

January 2010

# ECHO

Newsletter of the  
Washington Church of the New Jerusalem

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Dear Friends,

Christmas every year presents us with special opportunities to acknowledge and thank not only the Lord but the people who are special to us – and to the church. Here, first of all, I would like to express my deep appreciation for all those who contributed so powerfully once again to the success of our tableaux. Director James Roscoe came up with the basic plan and facilitated the whole production with the incredibly talented Candy and Emily Quintero as assistants, the reliable and gifted Bonnie Cowley on

sets, Andy Cooper on lights, our wonderful S.M.U.R.F.S. playing the music, and many, many others contributing in critical ways.

Despite the weather, postponement and change to a weekday evening we had strong attendance of around 140, including some 44 children, and a purely delightful event.

On a personal note I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the congregation who surprised us with a great many personal gifts and contributed so generously to the pastors' Christmas bonus. This was a wonderful surprise and will go a long way toward fulfilling some of our dreams at home and with our families. We are *very* grateful.

Welcome to the New Year!



As you'll see, we are beginning our worship services this month with a quarterly holy supper (the next one AFTER this to be on February 21<sup>st</sup>, and then most likely an evening service). This first Sunday is an opportunity to reflect on the benefits and blessings of the Lord's sustaining power, and to present ourselves for a fuller, deeper conjunction with Him.

Naturally, this involves some preparation, and so we recommend any reading of your choice on the topics of repentance, reformation and regeneration in the Heavenly Doctrines, along with the particular disciplines that are outlined there. I don't know about you, but the older I get the more I understand the issues that stand in the way of my own regeneration. But these things should not keep us from the sacrament; they should remind us of how much we need it, so that we can benefit from it – according to *Matthew* 5, verses 4 and 6.

Please note our TWO special guest speakers this month, the Rev. Eric Carswell visiting over the second weekend and representing all the work of education in the church, and the Rev. Dr. Reuben Bell, a very popular speaker from Fryeburg, Maine, coming to us for the last weekend of the month. See announcements elsewhere in this issue of the ECHO.

Also note that on the last Sunday of the month we begin a 7-week series of sermons on the prophet Elijah. Each sermon in the series will introduce a new topic for discussion in the many small groups that will be meeting weekly to explore the stories in depth and see their application to our daily lives. Everyone is invited to enroll in the discussion program, which will be hosted for groups of 8 to 12 at members' homes during the series, *which is designed especially with newcomers in mind*. Sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board at church or you can call the church office for help enrolling. Again, see the notice elsewhere in this issue for more details.

Finally, on calendar items, our SOCIETY MEETING at 8:00 pm at the church on January 15<sup>th</sup> will be a great opportunity for member input and feedback on all the work of the church, not to mention updates on projects currently in the works. Please consider this your official notice!

And now a word about ACTON PARK.

Pretty soon, hopefully we can begin referring to this as ACTION Park, since all the preliminary plans for further development have been approved *and bids have started coming in for road and sewer construction*. Really now all that stands in the way of going forward this spring is... you guessed it, MONEY. What this means (especially since the economy went south) is that we may have to PRE-SELL some of the lots before we can begin road construction.

There are 12 lots available, and pricing on them should be ready within a month. Advertising throughout the church will commence early in the New Year. Meanwhile the Acton Park Board asks that you speak to any church members you know who may be interested in purchasing a lot – either for future resale, just to help us get under way, or for their own future home. Interested parties may contact me or Brent Hyatt (301-352-5757). Hope to see some big machinery on that land this spring!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Gladish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

### Sermon Topics for January

3<sup>rd</sup> **Quarterly Holy Supper.** Both pastors will be on chancel for this service. There will be a children's talk as usual (by MDG) but the whole service will focus on the sacrament and "new beginnings." MEF will give the main address.

10<sup>th</sup> 9:30 am FAMILY SERVICE – The Rev. Eric Carswell, the bishop's rep for education, will be visiting this weekend and will present this service. Topic to be announced...

