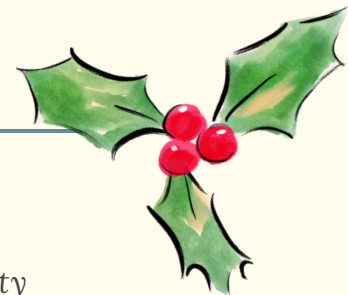




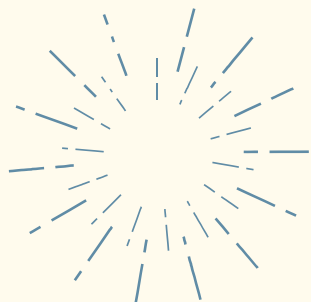
New Church

DECEMBER 2021



BISHOP'S NEWSLETTER

Your connection to General Church vision and community



"...Divine Providence is present within the smallest details of all, and people in the stream of providence are being carried along constantly towards happier things, whatever appearance the means may present."
Arcana Coelestia 8478

From the Desk of the Bishop

Friends,

The Lord is with you. Like so many of you, each year I revisit the Christmas story to drink in the familiar names and events which serve as the inspiration for our celebrations. This year a five-word phrase jumped out—words that were said to Mary but which stand as a comforting truth for us all: “The Lord is with you.” It’s part of a larger greeting, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!” (Luke 1:28).

Considering those five words, we note that the Lord said them to many people whose lives are recorded in the Word—to Joshua as he was about to lead the Israelites into Canaan—“The Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9); to His disciples in the resurrection—“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Mathew 28:20); and to all of us in the most famous of the Psalms: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me...” (23:4). It is also why He chose to be called by the name Immanuel, “which is translated ‘God with us’” (Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 7:14).

The Lord wants us to know and to believe deeply that He is with us in all things of life. As we read in the Heavenly Doctrines, “‘And God will be with you’ means the Lord’s Divine Providence.... For when the Lord is with someone He leads that person and makes provision so that all that happens, whether sad or joyful, may bring him what is good. This is Divine Providence” (Arcana Coelestia 6303).

A prayer that I set before you is that this season be one where you experience the Lord’s presence, and renew your commitment to work with Him as He leads you forward in His providence to what is good.

With affection,
Peter
peter.buss.Jr@newchurch.org

Note from the editor:

On behalf of everyone at the General Church, we wish you a very merry Christmas. We hope this installment offers opportunity for reflection on the deeply hopeful story of Christmas story that we never tire of celebrating. Please share your thoughts and reactions with us via [this form](#) - we are excited to hear about what works and what we can do better.

~ Marijke
Bau-Madsen,
Communications
Director

CONNECTING TO SCRIPTURE

WORSHIP



And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

God could not have created the universe and all things in it unless He were Human. This may be very clearly understood from the fact that love and wisdom, mercy and compassion, exist in God.... Not one of these qualities is possible abstracted from a human being....

Divine Love and Wisdom 286

We invite you to consider these passages and the wonder of the advent. Click below for full suggested readings.

[John 1; Divine Love and Wisdom 285-289](#)

The intention of this section is to offer you a moment of appreciation for the deep relationship between the Word and the Writings. Which passages of the Word and the Writings do you see as connected to each other? Let us know [here!](#)

It's not too late - [subscribe to our annual Christmas reading emails!](#)

We asked Rev. Pearse Frazier to sum up the power of the Lord's Advent in less than 100 words. Here's what he said:

CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

"Seeing God as Human helps us relate to Him. Love, wisdom, mercy and compassion are not abstract philosophical ideas. They are human qualities we can recognize in ourselves. Take a moment and imagine someone in your life you love. Maybe even close your eyes and take a moment to do just that. I'll wait...."

When you reflect on the love you have for someone, that feeling can give you an idea of the love the Lord has for you and all of humanity. He loves you, and everyone like that, and even more!"

[Stream New Church Audio sermon on Christmas from Walter Orthwein](#)

GENERAL CHURCH PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

LEARN



The General Church Publication Committee is dedicated to publishing General Church translations of the Writings and collateral literature, and welcomes submissions or suggestions by church members for consideration. A full color catalog is available on request from www.newchurchbooks.com.

GENERAL CHURCH PUBLICATION COMMITTEE CONT.

NEW: Prayer and Providence from the General Church Publication Committee. A compilation of interesting, encouraging sermons by Rev. Mike Gladish. An introduction on prayer, specific treatment of the Lord's Prayer, Providence, and a section with mostly expository sermons illustrating the principles discussed. Beautifully covered paperback; 285 pages. ISBN: 978-0-945003-79-3, at the Cathedral bookstore and Amazon.com \$15.00 USD.



Prayer and Providence

a collection of sermons reflecting the unique perspective and many challenging questions arising during a long pastoral career

the Rev. Michael Gladish

HEARTFELT BIBLE CHRISTMAS VIDEOS

The General Church Education team offers you six short videos for children told with felt figures. Five tell [stories directly from the Word](#), while the final video tells the complete Christmas story in a song called [Bethlehem Lay Sleeping](#). Access all videos on the [New Church Vineyard website](#).



[Click to access a Vineyard compilation of Christmas readings and activities for all ages!](#)

CONNECT



- We are very pleased to announce that Greg Henderson has accepted the position of Assistant Coordinator of New Church Schools as of July 1, 2022.
- Assistant Bishop Brad Heinrichs was delighted to attend the dedication of Temple Bethel in Benin this November. Brad reports that the ceremony was an especially joyful occasion and was given in English, French, and Fon, the native language.
- After 31 years of dedicated service to New Church education at Kainon School in Westville, South Africa, Jane Edmunds has retired. We owe her a debt of gratitude for a job well done and we wish her the best in the years to come.
- Merry Christmas from all at the General Church. Please [click here](#) to receive a video message of good tidings from the Executive and Assistant Bishops!

SOCIETY NEWS & EVENTS

If you'd like to support the General Church before the end of the year, you can do so here:



Click to the left to see our annual appeal in action, complete with a reminder: we are not born for our own sake.

Follow us:

