Gael Pendleton Coffin**



Though I only knew Gael Coffin for the last 40 years, it would be amiss for me not to have a little something in the Echo marking her passing on July 6, 2026.

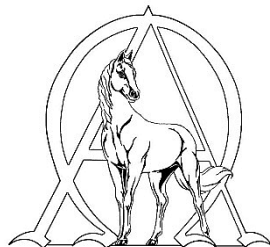
Gael, Phil, and their family were central figures in the establishing of the Washington New Church school and the move of the church to Mitchellville, MD from the DC area in the mid-60s. Gael

was not only part of the planning for the church building but also the planning for the start of a New Church school here. Gael's son Gregory was among the 7 first students. Her other 3 children, Justin, Jennifer, and Kate were to follow from 1<sup>st</sup> grade to 10<sup>th</sup>.

Gael's family moved into Acton Park, taking one of the earliest AP homes which was built by her sister Heather and husband Jean de Chazal. Gael spent years involved in the Acton Park board as a member and also as a director.

Gael loved to sing, and her strong alto added lovely harmony to our hymns and special music.

Gael was an artist. Her paintings were coveted gifts that are hung in many Acton Park homes and cherished. In the early days she also taught art at WNCS. One of her most important pieces of artwork was her design of the emblem of the Washington New Church and School. An emblem of the Alpha and the Omega intertwined with a white horse in the center, the correspondence of both clearly representing the Academic endeavor of the newly minted New Church school.



In 2004, with several of her children married with children of their own, Gael moved to Kempton, PA to be closer to some of them, then later moved to Cairnwood Village in Bryn Athyn. It is hard to believe that Gael has been gone from our community for more than 20 years. Gael left a lasting mark on our society and we have missed her.

Bonnie Cowley

***Her Memorial service will be held in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral on October 3, 2026, at 3:00PM, Lawson Smith officiating.***

### **Theta Alpha Guild (a.k.a. TAG)**

We are kicking off our new year with our first meeting of the school year on Wednesday, September 9, at 7:30p.m. (to about 8:30pm) at the church/school building. All women college age and

up with an interest in supporting community in our church or our school are warmly welcome to come. If you can't come in person, look for an email with a Zoom link.

By way of a little background, TAG serves the dual purposes of supporting the Washington New Church and the Washington New Church School, fondly known to many as WNCS. TAG has been around since the beginning of this local congregation, serving the church in many varied ways over the decades since its inception. We are also connected to an international nonprofit organization (Theta Alpha International) founded in 1904 with the goal of supporting New Church education. Community is at the heart of our mission. To that end we'll be checking in with our standing committees and planning annual events, such as the popular Souper Sundays, as well as looking at new ways we can serve the school and church communities. We'd love to hear your ideas!

Anne Ball, TAG President

## **SUMMER'S NEWS:**

Well, the weatherman outdid himself this summer with record heat in July, and with August not far behind. Now we get to think about things like school and homework, and whatever happened to the baseball season, and maybe the football season will produce better results, and remembrances of kicking leaves while walking to class with snow in the air. As Mr. Murples said: ... "old fellows have the compensation of some very wonderful memories." (See Clouds of Witness, by Dorothy Sayers) So head out there and collect some of those memories.

## **Congratulations:**

To **Jared Hyatt** and his college sweetheart, **Kylie Mauricci**, who were married in a lovely ceremony in the mountains of Estes Park, Colorado on August 9, 2026. Luke David officiated, and family and friends from all over the US, plus a couple from Canada, celebrated their union with joy and great gusto!

## Condolences:

To the family and friends of Gael P. Coffin, who passed away on July 6<sup>th</sup> after a long illness. Gael was a long-time member of our Society and an early resident of Acton Park; she will be missed. Her Memorial service will be held in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral on October 3, 2026, at 3:00PM.

## Early Retirement:

**Sharon Croft** reports that “The longest chapter of my life (so far!) has come to a close. Yesterday - July 24, 2026 - was my last day of work. The end of a career that started with a luck of the draw internship in 1983 at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center leaves me with many emotions. I am happy, sad, relieved, grateful, and excited all at the same time. It was the best job surrounded by the best people I could ever hope for. It was a {marvelous} ride. Now I am joining [John Croft](#) in retirement, to continue writing an even longer chapter!” That worked out to more than 43 years as a rocket scientist! Congratulations, Sharon!

## Retirement Rewards:

**Sharon and John Croft** wasted no time in reaping the rewards of retirement by flying to Sweden for a couple of weeks’ worth of touring the old country, starting in Jonkoping (where her mom was born), and touring through the beautiful countryside.

## Solar Power:

The Solar Field in Acton Park is well under way, after years of delays.

## Tarred, but Unfeathered:

In accordance with best-laid plans, the parking lot and driveway for the Church have been well-tarred and



striped, and ready for both cars and kids for another couple of decades. The tars and stripes never looked better!

## **School is Open!**

So where did the summer go? But right on schedule, the WNCS opened its doors and young folks (AKA: kids) streamed in, prepared (perhaps) for another session of readin,' 'ritin' and 'rithmatic and another step toward the time when repentance and regeneration will become more than book learning. So, pay attention, kids! Life awaits you.

## **Vacations:**

It is reported that **Phil and Janna Zuber** had a fabulous time with Phil's two brothers and wives joining them in Zurich, Switzerland, then boarding a lovely smaller cruise ship and traveling down the Rhine. Beautiful sights and memories were made despite the travel nightmares of flying.

**Brad & Kathy Johns** got to spend a week together on a vacation road trip. Kathy reports that "we hunted for Herkimer Diamonds in the famous mine in NY, then fished in Lake Sacandaga for bass, pike & perch (caught 30 fish). On to Vermont for 4 days with the grandchildren right on Lake Champlain, Ben & Jerry's Factory, and a scenic drive through the beautiful state. We ended our vacation in NYC seeing The Lost Boys on Broadway ~ fabulous show. Happy new school year!!"

We imagine that one or two other people took vacations over the summer, so we are also imagining they had such a good time that words failed them when they tried to tell us about what they did.

## **Memories:**

Speaking of memories: Mary Cooper hopes that somebody has one relating to a Nativity Set repair. It seems that the manger and infant baby in their set had been damaged, so she made a replacement. But she forgot to write down the name of the requester. Was it you? If so, please contact Mary.

[Donate to Help Grow the WNCS Scholarship Fund, organized by Erin Stillman](#)

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## *September Anniversaries*

*“Conjugal love has the quality of each one wanting to be the other, completely, and reciprocally. When this is experienced, they are in heavenly happiness.”*

*~ Emanuel Swedenborg AC 2731 ~*



*Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Daric & Jamie Simons ~ 12 yrs.*

*Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> ~ (Edwin) & Nancy Alford ~ 70 yrs.*

*Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> ~ Steve & Anne Ball ~ 39 yrs.*

*Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Bill & Sharon Kunkle ~ 42 yrs.*

*Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> ~ (Fred) & Carole Waelchli ~ 62 yrs.*

*Sept 28<sup>th</sup> ~ Lachy & Kate Maxwell ~ 23 yrs.*

*Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> ~ Bradley & Christine Johns ~ 9 yrs.*