

# Olivet New Church CHATTERBOX

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## The Power of Falling

*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.*

—John 12:24

They say that the only certainties in life are death and taxes. Now, whoever came up with that line clearly needed a dose of cheer to take with his breakfast; these things are far from the *only* certainties in life. But (setting taxes aside, for now), it's true that death is inevitable. The death of the body is inevitable—and a great deal of religious teaching and religious conversation is devoted to helping us through the fear and uncertainty that surround this fact.

But there are other sorts of death. We talk about needing to “let old dreams die.” Pieces of our identity die sometimes. There's a saying that “No plan survives contact with the enemy.”<sup>1</sup> Generally, this is understood to refer to the plans drawn up by officers in times of war, but it can be true of all different kinds of plans. Our plans for what we'll be and where we'll go too often don't seem to survive contact with the harder aspects of “real life.” We know we've got to let go and accept the fact that we're not in charge. Sometimes we're okay with things not going our way. Other times, especially when what we lose is something we'd trusted in or counted on, it's not so easy to adapt. Maybe an idea we held dearly, that gave us hope, turns out not to be true; maybe we experience a painful failure in an area of life in which we'd prided ourselves on our successes. When these sorts of things happen, we experience a kind of death.

This may sound melodramatic and it may sound altogether too bitterly true; either way, the Lord has a lot to say about it. In His Word He talks a lot about dying, and it's pretty clear that He's not just talking about the death of the body. He says, “Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it” (Mark 8:35; cf. Matt. 16:25; Luke 9:24, 17:23). In the Gospel of John He says, “He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (12:25), and this He says right after saying the words quoted at the top of this article: “[U]nless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.” These words do apply to the death of the body; it's pretty evident that the Lord is here referring specifically to His own approaching death and resurrection. But it's clear that He's also talking about death in the much wider sense I've described. The life He speaks of, the life we're to save or lose or keep, can't simply be our mortal existence on this earth. It's the *substance* of

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<sup>1</sup> A paraphrase of a quote by Prussian Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder

that life, which is what we love. What we love sometimes has to fall to the ground and die, if it is to grow.

That's really hard. Even if we believe that death is only a gateway to greater life, death still feels like death. But death is inevitable. Our bodies can't last forever, and—since we're not God—our plans and dreams never were going to shape the course of real life. A certain kind of death is part of the plan. So be it. As long as we cling to what we have, as long as we keep it from falling to the ground, it remains alone. It doesn't come to fruition. Fruitfulness is strangely married to what can feel in us like death. Abundance and life and joy sometimes only rise out of something that feels like letting go and falling down. What dies is us: our expectations, our love of *our* plans, *our* abilities, *ourselves*. What springs up in the place where we let go is not us. When we let go we're cut loose from the shore, and the stream of Providence carries us. And wherever that stream goes, life springs up abundantly. The Lord says: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (John 11:25). He has plans for us—plans to give us "a future, and a hope" (Jer. 29:11). Who but He knows how *alive* we'll feel when everything we have has fallen into His hands, and is growing.

*Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise.*

—Micah 7:8

Rev. Jared Buss

## **From the Pastor**

*Olivet Special Society Meeting:* We had a good turnout of both young and old for the special society meeting to discuss the present and future of the Olivet society. We began with a discussion of the current state of the Olivet Church and School. In answering the question "Why discuss the school since we did that in the last set of special meetings?" we all agreed that for the past 125 years these two have been one. There has been no school without the church and no church without the school. But turning just to the society, we looked at our current state. First, I asked what members believed the mission statement of the Olivet Society was. None of us could repeat it. We weren't surprised, but we agreed we should reexamine it and formulate a new one that reflects our current mission and with which we could all connect. A strong plea was made to be more inclusive, expanding beyond just Toronto when helping people learn and live the teachings of the New Church.

Among comments made concerning our current state were a number that touched on the fact that we collectively tired, that church involvement is in a sad state, and that attendance has been slowly declining over the decades. We noted frustrations around the use of space for various church uses. I offered that self-examination such as we were doing offers the hells an especially good chance to lead us toward depressing and negative thoughts. I tried to encourage those gathered to keep the focus and perspective positive. Moving from the discussion of the current state, I did a review of the invitations I had received, along with those of other candidates in 2001 and 2004, to consider the Olivet pastorate as former pastors were leaving. Both letters I received were fairly identical and included the issues of declining church attendance, participations, and volunteerism. I brought this historical perspective into play to show that the state we are in is nothing new. We, along with all churches, both General Church as well as mainline Protestant and Catholic denominations, are facing the same challenges.

