

Olivet New Church

CHATTERBOX

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Number 11

Merry Christmas—Made Brighter by the Dark

In a recent Arcana Coelestia class, we entered into a discussion of the reasons why the Lord was born on this earth. The section of the Arcana that we were studying at the time is a most difficult section dealing with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the escape of Lot and his two daughters, and finally the birth of their two children, Moab and Ammon.

The statement is made that greater details of some parts of these stories will not be explored as they “do violence to our ideas and give offence to chaste ears.” (AC 2466) Some of the things mentioned in the Word are deeply disturbing. There are evils that disturb the mind if described, and which generally are considered inappropriate to discuss in “polite company.” There are many extremely violent stories related to the many wars of the Old Testament.

What does this have to do with the Lord’s birth? We learn in the Word of the New Church that the Lord came to be born on this earth because we are among the most external, evil people in the universe. Jesus said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” (Mark 217)

Christmas is a wonderful time to focus on innocence, peace and joy. It is a special time to celebrate the Lord’s birth. Nothing should diminish the celebration. In the heavens, the celebrations of the Lord’s advent are accompanied with magnificent light shows, beautiful singing, and concerts. (CL 81)

The best celebrations are with those who are most keenly aware of depths of hell from which they have been saved by the Lord’s coming. The celestial angels are in touch with the depravity of their own natures and how powerfully the Lord withholds them from their own evils. The angels and inhabitants of our earth were in greatest need of salvation, as we are most depraved. The Lord came here because we relate to the most external functions of the body (AC 8630, 9360), like the skin.

As we turn our minds and hearts to the Lord in thanksgiving and celebration of the Christmas story, we are able to consider deeply what is most blessed about this story. Things of light and beauty are better able to be appreciated when considered in contrast to things that are dark and ugly (TCR 763). No one likes to think about evil and darkness. The Arcana class is very eager to get on to the next, more uplifting section of Volume 3! However, we must relate each thing from the Word to ourselves, as the Lord is not interested in teaching us history, psychology, science, or the nature of other people’s evils and falsities. He gives us the Word so we can each apply what is written to our own spiritual needs. The Christmas story is a story of the Lord coming to us personally.

Celebrations of Christmas include acknowledging Herod as well as the shepherds and wise men. Joseph had a very hard time accepting Mary’s “being found with child,” in contrast to Elizabeth being filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaiming prophecy. The Lord came to heal the sick—that’s us! And our

celebrations are all the more genuine when we praise Him for coming into our personal spiritual lives with “healing in His wings.” (Mal. 4:2)

So, it is good to take the time to reflect on what needs healing, what needs redemption, and forgiveness in our own lives. It is good to be in touch with the dark, so that the “season of lights” and the celebration of this Christmas holiday can be all the brighter.

Rev. Michael Cowley

From the Pastor

Society meeting on January 17, 2018: A year ago, we had two society meetings to discuss the Olivet School. The results of those meetings led into some intensive work with school marketing and outreach. At that time, we also noted the need to have the same kind of meeting to discuss the society’s needs. We will have more information about the meeting in the January *Chatterbox*, but save the date for attending this important meeting.

Pastor’s Council: The last two Pastor’s Council meetings have included agenda items related to our worship services, pastoral work, and Sunday School programming. Regarding this last subject, we explored ways to open up and extend the meaningful time for the children attending the Sunday School. There are still details to work out, but one idea which impacts the society overall is a change to the after-church refreshment time in order to allow the children a play area to engage them after church. We are looking at a six-week trial period in January and February. More details will follow.

Baden-Powell Day (part of Scout-Guide Week) – February 18, 2018: Olivet will host a Baden-Powell Day celebration during our Sunday service. Again, more details will follow.