10<sup>th</sup> 11:00 am TRADITIONAL SERVICE **Forgiveness:** what it is and what it isn't (Matt. 18:21-35). Having trouble letting go of something? Maybe this will help. – MDG

17<sup>th</sup> **Innocent Victims in the Word** (Psalm 137:8-9). Why do babies in the Word die for the sins of their parents? How can we reconcile such things with God's love? – MDG

24<sup>th</sup> **Fear and Courage** (Deut. 31:6). What are YOU afraid of? And how does courage work for you? The Word has much to teach us on this topic and it is all very practical! – MDG

31<sup>st</sup> **Elijah Fed by Ravens** (I Kings 17-17). This is the first in a 7-week series on Elijah, which we are studying in connection with the new "Journey" program called "Living Courageously." And we are very fortunate to have as a guest preacher today the Rev. Dr. Reuben Bell, who will be here for the whole weekend, also speaking to us at the banquet on Saturday evening. More information elsewhere in the ECHO.

### **From the Assistant**

I travel once a month to lead worship at the Baltimore New Church. The church is situated in the midst of a diverse neighborhood of people from all walks of life. We are grateful for many positive aspects of our situation. The Baltimore Society owns the church building. We are visible to the surrounding community. People drive by the church each day. Some walk

their dogs on the property. Our guardian angels pick up paper that the wind may have blown onto the church lawn. Our church is part of the Chinquapin Civic Improvement Association, a non-profit organization dedication to service to the community.

A plan to increase the frequency of worship has been proposed. This plan calls for me to preach in Baltimore twice a month. To supplement this effort a minister would be placed in York, PA to serve that congregation and the one in Elizabethtown. This minister would also travel to Baltimore twice a month.

Theoretically, on an alternating basis another minister and I could serve the Baltimore society which then could offer regular, weekly worship.

This scenario would open up a whole new world of possibilities. Once we began offering weekly worship we can reach out to the community surrounding the church. Our current worship schedule (September – June) makes it very awkward to promote a church that worships once a month, on the second Sunday, then the third, then the second, and so on. This kind of irregular scheduling is almost impossible to fit within the framework of an orderly outreach effort. Right now I just don't know how to promote a church that currently worships once a month and not at all in July and August.

Our congregants remain dedicated even though we are small in number. But we are big in faith and full of hope as we continue each month undeterred. I like to compare us to that little mustard seed that will flourish, not in a day, but over time into a beautiful, magnificent plant where the birds may build their nests. Meanwhile, we make use of what (and who) we have, believing that the Lord will bless our work.

In the face of challenges and various struggles we march forward. However, we're not blind to reality. We just have to maximize the uses performed by our small number of volunteers. Circumstances require that we accomplish what is absolutely necessary regarding maintenance of the church building. We must exercise prudence in respect to financial issues. I do not consider our small group as destitute. I wouldn't classify our situation as a crisis either. While

we're dedicated to our uses, we're also sensitive to the resources available to us.

I want to invite you to worship with us. As Baltimore's nearest neighbor and sister society, Washington can do a great deal to support the Baltimore society's effort by joining them in worship when possible. A healthy Baltimore society will be a real asset to the growth of the New Church in entire area. Our worship is at 11:00 am on these dates: Jan 24; Feb 21; March 21; April 18; May 16; and June 13. If you're inspired to join us, please speak with me. There's much more I'd like to share with you.

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

*Dear Washington Society,*

*We wish to express our sincere thanks to all of you for the wonderful gifts you've given us during the Christmas season. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and cherish your kind words of encouragement. Your love for us is priceless. May the Lord bless you all the days of your life.*

*~ Michael, Janet and Jonathan.*

### ***Report on Pastor's Council***

By the pastor

There were ten members present at our last meeting (on December 10<sup>th</sup>). In addition to the items listed on the agenda in last month's ECHO we also discussed the Christmas Eve service, the Holy Supper, and the fruit offerings at Thanksgiving. Most members of the council had done their "homework" by contacting their constituents in order to get input for the meeting, all of which was well received. If you have any questions on reading this report please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the council for more information. Here is a short summary of what transpired.

My first item was to ask about the possibility of "serious" refreshments every Sunday after worship services, thinking especially about those who travel long distances to attend. The

discussion surprised me as most members, some with long histories of travel for church, felt that this was not necessary and might even interfere with family commitments. In addition we are stretched pretty thin on volunteers just now. So we will not be going forward with this at this time, but on a suggestion I did agree to conduct a survey of those who drive long distances, to see what we can do to enhance their worship experience when they make that commitment.