Moving from this to consider future planning, I asked if I had missed any recent planning notes or overall plans in the society—apparently I had not. We agreed then that the last "five-year plan" was completed in 2005 and that it had exceeded its "best by" date! However, it would be good to reflect on what was targeted then and what we have accomplished from that plan. We then looked

at the eight essentials outlined in that plan related to worship, education, social activity, Sunday school, youth programs, outreach, greeters, etc. A quick review determined that we had achieved and continued to maintain the majority of the plans we had set in place 12-15 years ago. Cheers!

Now, what about the future? It is hard to make any plans for the society in a vacuum or outside the consideration of the planning of the school. I noted that in the past 18 months the school administration/staff have been working especially hard on the marketing for the school. We have decisions to make within the timeline we originally set in place and have now extended at our last set of meetings.

Highlights from our discussion involved our own sense of what we each individually, and as a group, have done and do for our own spiritual growth and nourishment. We can't give away what we ourselves don't have. How can we best look to growing the church within ourselves? This is what we wish to offer to others! One suggestion was that we not try to develop an "outreach" mission now, but focus instead on "inreach" (if there is such a term).

I did not set up the meeting with a plan to create a new 5- or 10-year plan, but to begin the conversation by looking at what we have achieved and where we feel we need to focus. An urgency was mentioned and repeated concerning the work we need to do with the current enrolment of our Sunday school and its development. Several times, the state of volunteers and the uses that need bodies to perform them was mentioned. Again, this is an old challenge, which former and present pastors, councils, boards, and individuals have been struggling to fix.

The bottom line is that we are doing well, all things considered. We are definitely due to move forward with new planning. We need to reassess the mission statement, but we have strong worship and education programs in place, which are essential, though they need updating. If you've gotten this far, you know what comes next—it is the follow up that involves YOU. The Divine of the Lord MAKES heaven, and the people (YOU) constitute it (Heaven and Hell 12). Our Society needs you to look into your heart and find what the Lord has placed there that you can share with others. In 5, 10, 20 or 50 years, we will again look back and reassess what took place in 2018-2023. What part will you have played in the story told then?

*March and April Events:* The middle of the month is **March Break**; the School will be closed and some staff, including myself, will be out of town. Please call ahead to be sure the offices are "manned" before you come over.

**Easter** is early this year and we will be holding Palm Sunday service and Good Friday Vespers service, including Holy Supper, in the last week of the month. Please come early Palm Sunday to gather in the hall downstairs and enter the palm processional in celebration of the triumphal entry of the Lord into Jerusalem.

Looking toward April, we begin the month with Easter celebrations. Again, please come early and bring a floral offering and/or a nonperishable food offering for the processional that will gather in the hall downstairs. April 7 we will host the **GCIC Annual Meeting**, and the following weekend, April 14, 15 the Bishop and his wife, **Brian and Gretchen Keith**, will visit the society. The Pastors' Council and Olivet Board will hold a **joint committee meeting** with the Bishop on Saturday April 14 at 10:00 am as part of the pastor's annual development review process. This will be followed later that day with an **open house at the manse from 2:00-5:00 pm** to visit with Brian and Gretchen. On Sunday, April 15, **Bishop Keith will lead us in worship**.

Saturday, April 21, the **Olivet Earth Day Workday** will take place. Come with your gloves, rakes, and work clothes to help clean inside and out as we do our part in spring cleaning.

The following weekend, Gwenda and I will be heading to Asheville, NC, to attend a wedding. And then comes May!

Michael

## From the Assistant to the Pastor

Happy March to you all! I wish I could say “happy spring.” It’s taken me a few years to really register and accept that Toronto’s spring simply doesn’t begin in March. Only last March I went to a nursery looking for flowers to plant, and got more or less told off by a staff member there for not knowing what I was doing. I guess I’m wiser now.

This month I’ll be doing a lot less travelling than I’ve tended to in recent months; I’ll only be away preaching one weekend (in Dawson Creek), and I won’t be going away for March break. To make up for it, people will be coming to me—both my parents and my wife’s will be coming to visit us for a few days this month including for my son’s very first birthday! Which is odd, because he was only born a few days ago...