Bishop (Episcopal) Selection Process – trying a new process on February 14, 2018: As mentioned at our annual meeting this past October, the priesthood will be electing a new executive bishop this coming June at the Clergy Meetings in Bryn Athyn. This is the normal process by which the priesthood and thus the General Church governs itself and selects new leadership. What is new in this round of episcopal selection is the introduction of a more formalized counseling process by means of which the priests who nominate and elect the Bishop are informed by their congregations. I found the letter which Rev. Eric Carswell, pastor of the Bryn Athyn Church, sent to his membership a most valuable tool for this. Instead of reinventing the wheel, I took this letter to Pastor’s Council for discussion and now, with Eric’s permission, I would like to share it with the Olivet Society in preparation for our February 14th meeting. After reading and discussing the letter below (which I will have available at the office for people to fill out and bring to the meeting), Pastor’s Council wished to add a line related to their appreciation of Bishop Buss’ championing the subject of Conjugal Love during his tenure, and put that subject into the ranking list, as well as a line related to recruitment and mentoring new priests.

Rev. Michael Cowley

Desirable Qualities in the Next Executive Bishop

This coming June the International Council of the Clergy of the General Church of the New Jerusalem (GCNJ) will nominate a candidate for the position of Executive Bishop to take over that position from the current Executive Bishop Brian Keith when he steps down at the end of June 2019. In nominating a new Executive Bishop, there are many qualities and experiences that might be considered highly important to help someone serve the GCNJ in the coming years. This is somewhat similar to what happens when a congregation defines the qualities that they hope for in their next pastor. Inevitably, no real human being has them all.

A person's life experience tends to affect his perspectives and leadership. My observation is that Bishop Willard Pendleton (serving 1961-76) brought a strong dedication to New Church education and significant experience leading the Academy to his time as Executive Bishop. Bishop Louis King (1976-91) brought his extensive and recent experience serving in congregations outside of Bryn Athyn and gave attention to this part of the church during his tenure and the substantial growth in the number of societies and circles. Bishop Peter Buss (1991-2004) was the first person to be Bishop who was both born outside of the USA and had international pastoral leadership experience. It was telling that his first words to the Assembly upon taking his role was to speak greetings in eight or more different languages. Bishop Tom Kline (2004-13) had the experience of serving first as Assistant Pastor and then Head Pastor to Bryn Athyn for 23 years before becoming Executive Bishop. Unlike the previous bishops, Tom had almost no time as assistant Bishop to learn the ropes. Brian Keith has brought the balance of out-of-Bryn Athyn experience, time as the Dean of the Theological School, a number of years as Principal of the Bryn Athyn Church School, and 8 years serving as Asst. Bishop.

If you had to do a "forced ranking" of the following, which one would you rate highest and which lower in descending order? I'm happy to get your ranking.

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ Strong doctrinal leadership | _____ Energy and health for a rigorous job |
| _____ Lead to broad sense of unity in the GCNJ | _____ Support for outreach |
| _____ Support for translation work for many languages | _____ Support for New Church education |
| _____ Ability to relate to many different people | _____ Inspiring preacher/speaker |
| _____ Executive leadership and management skills | _____ Ability to lead the laity of the GCNJ |
| _____ Ability to lead the GCNJ offices | _____ Ability to lead GCNJ and ANC Boards |
| _____ A wife who can do extensive travel with him | _____ Recognized wisdom and humility |
| _____ Strong support for the GCNJ internationally | |
| _____ Other _____ | |

From the Assistant to the Pastor

December is one of my favourite times to be a pastor. I look forward very much to sharing this season's stories with you. The Christmas story is many things, and innocence and tenderness are not the only qualities that reach out from it and compel us—but innocence is, more and more, what I find I'm stirred by in this story. It's what I hope to rejoice in with you.

I will be away in Dawson Creek at the beginning of December, but after that I will be on the chancel every Sunday until Christmas. On the day after Christmas, my family and I will be going to Bryn Athyn to spend some holiday time with our extended families; we'll be back early on in the new year.