Next we discussed the informal family services, most people reporting that they continue to be well received and appreciated, and that the supper room is preferred over the sanctuary for these.

Then we had a quick review of the Thanksgiving service, especially in view of the changes Michael and I introduced at that time, and again, we heard very positive things. Many liked the congregational readings, though some said they were a bit long. Everyone seemed to enjoy having both pastors share the service, including the sermon. A few remarked that they felt overall it went long for the young kids, but this is a perennial challenge at festival services, as we try to accommodate both young and old, and even so it only went for about 45 minutes. What we had hoped was that the variety in the service would keep the young ones engaged.

By the time you read this we will have had our Christmas Eve service, but the conclusion of our discussion above was that we would try a similar approach for that evening.

With regard to the holy supper, the main concern had to do with the announcements made during recent services, which disturbed the sphere of worship for at least one person. We all agreed that care should be taken to preserve the sphere but several also said they felt a new and warm sense of welcome at the holy supper because of these announcements. All of these are points well taken. In addition I confirmed that individual cups will continue to be offered during Holy Suppers, for those who have health concerns or who prefer this way of receiving the wine.

Regarding the fruit offerings at Thanksgiving, concern was raised about the fact that ripe fruits and vegetables sometimes cannot be delivered to the appropriate charities until many days after the service. This means that some of those offerings have to be thrown away before they are ever used. We agreed to look further into this and find a good solution before next year.

The topic of pastoral services for members outside of Mitchellville was greeted with enthusiasm and strong support – with just a caution that we don’t expect too much of our pastors. It is not clear at this writing exactly how we will meet this need, but as your pastor I am committed to finding a way. I’m especially concerned for the children and young people out there, and hope we can organize some appropriate functions for all ages. If any of you reading this has good ideas please don’t hesitate to communicate with me or any council member. We (council members) have agreed to stay in touch between meetings, so the conversation will be ongoing.

There were a few questions about property and renovation issues and I was pleased to be able to report that all of them are currently being addressed by the church board. If you’d like more information please don’t hesitate to ask.

Concerns about the controversies swirling around the Academy and the General Church were noted, but not discussed in any detail. Again, if you have concerns please see the pastor, or go, if possible, to the source. Our leaders need your input.

The last item on our agenda was a proposed new plan to support our sister congregation in Baltimore. This involves the hope that Michael will be able to preach there twice a month, rather than travelling more widely throughout the country, and also that one or more other ministers will visit there on the alternate Sundays – for a full program of *weekly services*. If we can make this happen in the New Year we will be asking some of YOU to attend there from time to time by way of encouragement. Please see Michael’s article, “From the Assistant Pastor.”

I'd like to thank the members of the council once again for their strong and thoughtful contributions to the leadership of this congregation. They (and you) are all greatly appreciated.

#### Friday Classes for January

8<sup>th</sup> Rev. Eric Carswell, vice chancellor of the Academy and bishop's rep for education, will speak on Education of the Will. Eric will be visiting our school and consulting with our teaching staff on Friday, and will also preach at the family service on Sunday morning.

15<sup>th</sup> SOCIETY MEETING: Although there will be some business items this event is primarily for the discussion and development of our vision, goals and plans as a congregation – a sort of open forum, or “town hall” meeting if you will. All are welcome, whether enrolled as members or not. A pastor's report will set the stage for your response and contributions.

22<sup>nd</sup> Racial Judgments & Stereotypes in the Word. This class follows after the sermon on the 17<sup>th</sup> and takes the issues further, also allowing for discussion. What can we make of sweeping judgments about people in any form of revelation, including the Writings? Let's look at this together. – MDG

29<sup>th</sup> (*Saturday*) Swedenborg Commemorative Banquet. We are very privileged to have as our guest speaker the Rev. Dr. Reuben Bell, of Fryeburg, Maine, speaking on Swedenborg's preparation for the revelations he received, and correlations between his natural and spiritual work. This is an area of special interest to Dr. Bell given his medical and theological training. He will also preach for us on that same weekend.