Rev. Jared Buss

## From the Principal

Please take note of two upcoming events! On April 13, Olivet’s annual **French show** will take place, followed by a professional **puppet play** chosen to entertain the young and young at heart. Doors will open at 5:00 pm for classroom touring, and the French play will begin at 6:15 pm.

In September 1893, Olivet New Church Day School opened its doors for the first time. Fast forward 125 years and it's time to celebrate! Come on Friday, June 8 for a **BBQ and fun fair**! All are welcome!

Gabriele Pulpan

## Do you love Olivet School?

Did you know that this year marks our 125th year as an elementary school? Olivet Day School first opened its doors in September 1893!

As a celebration of this milestone, Olivet School will be filming a legacy video that will feature on-camera testimonials from current and past staff, students, and their families. The video will be used for promotional purposes on Olivet School’s website and social media platforms for all to see.

Do you have funny, loving, heartwarming, or just plain amazing things to say about your experience at Olivet School? If you'd be comfortable being on camera, contact Sandy at [info@olivetschool.ca](mailto:info@olivetschool.ca) to express your interest in booking an on-camera interview.

Shoot dates are expected to take place in April; however, more information will be provided in the coming months as it becomes available. Come and join in the first of our celebrations marking our 125th anniversary!

## The Reformation and the Printing Press: Friday March 2, 2018

The Forward Sons will be hosting a presentation by The Reverend Doctor Pearce J. Carefoote on Friday, March 2 at 7:30 pm. His topic will be *Flickering of the Flame: The Reformation and the Printing Press*. This talk is for anyone who would find it interesting; all ladies and gentlemen are welcome.

Martin Luther compared the invention of the printing press in 1450 to the “flickering of the flame that burns before the end of this age.” He was one of the few to realize that he was living through a revolution—one that would give birth to a new world, much in the same way as today’s digital revolution is radically transforming ours. This illustrated presentation will look at some of the key moments of intersection between the printing press and the Reformation and will suggest that in order to understand what is happening to our society today, one can look back to those tumultuous moments five hundred years ago for some answers.

Refreshments to follow after the presentation.

## **Heavenly Doctrines Book Study Phone Class**

Twice a month you are invited to join people from across Canada in a book study class, with open discussions flowing from topics in a book of the Heavenly Doctrines. We will be starting a new book for 2018, *The Four Doctrines*, starting in January with the Doctrine of the Lord. Join in the conversation!

We meet on alternating Wednesdays at 8pm. The conference call number is toll free. Contact Rev. Nathan Cole for information at [asstpastor@carmelnewchurch.org](mailto:asstpastor@carmelnewchurch.org) or 519-748-5802.

## **The “Olivet NewChurch Video” YouTube Channel**

The channel has an improved look. When the channel first loads, it should automatically start playing the last sermon that was uploaded. Underneath the video is the list of New Church Youtube channels; clicking one of these should get you directly to that channel. The liked videos listed below that row should be the most recent ones from the offTheLeftEye channel. We have left up the last Journey series, which includes the sermons given at Olivet as well as NewChurchLive videos on the same series, as well as an offTheLeftEye video on forgiveness.

We are looking into other future possibilities around what we can do with our recording, like live streaming and podcasting.

We seem to be fulfilling a need that is out there as I have had positive feedback and the channel is up to 27 subscribers. If you use Facebook, there is a link to every sermon since the summer on the Olivet Facebook page.

If anyone is interested in getting involved in this exciting new use for the church, please feel free to contact Jerry Jutras or Amy Jutras.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jerry Jutras

## **offTheLeftEye Live Monday Nights**

I was wondering if anyone out there watches offTheLeftEye live on Mondays at 8:00 pm. If you do, wouldn't it be fun to watch in a group? You certainly could have an opportunity to get a lot more out of the program in a group than watching alone. I have proven that it can be streamed effectively in the church hall and projected on the big screen or onto the television in the new playroom. Please contact Jerry Jutras if this sounds like something you might be interested in getting involved in.