Yet again, I have the privilege of being a part of the Christmas Tableaux. If you have any interest in being a part of them yourself, make sure you take a look at Justine's note, included a little further on.

The Lord bless you and your loved ones this holiday season,

Rev. Jared Buss

From the Principal

Our open house on the November 15 was a fun event! The whole building was spiffed up and ready for guests! The classrooms were cleaned, scrubbed, and displayed the children's work to its best advantage. In the lobby, we had Sonya (sonya@autoplayartstudio.com) set up an art gallery with her amazing paintings; she is taking orders for commissioned works – her specialty is portraits. Please pick up her card in the lobby to contact her if you are interested or have questions. She is donating 20% of her proceeds back to Olivet for our United for Puerto Rico Fund.



Artist and storyteller Nathalie Vachon entertained young and old alike with her amazing storytelling! The children's faces glowed with excitement as she led them down one story path after another and as they interacted with sounds, songs, and movement.

After many years without, Olivet has a parent council once again. This group will

be in charge of some fundraising and some of the fun events we do around the school. I am very grateful to Marcela Mendonça, My Ly La, and Kim Parker who form the core of the group.

Olivet School is participating in the Etobicoke Lakeshore Santa Claus Parade on December 2. This is a family event, and if you and your little ones would like to join in, please contact either me at principal@olivetschool.ca or the newly formed Olivet Parent Council at olivetparentcouncil@gmail.com. We will meet and register in the lobby of the Second Street School at 8:45 am. Gabriele or the Parent Council can give you guidelines on the costumes you may wear.

Following the parade, those interested in attending the Skate with Santa at Colonel Samuel Smith Park can go to <http://lakeshoresantaclausparade.com/skate-with-santa/>. This part is not part of the school event, just for your information.

Gabriele Pulpan

Sunday School News

We recently finished this year's 5-week Journey Program, "Practicing Forgiveness." The children's Journey was based on 5 stories from Jesus' ministry and looked at how the Lord helps us to both give and accept forgiveness.

We learned that the the Lord will never turn away from us and will always welcome us back. We need to forgive others, as the Lord wants us to follow Him on a path of forgiveness, and when we forgive we are free to move, just like the paralyzed man.

There were many fun activities this year such as identifying mystery scents (Taika gue ssed them all), making scented jars, writing in shaving cream, acting out the story of the paralyzed man, and creating our own moving picture.

Katherine Jutras



Christmas Tableaux 2017

An invitation: Please join us at 10:30 am on Sunday, December 17 for the Olivet New Church Christmas Tableaux service. There will be special music, including performances by the Olivet School children's choir, and the Christmas story will be depicted in living pictures.

Call for volunteers: What better way to get into the Christmas spirit than by participating in Tableaux? If you'd like to be involved in Tableaux either as a performer or behind the scenes (props, costumes, etc.), please contact director Justine Buss at justinebbuss@gmail.com or 647-745-2111.

Tentative rehearsal schedule overview: Tableaux practices will take place at the Olivet New Church in the evening on Monday, December 11 and Tuesday, December 12 and a mandatory dress rehearsal will be on Saturday, December 16 from morning to early afternoon. Lunch will be provided.

Not all performers will be needed for every rehearsal period. Cast members will receive a more detailed rehearsal schedule in December. It's not a huge time commitment and it is such a gift to the community. Please note that we would like some older children to be involved. We will only give them parts that won't conflict with the school choir performance. Thank you for contributing your time and talent to this special service!

Justine Buss



Thanks!

In the first weeks of November, we had poppy boxes from a Mississauga Legion in our building. The Legion would very much like to thank us for all our contributions.

Kathleen McClure Fountain Award Seeking some historical information—can you help?

We are seeking information about the recipients of this award for the years 2000, 2001, and 2002. We believe that the award was first made in 1999 to our own Chatterbox editor Claire (Sheldon) Hurd. We have the list of recipients from 2003 onwards. Do you know who received an award in those missing years? If you do, please let me know so that we can complete the new plaque that is being designed.

Lynn Starkey



You are invited to the Olivet Women's Christmas Potluck Dinner

Date: Friday, December 1, 2017

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Location: 2 Lorraine Gardens, Etobicoke

The house across from Olivet Church & School

Please bring a main course, salad or dessert to share and a pair of children's or women's socks or underwear (all sizes) that will be donated to Women's Habitat Shelter in Etobicoke.

Contact info: gwendacowley2@gmail.com or 647-882-1620

New Year's Day Cowley Open House

Come share a cup of good cheer to start the New Year! All are invited to a New Year's Day open house at the manse between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm in the afternoon of January 1, 2018.

Michael and Gwenda

You are invited to the Christian Men's Christmas Dinner & Carol Sing

This is an evening of great food and having fun together – come join us!

Date: Friday, December 8, 2017

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Olivet Church Hall

Cost: \$10.00

RSVP to:

Patrick Horigan at 905-873-0873

phorigan@cogeco.net or

Erik Parker at 647-271-7617

erik_parker@rogers.com



Kitchener Youth Weekend – Oct 27-29, 2017

A total of 40 teens (grades 7-12) attended the youth weekend sponsored by the General Church in Canada that was held at the Carmel New Church in Kitchener from October 27-29, 2017. Head organizer for this weekend, Rev. Nathan Cole, and 14 teens attended from the Kitchener society. Rev. Brett Buick and Rev. Judah Synnestvedt and 13 teens from the Kempton society in Pennsylvania along with chaperone Alison Cole (of Bryn Athyn, PA) also attended the weekend, as well as chaperone/driver Robert Uber along with four teens from the Pittsburgh society. Rev. Elmo Acton brought two teens from the Oak Arbor society in Michigan and two teens from Glenview society (near Chicago). Rev. Jared Buss and chaperone Naomi Reid brought four teens from the Olivet society and Rev. Matthew Genzlinger brought one teen from the Boston/Concord society.



Getting to a youth weekend requires a considerable amount of travel time for many of the participants and drivers, but it is worth the drive. These weekends provide spiritual instruction in New Church doctrine and much needed contact and social time for teens so they can know firsthand that there are lots of other young people that exist in this church. This is something they might not otherwise have the chance to learn, especially if they happen to belong to a smaller church group. It is fortunate that the ministers, drivers, and chaperones for these events are willing to do what it takes to make them happen. As a chaperone, I am

fortunate to be able to attend the spiritual discussion session and church services that happen throughout the weekend.

One of the ideas that I learned at this event about prayer (the theme for this weekend) was that when we approach the Lord in prayer, we are to remove the sandals from our feet as Moses was commanded to do before receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. Rev. Brad Heinrichs explained that this means that we are to put our natural concerns aside (like thinking about what we will be eating at the next meal or worrying about our finances) and focus instead on what the Lord has to teach us throughout His Word.

Another useful idea I came away with is that when we pray, we should not attempt to limit the Lord's providence with our prayer. The example that was given was that we shouldn't pray for our job not to end, but instead pray for the Lord's will to be done regarding our job or other concerns in our life. We may not realize it at that time, but if our job ends, perhaps the Lord has something better in store for us if we are open to His guidance. If we approach prayer to the Lord with this attitude, He can bless us in the way that He sees fit through His divine providence.

Rev. Nathan Cole led an interesting and interactive spiritual discussion exploring the deeper meanings that exist in all of the different phrases of the Lord's Prayer. We also talked about when, how and for what we should pray. He let us know that the Writings tell us that we should pray in the morning to ask for the Lord's guidance for the day, in the evening to thank the Lord for the blessings that He has provided for us throughout the day, and also at mealtimes. We can also pray any time we want to ask the Lord to help us with our lives and that the Lord's will be done in all things.

The ministers and chaperones each helped with various aspects of the weekend and once again, the weekend was very successful. Although I didn't make it to the Skyzone trampoline park, I heard that everyone who went had fun even if they were a little stiff the next morning.

There were many people from the Kitchener society who helped prepare delicious meals and snacks, which everyone appreciated. Nina Riepert kindly helped me during the weekend craft time when each teen got the opportunity to create a beautiful fall picture using paint and shiny fall-coloured leaves.

These weekends would not be possible without the generosity of so many people helping in many ways to make them a success. Thank you to everyone who participated and to the teens who attended. I look forward to the next teen weekend which will be held in Sarver, Pennsylvania on May 4-6, 2018.

Naomi Reid

Address Change

Details available in printed and electronically emailed Chatterbox

Upright piano looking for a new home!

This Heintzman piano used to be in the church hall. Since the second flood, it has been kept in the Smithwood manse, but it's ready to go to someone who will use and love it. Asking \$400.

~ Olivet New Church and Olivet School ~
~ December 2017 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Olivet School PA Day (JK-6) 6p Women's Christmas Party at the Manse	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10:30a Worship (MKC) 11a Sunday School Christmas Party	7p Joint Committee Mtg w/ Olivet Board & Pastor's Council	7p Closed AA Mtg	3p Broader Horizons	6:30p Beaver Scouts 8:30p Open AA Mtg	7p Forward Sons' Christmas Dinner	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
10:30a Worship (JJB)	Fall Term Report Cards 6p Tableaux Rehearsal	6p Tableaux Rehearsal 7p Closed AA Mtg	3p Broader Horizons 6:15p Olivet School Christmas Concert 6:15p Sweet & Savoury Bake Sale	10a Arcana Class 8:30p Open AA Mtg	Chatterbox Deadline	8a Tableaux Rehearsal
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
10:15a Children's Choir 10:30a Tableaux Worship Service (JJB) 12p Potluck Lunch		7p Closed AA Mtg	3p Broader Horizons 6:30p Dessert & Doctrinal Class (JJB)	1p Early Dismissal for Christmas Break 8:30p Open AA Mtg	Olivet School Christmas Break	Olivet School Christmas Break
24	25 Christmas	26 Boxing Day	27	28	29	30
Olivet School Christmas Break 5p Worship (JJB)	Olivet School Christmas Break 10:30a Worship (MKC)	Olivet School Christmas Break 7p Closed AA Mtg	Olivet School Christmas Break	Olivet School Christmas Break 8:30p Open AA Mtg	Olivet School Christmas Break	Olivet School Christmas Break
31	<p align="center">New Year's Day Cowley Open House</p> <p align="center">Come share a cup of good cheer to start the New Year! All are invited to a New Year's Day open house at the manse between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm in the afternoon of January 1, 2018.</p>					
Olivet School Christmas Break 10:30a Worship (MKC)						

Supper Volunteer Schedule

December Anniversaries

Details available in printed and electronically emailed Chatterbox

Love truly conjugal is from the Lord alone. AE 983:2

Date	Cooks	Dishwashers
December 17 – Potluck Lunch after Tableaux Service	<i>Details available in printed and electronically emailed Chatterbox</i>	
December 20 – Christmas Class Refreshments	<i>Details available in printed and electronically emailed Chatterbox</i>	

Sunday Volunteer Schedule

If you are not able to come on your scheduled day, please find a sub.

Details available in printed and electronically emailed Chatterbox

Olivet Church, 279 Burnhamthorpe Rd, Toronto, ON, M9B 1Z6	416-239-3054
Olivet Church email address: contact@olivetnewchurch.org	FAX 416-239-4935
Pastor, Michael Cowley.....	647-883-3754
Assistant to the Pastor, Jared Buss.....	647-677-2600
Chatterbox Editor, Claire Hurd.....	647-203-5875
Visitors to Olivet, Mieke Braam... ..	416-232-1476
Rides to church, Karen Cooper.....	416-236-0841