## Men's Breakfast Discussion Group



MEN! This is for YOU. Last summer I wrote for the ECHO about an idea I've been thinking about for years, and now I'd like to try it. The idea is that we get together once a month for a discussion over breakfast about a NON-New Church book of our choice, that we can relate to our New Church teachings and consider from that point of view. My first suggestion is the book "What's So Great About Christianity," by Dinesh D'Souza. As an alternative, and just for argument's sake, we could discuss the book, "God is Not Great," subtitled "How Religion Poisons Everything," by Christopher Hitchens. Both books are available in the library or from Barnes & Noble, and we could have our first meeting deciding which one (or another) to tackle first.

*Guys, this is NOT a class or a personal sharing group!* It's just an opportunity to do a little extra-curricular reading and have a short intellectual discussion outside the ordinary sphere of the church, while we do something we need to do anyway – eat breakfast. I have scheduled the first one for **Saturday morning, January 9<sup>th</sup>, at 8:30 am at T. J. Elliott's Restaurant**, a nice, out-of-the-way place about a half mile north of Rte. 450 on Rte 197 – in a plaza just north of the Bowie Post Office. Typical breakfast there is about \$8.00 and they tell me it's not very busy on Saturday mornings (unlike the IHOP, which is a zoo).

I would GREATLY appreciate it if you would let me know ahead of time if you plan to join us. Possibly Eric Carswell will also come, as he will be visiting here from Bryn Athyn that weekend. Still, if you can't decide until the last minute, just show up; we can always pull another table into the group. See you there?! – MDG

**From the Board of Trustees:**

Notes from the Board of Trustees Meeting on December 1, 2009

- Trustees in attendance were Steve Ball, Andy Cooper, Sharon Cooper, Brent Hyatt, Keith Hyatt, Wynne Hyatt, Dean Smith, and Stewart Smith. Also in attendance were Rev. Mike Gladish, Rev. Michael Ferrell, Acting Principal Kathy Johns, and George Cooper.
- Rev. Gladish gave a Pastor's Report, stating that he feels comfortable with his understanding of how the Society operates, and looks forward to becoming more involved in development planning, and promoting growth, but in a responsible manner. He discussed the Strategic plan and vision documents, as well as the Southeast district Scholarship fund.
- Keith Hyatt gave a Treasurer's report, including discussion of school tuition policies.
- Kathy Johns gave a School report, discussing the school's late acceptance policy, Scott Daum's visit to our school from the Academy, and problems with the school's main printer. The security committee requests installation of a buzzer/doorbell or security code for the front door, so that the front door does not need to be unlocked all day.
- Col. Dean Smith agreed to serve as Chair of the Board for the next three month period.
- The Board discussed the General Church Capital Campaign and the Healthy Church program. George Cooper is working on a New Tribune newsletter to help clarify and describe how the program will work for our Society. The letter to the General Church, specifying our Society's intents and plans for the Healthy Church match, should go out next week.
- Subsequent to this Trustees meeting, the job of Principal of the Washington New Church School was offered to and accepted by Kathy Johns, following approval of the Society Bylaws permitting a lay principal at the Society meeting. Congratulations, Kathy!

## Announcements

**Honorable Students:** Congratulations to our Academy of the New Church Secondary Students who have achieved honor roll for the first term 2009-10 – **Erika Hyatt, Kathleen Smith, Derek Hyatt and John Kunkle.**

You are invited to join in the Journey program, “Living



**Courageously”** based on the story of the great prophet of the Lord, Elijah. *What is “Living Courageously”?* “Living Courageously” is a seven week spiritual growth program (beginning Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>) where participants will make a commitment to work on spiritual growth.

There will be several ways one can participate in this program:

- 1) Worshiping together on Sundays
- 2) Participating in a discussion group
- 3) Individual weekly reading
- 4) Attend weekly Friday doctrinal classes

The Sunday sermons, weekly readings, small groups and doctrinal classes will be coordinated around the focus of Living Courageously. Please join us.

For more information and to find out how to participate, contact the Pastor – Mike Gladish or program coordinator – **Sharon Kunkle** – Sharon@wlc.name.

**Work Party:** We will have another work party at the church, Saturday, January 16th at 9:00 AM. This will be preceded by a pancake breakfast at 8:00AM prepared by the Youth Group.