## **Young Adults Social Event – January 27, 2018**

Thirteen people attended the Olivet Young Adults' Social Event in January, which started at the Colonel Samuel Smith Skating Path. After everyone had fun skating, they came to the Reids' house for homemade burritos with all of the fixings and birthday cake and ice cream, as one of the participants happened to have a birthday on that same day. When we finished eating, Rev. Jared Buss led a fun warm-up exercise and spiritual discussion on the ninth and tenth commandments, which deal with coveting. One of the interesting things I learned was that the earlier commandments deal with actions that we are commanded to do or not do, but the last two commandments involve a person's intention. Rev. Buss asked us to think about what we might wish to do if we could be assured that there were no negative consequences for the action. He helped us understand that these commandments are harder, involving our thoughts and intentions, not just our outward actions, requiring us to reflect on our thoughts and intentions and make sure that we are not spending time wishing we could have or take something that legitimately belongs to someone else. This includes property, marriage relationships, or anything else that is good that belongs to another person. This was a perspective that I

had not considered before. After the discussion was finished, everyone continued socializing with each other. We ended the evening with an impromptu singalong while one of the participants accompanied us with guitar. Once again, this was a fun and enlightening evening for everyone who was able to attend. The next social event will take place on Saturday, March 24, 2018 at the Olivet Church.

Naomi Reid

## **Claim Your Family Psalmody!**

Once upon a time we used psalmodies in worship; we no longer do. We've been holding on to all of them, but they've served their use, and it's time to free up the space that they've been occupying. However, they all belong to someone—they all have their owner's name embossed on them. Below is a list of all of the names that appear on a psalmody in our collection. You may be interested in keeping yours, or one that belonged to an ancestor of yours. If this is the case, please contact me or the church office. We'll hold them till the end of May, and then send them along to the Shelves of Heaven.

Rev. Jared Buss

## **Laws of Life Essay Contest**

All high school sophomore (or 15/16-year-old) girls worldwide are eligible to enter this contest. This essay is an opportunity to write about what YOU think is important in life. This is your chance to be heard—to write from the heart about one or more of your personal laws of life. Essays are to be in English (Google Translate can be used for this purpose). No name or identification can be on the paper itself to allow for impartial judging, but have your name and address in the envelope or email. You can see last year's winning essays printed in the *Theta Alpha Journal*. Winners receive a certificate and a cheque: 1st place \$100 USD, 2nd place \$75 USD, and 3rd place \$50 USD. Essays are printed in the *Journal* with writers' permission and as room permits. The essay guidelines are the following:

"The Laws of Life" are a set of rules, ideals, or principles by which one should live: What do you value most in life? What is important to you? What ideals do you hold deep in your heart? Think about the people and experiences that have helped you form these laws...

Pick a topic to write about, such as a personal experience/lesson learned that affects how you live/view your life now or an aphorism or quote that inspires or guides you. You can use an analogy, a quotation or a story or parable (please do not use personal romantic relationships).

Submissions are to be sent to Theta Alpha International PO Box 511, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009, USA. Or, you can email to [ANCdaughters@gmail.com](mailto:ANCdaughters@gmail.com). Submissions must be received by March 20, 2018.



## ***A New Church Camp for Teens***

Please join us **Sunday, July 1 – Saturday, July 7, 2018**

Held at the Ecology Retreat Centre Mono, Ontario.  
(for teens who have completed at least Grade 8 and those in high school)

*Theme: Coming very soon...*

*Registration forms available by March – Keep checking our Facebook page!*

For a **registration form** or more information please contact Stephanie Kuhl, Camp Director  
Email: [stephkuhl@live.ca](mailto:stephkuhl@live.ca) or Phone: (519) 895-1891

**MAPLE LEAF ACADEMY — SERVING THE YOUTH OF THE GENERAL CHURCH SINCE 1969, SPONSORED BY THE  
GENERAL CHURCH IN CANADA  
STAFFED BY EXPERIENCED VOLUNTEERS**

### **CAMP FEES**

Full cost of camp	\$650
GCIC Grant	<u>-\$360</u>
<b>Regular Camper Fee</b>	<b>\$290</b>
Early Bird*	\$265
Junior Staff**	\$200

**Full payment is requested by June 10<sup>th</sup>.**

A deposit of at least \$50 is required with  
registration. (\$5.00 non-refundable)

**\*Early Bird** fee is available to those who register and  
send in full payment by May 1, 2018.

**\*\*Junior Staff** must have completed Grade 12  
and attended Maple at least once before. Junior  
staff campers are expected to hold a leadership  
role and participate in specific camp activities

**Financial assistance is available.** Please apply  
early as funds are limited. Direct your requests to  
the Camp Director.

**~Olivet New Church and Olivet School ~  
~ March 2018 ~**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b> 6:30p Beaver Scouts 8:30p Open AA Mtg	<b>2</b> 7:30p Forward Sons' Speaker Event	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> 10:30a Worship (MKC) 12p Potluck	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 3:15p Hatch Coding Class 7p Closed AA Mtg	<b>7</b> 3p Broader Horizons (to Mar 21)	<b>8</b> 10a Arcana Class 6:30p Beaver Scouts 7p AA Business Mtg 8:30p Open AA Mtg	<b>9</b> Last Day of Winter Term 1p 1:00 pm Early Dismissal 1p Pastor out of town	<b>10</b> Pastor out of town
<b>11</b> March Break Pastor out of town 10:30a Worship (JJB)	<b>12</b> March Break Pastor out of town	<b>13</b> March Break Pastor out of town 7p Closed AA Mtg	<b>14</b> March Break Pastor out of town	<b>15</b> March Break Pastor out of town 8:30p Open AA Mtg	<b>16</b> Chatterbox Deadline March Break Pastor out of town	<b>17</b> March Break Pastor out of town
<b>18</b> March Break 12a Pastor out of town 10:30a Worship (JJB)	<b>19</b> Classes Resume 7p Olivet Board Meeting	<b>20</b> 3:15p Hatch Coding Class 7p Closed AA Mtg	<b>21</b> 3p Broader Horizons (to Mar 21)	<b>22</b> 10a Arcana class 6:30p Beaver Scouts 8:30p Open AA Mtg	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 7p Young Adult's Social MKC
<b>25</b> Palm Sunday 10:15a Children's Choir 10:30a Palm Sunday Worship Service (JJB) 11a After Church Activities for Children	<b>26</b> Winter Term Reprt Cards	<b>27</b> 7p Closed AA Mtg	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 1p 1:00 pm Early Dismissal 1p Parent-Teacher Conferences 6:30p Beaver Scouts 8:30p Open AA Mtg	<b>30</b> Good Friday 7p Vespers Holy Supper Service MKC	<b>31</b>



## Olivet Directory

Copies of the most recent directory are available in the church office or by emailing [contact@olivetnewchurch.org](mailto:contact@olivetnewchurch.org) . Changes may still be made as only a limited number of directories are printed at a time.

### March Anniversary

(Skip) and Sandy Green.....March 1, 35 years

*Now, since a conjunctive inclination is inscribed on every part and principle of the male and of the female, it follows, that this inclination cannot be destroyed and die with the body. CL 46*

## Supper Volunteer Schedule

Date	Cooks	Dishwashers
March 4 – Potluck lunch	B Horigan	Volunteers

## Sunday Volunteer Schedule

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

Date	Usher	Chancel	Organist	Sunday School 1 (PK-1)	Sunday School 2 (Gr2-4)	JOY (Gr5-8)	Greeters	Refreshments	Flowers
Mar 4 Potluck	E Parker	J Parker	A Nater	J Buss	K Cooper		L Holmes	A Schnarr	S Bradfield
Mar 11 Beginning of March Break Daylight Savings Time Starts	S Cho	S Bradfield	A Nater		K Jutras		J Jorgenson	J Jorgenson	S Bradfield
Mar 18 End of March Break	J Jutras	C Horigan	F Raymond		K Jutras		P Horigan	M Broderick	S Bradfield
Mar 25 Palm Sunday Children's Choir	G Cresswell	K Cooper	A Nater				J Parker	<b>Need Volunteer</b>	S Bradfield
Mar 30 Good Friday Vespers Holy Supper	M Hasen	J Parker	A Nater				<b>Need Volunteer</b>	<b>Need Volunteer</b>	S Bradfield
Apr 1 Easter Festival Service	M Hasen	C Horigan/A Reid	A Nater				J Parker	<b>Need Volunteer</b>	L Starkey

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Olivet Church email address: <a href="mailto:contact@olivetnewchurch.org">contact@olivetnewchurch.org</a> .....	FAX 416-239-4935
Pastor, Michael Cowley.....	647-883-3754
Assistant to the Pastor, Jared Buss.....	647-677-2600