There is always lots of work to do around here to make the building and grounds more efficient, safe and presentable AND your volunteer efforts save the church money. Besides, it is a whole lot of fun working with your fellow New Churchmen (and women) taking care of our church building

**Thank You:** We are so grateful to the person who handed us a bag of lavender-themed Carters baby clothes while Shaunti was in utero. Many thanks! Becca and Lincoln Smith

### **THETA ALPHA INTERNATIONAL S.S.T.P.**



The Theta Alpha International Sunday School Translation Project, started in the fall of 2003, has as its goal the translation into French and publication of four levels of *Jacob's Ladder* Religion Lessons. These are presently used as the basis of the Sunday school program in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, where they are being enjoyed by many. They will be distributed to all the congregations in Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Benin, and any other French-speaking country that wants them.

The Theta Alpha International Executive Committee has decided to put 2010 Theta Alpha *Journal* contributions toward the Sunday School Translation Project, in part to compensate for not having produced a *Journal* in 2009. (You will see this reflected on the dues notices which were recently sent out.) We are grateful to have a new *Journal* editor coming aboard, Angela Rose, who will work towards getting us back into our biannual publication pattern.

Thank you for your patience as we worked to find volunteers willing to manage the big commitment of *Journal* editorship, and thank you also, in advance, for your generosity towards the Sunday School Translation Project and our other uses. We look forward to playing our part in helping people throughout the world grow closer to the Lord God, Jesus Christ, in His Second Coming!

### **News Nots**

**Q:** So, what do you get when the news notes lady gets busy with the Christmas bustle, and forgets her Echo duties?

**A:** News Nots!

Yet, we cannot let one particular event go unmarked in our annals (along with a few other highlights)

**LET IT SNOW!** Those who went to pick up high school and college students from ANC (or anywhere else for that matter) on December 18<sup>th</sup> had just time to gather our chickens under the wing in Mitchellville when the blizzard of 2009 hit!! Visitors and family returning home for the holidays faced extended and perilous trips in fast and furiously falling flakes!

**December highlights:**

***A Welcome Visitor to WNCS:*** We had the pleasure of hosting **Scott Daum**, new Director of New Church Education, in our school on Wednesday and Thursday. He is visiting all the small church schools in North America to become familiar with the staff and the programs we offer. He'll be back for another visit at our Open House in February. Thanks for coming, Scott

***Other WNCS News:*** All of WNCS enjoyed a Metro ride to the National Geographic Museum in DC where they viewed an exhibit of the "Terra Cotta Warriors", A few days latter the students treated parents, grandparents and friends to an evening of song, bells and poetry – "Christmas Through the Ages". What great performances we enjoyed from our adorable Jr. Ks – through our talented upper school students – and in several languages to boot! A video was done of this program. Be on the lookout for a secured video link to it.

***Theta Alpha Guild Christmas Program:*** **Phil and Janna Zuber** opened their home again for this annual event. An inspiring and thought provoking talk by our own Mike Gladish was given on the symbolism in the Christmas Story. As usual this was a lovely event, even better attended than usual due to the addition of Janna's Sisters and family that were passing through following memorial services. An added treat was **Nini (Janet Doering)** played "Calm On the Listening Ear" for all of us to sing along. Nini remarked that this was her last year... of course, that's what she said last year!

***The Tableaux:*** As mentioned in the Pastor's article, many people volunteered toward successful Tableaux this year. In spite of a postponement and lots of ice and snow, the tableaux were lovely

and well attended. I overheard several people commenting on how delightful it was to have New Church doctrine added to the Tableaux infilling the already familiar stories.

*Visitors:* There are and will be many visitors over the holidays not mentioned here, yet we want to note that **Devin & Suzanne Zuber** and their two little girls came across the big pond from Germany to visit family and friends. It was fun to see Janna (Nanna) & Phil Zuber doting over their little grandchildren at the sing. Please let the News Notes Editor know if you had visitors you would like mentioned in next Echo.

Through Christmas and into the New Year, enjoy happy times wrapping and unwrapping, and enjoying family and --- digging snow!

The New Year looks bright for the Washington New Church, as projects for renovations and extensions of our uses here unfold. Many thanks to all those who have poured hours into these projects and events to make them happen.

