

Olivet New Church

CHATTERBOX

Volume 85

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Number 3

“Lord, You Know”

In the book of Ezekiel, there’s a remarkably vivid description of a place that’s come to be called “the valley of dry bones.” The story reads:

The hand of Jehovah came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of Jehovah, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. And He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” (37:1-3)

The image here, like many pictures and stories from the Old Testament, is unsettling and unbeautiful. Why would the Lord bring His servant to a valley of dry bones? To force us to recall the inevitability of death? Of course not—the Lord never rubs the truth in anyone’s face. I think there’s a very simple reason why the Lord includes so many grim images in His Word: they’re there to remind us that the Lord sees even the darkest things, even the lowest ebbs of our spiritual lives. Even the driest, most lifeless valleys within human experience—places in which we wouldn’t elect to spend much of our conscious time—are places He understands.

The question He asks Ezekiel in this story is a fascinating one: “Can these bones live?” That question could mean a lot of things. It could be rhetorical: “Are these dead things indeed dead?” It could be a question about Ezekiel’s faith: “Do you believe that I have the power to make what is dead come alive?” It could be a question about bones in a valley, or it could be a question about something much more personal, something within Ezekiel, something within us that we recognize altogether too well. “Do you have hope for these dead, dry things?”

Ezekiel’s answer is this: “O Lord Jehovah, You know” (v. 3). Is that really an answer? Is Ezekiel trying to dodge what the Lord is asking? What is he really saying here?

I think that Ezekiel’s answer echoes the Lord’s very reason for bringing him to the valley of dry bones. The Lord shows us that He sees even the bleakest places in us—He *knows* even these valleys. He asks us if it is possible for life—for breath, for growth, for joy—to take hold even in these places of death. And the small voice of faith within us—the voice of innocence—answers, “Lord, You know.” He *knows* the dryness and the darkness, even the worst of it. During His life on earth, in a body like ours, He went there. “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows” (Isaiah 53:4). If He, the Lord, stands with us in the valley of dry bones and says that it is still possible for us to live...He knows.

Thus says the Lord Jehovah to these bones: “Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am Jehovah.” (Ez. 37:5, 6)

From the Pastor

We do hope March is nice to us, going out like a lamb, and then staying on as a lamb into April! Last year, as you may remember, we had such a bad winter storm in April that we had to cancel church the weekend the Bishop was going to preach. So, here's to a hopeful March and budding spring weather!

You will see in other sections of the *Chatterbox* news concerning the Olivet School and some questions the pastors are considering related to our Sunday worship services.

In relation to the School: "Go to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' ... Freely you have received; freely give." This passage from Matthew 10:6-8 reminds us of several things related to the gift of New Church education. On a spiritual level, we are urged by the Lord to give freely what we have received freely. How can we best look to serving others? We are not currently in the business of setting up food kitchens. But imagine if we were! We could purchase a couple of school busses and convert them to mobile food kitchens and serve the broader community. We could save lives with natural nourishment, serving those in crisis, or those experiencing homelessness, or those enduring natural disasters.

No, we aren't in that business, though many churches and social gospel communities are. What we have 125 years of experience doing is serving starving young minds with spiritual nourishment. We have a fantastic set of ingredients given us by the Lord in His Second Coming: the Gospel of the New Advent. And we have a menu, refined through those many decades, to serve the best age-appropriate spiritual banquet to those who come to our table.

This coming year we are making changes in our administration team to meet the challenges of current conditions. Please see the other article to get more details about the upcoming 2019-2020 academic year at Olivet.

Jared has written about our worship services in his section. Please read and reflect on what is said there.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments on these subjects please don't hesitate to call or email me or Jared with your thoughts.

Blessings,
Michael

From the Assistant to the Pastor

After receiving feedback from some society members, and after discussions with the Pastor's Council, Michael and I have decided to revisit Olivet's Sunday order of service—specifically the offices that we use at the beginning of our worship services—with an eye to possibly making some changes. The original feedback we received had to do with the omission of the "Sanctus" and the "Gloria" from our Sunday services (these are two short songs, both sung when the congregation rises from saying the Lord's prayer). These songs were originally cut from our order of service in response to a request that the offices be made a little shorter, but recently it was pointed out that the Sanctus and the Gloria are the most (and arguably the only) truly joyful parts of the offices, and that overall the offices have a fairly solemn tone. We're now considering what could be done to add a little more joy or praise to the order of service without making it longer. This has led us to wonder about the whole structure of the offices and the overall balance of praise and reverence in our worship services. Please rest assured that we're not thinking of cutting all of the quiet moments and the calls for humility from the service. Reverence—or, more accurately, humility—is an essential aspect of worship, and there are lots of teachings that speak to this. We're simply taking another look at the balance of humility, reflection, joy, and expression in our services.

We'd love your feedback! Any observations are welcome, but we'd specifically like to hear your responses to the following questions:

- Do you have strong opinions about the length of the office (the portion of the worship service that happens before the children’s talk)? Is it too long? Too short? Just right?
- Do you miss singing the Sanctus and the Gloria?
- Do you sometimes wish that the opening portion of the service had a lighter or a more joyful tone?
- Some churches print their entire order of service (all of the statements and responses found in the office, etc.) in the worship handout. This gives the pastors the freedom to “re-write” the offices—to shorten them, lengthen them, or change their tone—as needed. Does this seem like a good idea for Olivet?

Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to help us with this! You can share your thoughts with me or with Michael by phone or by email, or (better yet) just give us an earful when you happen to bump into us. I always enjoy talking to you—especially when the conversation is about helping people draw nearer to the Lord.

I hope the month of March isn’t too much like a lion. And to those of you for whom there is such a thing as a spring break—have a lovely spring break!

Jared

Plan for Transitional Year (2019–2020) at Olivet School

We have arrived at a viable strategy for the 2019/20 school year. This plan takes into consideration that the society vote, to be held in the fall of 2019 will determine the future of the school beyond the 2019/20 school year. With a commitment for the school to continue through to June 2020, we came up with a well-planned solution to keep the school running efficiently, ensuring that we could do so without hiring new faculty or personnel under circumstances in which the future is uncertain.

We have consulted with the Rt. Rev. Peter Buss, head of New Church Education and future executive bishop, who gave us his support for the plan. It is noted that the Pittsburgh and Glenview New Church Schools have used similar solutions to fulfilling the leadership roles at their respective schools.

Classroom and administration plan:

- Tots Time and Playschool – Judy Todd, with Kim Parker
- JK and SK – Laura Braam
- Grades 1-2-3 – Britteny Wilson, with Sara Gatti (at 20 hours maximum per week)
- Grades 4-5 – Elaine Kim
- Teacher/Principal - Britteny Wilson
- Teacher/Assistant Principal – Laura Braam
- Lead Administrator - Val Younan
- Consultant/Assistant on an as-needed basis – Gabriele Pulpan

While a three-grade split is not an ideal solution *for a long-term arrangement*, this is the best solution for this transition year. Sara and Gabriele have expressed their delight at being given the opportunity to have a transition year in which to gently go from full time to full stop; both see this as an honour and not an obligation. Val will continue with her part-time human resources function with Olivet, as well as performing the part-time lead administrator role; she will be the point person for contact with the Board. Beginning this spring (2019), Val will be consulting more often with Gabriele and will be part of the planning process to wind down the year and to prepare for the start of the 2019/20 year.

Since there is no need to hire a full-time principal for the 2019/20 school year plan, and we are not replacing Sara Gatti as kindergarten teacher at this time, we do not anticipate any increase in costs.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact any of us.

Respectfully yours,

Rev. Michael Cowley, Gabriele Pulpan, Val Younan

From the Principal

To chase away the winter blues we had a pancake breakfast on Friday, February 1. It was great to see so many people turn out; thanks to the society members who came out to meet and mingle with the school parents.



Who doesn't love handmade Valentines and sweet treats? Both were enjoyed by the children (and adults!) on Valentine's Day!



Breakfast Thank You

On February 1, we and a few society members attended the Olivet School staff pancake breakfast. It was lovely to walk into a full hall of happy people and eat a delicious breakfast with the Olivet students and parents. What struck me most was the sphere, as I watched the laughing teachers cooking in the kitchen, Mrs. Pulpan mopping the snowy floors, and how many parents stayed to clear up the tables and chairs without being asked. Thank you—please do it again?

Gillian Parker

General Church Corporation – Annual Meeting

May 18, 2019 @ 3:00 pm
Benade Hall Auditorium
2815 Benade Circle
Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Members of the General Church Corporation are invited to participate in the election of General Church Board members at this meeting. Look for the report of the General Church Nominating Committee at the end of February, containing the report from the Nominating Committee, information on nominees, and minutes from 2018. Call-in information will be also included.

If you have recently changed your mail or email address, or if you are unsure of your membership in the General Church and/or General Church Corporation*, please contact Susan Wright at 267-502-4990 or susan.wright@anc-gc.org, or Kelly Treacy 267-502-4901 or kelly.treacy@newchurch.org.

*General Church members are eligible to become corporation members after three years of church membership.

Livestreaming Update

We have finished the Journey Program “Love over Ego.” On our YouTube channel, the playlist for this program contains all the videos mentioned in the book as well as 24 related sermons. The Olivet sermons in this series have also been uploaded to New Church Audio and are available as mp3 files for listening or downloading.

We livestreamed a Wednesday doctrinal class for the first time in February. The class was given by Rev. Michael Cowley and was based on the book by Hugo Odhner entitled *The Human Mind*. We are encouraged by the response to this livestream on Facebook and YouTube and hope to keep doing future classes.

Here are the web links to the platforms where our content can be found:

Olivet Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/olivet.newchurch>

“Olivet NewChurch Video” YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC671dEQFjyTkM5-fhILIEYA>

New Church Audio

<http://newchurcaudio.org/index.php>

Respectfully submitted,
Jerry Jutras

Ladies: You are Invited to a Craft Night!

Saturday, March 23, 2019, 7:00 pm in the Olivet Church hall

Cost: \$25.00.*

At this event, you can make a seasonal fairy garden (winter or spring). Each garden will come with a variety of 3D-printed objects such as a gazebo, fountain, bridge, arbour, and park bench to help design your garden, as well as flowers, moss etc. A selection of teas and desserts will be available.



To reserve your space, please contact Naomi Reid at ***Personal information removed from online version***

* Please pay when you confirm your interest in attending and let her know which season you would like to design. Any profit will be donated to the Olivet Church.

Message from Soni Werner: Next Steps for the Olivet Mediation Process

Tuesday, April 2 SWOT sessions—group discussions on **StrengthsWeaknessOpportunityThreats**

In the morning: 10 am to 12:30 pm, in the lobby

In the late afternoon: 4 pm to 6 pm, in the lobby

In the evening: 7pm to 9:30pm -- Soni will need access to one or two classrooms and to have adult chairs set up.

Please let Sandy know which session(s) you can attend. Soni will then gather all the new input from the SWOT sessions, pull out common threads/ideas and then...

Wednesday, April 3 in the church hall at 7 pm (coffee and dessert to be served)—Soni will present back to the society members what she has been hearing from us and highlight the common threads and ideas for members to think about.

Thursday, April 4 at Montgomery's Inn from 3 pm to 9 pm—mediated sessions between two people at a time, with Soni counseling. These sessions can be used for two purposes.

1. If you are interested in having a guided one-on-one discussion (to better understand the other person's views and to explain your position) with someone else who has an opposing viewpoint on the school. (Soni may suggest someone for you to speak with or you can ask someone yourself)

2. Perhaps you just would like Soni's assistance with someone with whom you may have had past conflicts that you would like to try to resolve—you can email Val who will be discreetly and privately setting up Soni's mediation sessions. *Please note: These sessions will not be held at Olivet but at Montgomery's Inn on the southeast corner of Dundas St. W. and Islington Ave.*

Remember: The main purpose of this Olivet mediation process is to help us in the Olivet society draw closer to each other and “walk our talk” of charity and love.

To prepare for the SWOT process, think about the following:

- Strengths: Characteristics of the church that may give it an advantage over others;
- Weaknesses: Characteristics of the church that may be a disadvantage as related to others;
- Opportunities: Conditions outside the church that could potentially increase attendance or revenues;
- Threats: Conditions outside (or inside) the church that could create problems for the church.

Here is additional information:

<https://smartchurchmanagement.com/church-strategic-planning/>

Just a reminder, Olivet members have already done the **SMART** process (once) in 2012/13 during the school review. **SMART=SpecificMeasurableAttainableRealisticTimely**

From the link above:

“Many organizations use the SMART goal process to ensure their goals/plans are achievable. When writing a goal, filter it through the following questions:

Specific: Is the goal/plan specific enough for clarity?

Measurable: Is there a way to measure the success of the goal/plan?

Attainable: Is the goal/plan truly attainable?

Realistic: Is the goal/plan realistically written?

Timely: Is there a timeline associated to the goal/plan to ensure a completion date?”

Kathleen McClure Fountain Memorial Award

Nominations are open for the Kathleen McClure Fountain Memorial Award! This monetary award is designed to remember Kathleen McClure Fountain’s love of children, respect for education, and sense of service freely given, and to inspire the best in every student.

Do you know someone in grade 5, 8, or 12 who demonstrates a strong standing in academics, committed involvement in extra-curricular activities, as well as enthusiastic participation in events at Olivet Church and/or School? A personal reference from a principal (or similar authority) is also required. (Note: Nominees do not have to be currently/previously enrolled in Olivet School.)

Please email kmf.nominations@olivetnewchurch.org to nominate a student or to ask any questions.



A New Church Camp for Teens

Please join us **Thursday, June 27 – Wednesday, July 3, 2019**

Held at the Ecology Retreat Centre in Mono, Ontario.

(For teens who will have just completed at least grade 8 or any year of high school)

This year's theme is: *Renewal*

He leads me beside the still waters; He restores my soul ~ Psalm 23:2-3 ~

Registration form now available – email stephkuhl@live.ca, or find it on the Maple Leaf Academy Facebook page or at maplecamp.com, updating soon

Have questions/need more information? Please contact Stephanie Kuhl, Camp Director

Email: stephkuhl@live.ca or call 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>-\$350</u>
Regular camper fee	\$300
Early bird*	\$265
Junior staff**	\$200

Full payment is requested by June 10.

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, 2019.

****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 (Steph Kuhl).

Service Opportunities for Group of Teens?

At the beginning of May, Olivet will be hosting a GCIC-sponsored teen weekend event. These events have always included some sort of service project for the teens. I'm wondering if you can help me: it's not particularly easy to find service opportunities for big groups of untrained volunteers that also give the teens a chance to feel genuinely useful. If you know of such a service opportunity, please let me know!

Here are the requirements:

- We want to keep about 50 people (40 teens & 10 adults) busy for 2-3 hours;
- We need work that requires no particular training or skill;
- The more definitely the teens can accomplish something/be of service to someone, the better.

So, if you have leads on charity organizations able to offer this kind of service opportunity, that's great. And if you have some neighbours going through rough times who really need their yard brought into order, that's great too. Let me know! Thanks in advance for your help.

Rev. Jared Buss

A Day in the Life of the Olivet Playschool

Recently, I was asked to substitute for Kim Parker, who is employed part-time in the Olivet playschool, and I thought I would share my experience with you. Although the kids were scheduled to come in at 9:00 am, the morning preparation and setup started as soon as I arrived at 8:30 am. I helped Ms. Judy Todd set up the playschool classroom, put out the riding toys in the gym, and set out tiny chairs and a basket of books outside of the children's washroom.

Soon the parents were dropping off their young children. These children aren't babies, but a few are still wearing pull-up diapers. There are sixteen children in this program who range from ages two to four. I waited in the gym and stood close to the small slide as the children came into the gym after greeting Ms. Todd. I watched for safety issues as the children were learning how to take turns climbing up and sliding down the tiny play structure. Some children didn't want to keep the line moving and so had to be encouraged to slide down. Judy kindly made nametags for the children to wear so I could address the children by their names when I spoke to them. I smiled and greeted each child as they were about to slide down and I noticed that they smiled back and would often wait to be given permission to come down. Soon Rosalie Buss arrived with her father (Rev. Jared Buss) and she joined the others on the slide and played happily with them. Some of the other children chose to use the tricycles and little cars. In order to find the right vehicle, the children would try sitting on different riding toys until they found one they could ride easily, not too big or small for them.

To make a connection between the playschool and the kindergarten, Mrs. Sara Gatti will occasionally bring her kindergarten children to the downstairs hall and let them play for a little while with the playschool children. When the kindergarten children arrived, I noticed that there were lots of children playing happily together, but there was no fighting, pushing, or shoving. I attribute the good behaviour that I observed, not just to the children, but to the competence of the two teachers (Ms. Todd and Mrs. Gatti) who were actively instructing the children how to get along well with each other and would redirect as necessary.

Eventually the combined playtime was over, and Mrs. Gatti took her children back upstairs to their own classroom and Ms. Todd allowed time for bathroom breaks for the children. Afterward, the children helped put away the cars and tricycles by driving them to the door of the storage room while I put them away. Then, we went into the playschool room so the children could choose a variety of activities at the different play stations. Judy had made some colourful two-toned play dough for the children to play with, which she later donated to the afterschool program. Many of the children used this play dough to make "cookies," while other children painted, played at the water table, played in the tiny kitchen, or had fun with finger puppets and other activities. As I interacted with the children at the various play stations, I appreciated how the children found ways to share what they were doing or making with Judy and I. Judy let me know there was one little boy who is just in the process of learning English. He was a quiet, well-mannered little boy who recognizes his name and perhaps some other

words. I noticed that he smiled sweetly and came over when he was called and that he played nicely with the others, even if he did not say too much to them. At this young age, the children are trying to master so many basic skills that they probably hardly notice his lack of words anyway.

After creative play and snack time was finished, it was time for a bible story. Judy told the story from Luke 19:1-10 about a rich man named Zacchaeus, who was the chief among the publicans. Zacchaeus climbed up a tree so that he might be able to see and talk with Jesus as he passed by with his followers on the road. Judy knew this bible story well and used a little plastic play person as Zacchaeus and an indoor tree to help her illustrate the story as she told it to the children who were sitting on the carpet around her. This was an interactive experience, and as I watched her tell it, I knew that she understood how to relate this bible story in a way that would hold the attention of these very young children. I could see that doing this took much skill, but she was able to hold their attention with the ease of a seasoned professional.

After Judy led a prayer and a song, it was time for the children to go home with their parents. It had been a busy and productive morning, but also a very rich experience for these children. We are fortunate to have both Judy and Kim who understand how to relate well to these precious young children and have the skills to make the Olivet playschool such a positive learning experience for them. I gained a new respect for what goes on in this space that we call the playschool and a realization that this important use needs to be nurtured and protected. I know that many of us hope that the playschool parents will eventually choose to send their children through the school and that is what I hope for too. Fortunately, there are some parents who decide that Olivet is the best place for their children to continue their education. I also know that the Lord is building many positive remains for these children that will become some of their precious early childhood memories.

I am grateful for this special experience and to have been given the opportunity to interact with these little children and gain a new understanding of what actually happens in the Olivet playschool.

Written by Naomi Reid in October 2018

Fond Farewell for Now

Dear friends at Olivet Church and School,

After a wonderful nine months of living in Ontario we are happy to be headed back home to Boynton Beach, Florida, during Olivet's March Break.

We are incredibly grateful ***Personal information removed from online version*** got to attend Olivet School for their first formal schooling experience, and while we are glad to be reuniting our family, we are very sad to say goodbye to all our new friends here. We are so thankful for all the special memories we've created together in a short time and look forward to visiting more in the future.

Thank you for your loving support, given in seen and unseen ways, which made us feel so welcomed and loved. We are forever grateful!

We hope to see you after church on Sunday March 3 for a chance to say goodbye!

Lots of love,

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March Anniversary

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Conjugal love, likewise, remains of such quality as it was interiorly with a man in the world, that is, in his interior will and thought. CL 48

~ Olivet New Church and Olivet School ~
~ March 2019 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Winter Term Ends 10:30a Field Trip for KG 1p Early Dismissal 6:30p H4H Bus. Mtg 7:30p H4H/NA	2 7p Young Adult Social Cancelled
3 10:30a Worship (MKC)	4 Gr. 3 Field Trip 6:30p Beaver Scouts 7p Pastors council 7p Scout Leaders Meeting	5 7p Closed AA Mtg	6 3p Broader Horizons (Feb. 13 - Mar. 6)	7 10a Arcana class in Lobby 12:30p Drop In On The Pastor 7:30p Open AA Mtg	8 Uniform-Free Day (Loonie/Toonie for Charity) 7:30p Hunger for Healing NA	9
10 10:30a Worship (JJB)	11 March Break	12 March Break 7p Closed AA Mtg	13 March Break	14 March Break 12:30p Drop In On The Pastor 6:15p AA Bus. meeting 7:30p Open AA Mtg	15 Chatterbox Deadline March Break 7:30p Hunger for Healing NA	16
17 10:30a Worship (JPC)	18 Classes Resume 6:30p Beaver Scouts 7p Olivet Board Meeting	19 7p Closed AA Mtg	20 6:30p Wednesday Supper 7:30p Doctrinal Class (JJB)	21 10a Arcana class in Lobby 12:30p Drop In On The Pastor 7:30p Open AA Mtg	22 8p Hunger for Healing NA ask to set up for potluck	23 7p Ladies' Craft Night
24 10:30a Worship (MKC) 12p Potluck	25 Report Cards (Winter Term) 6:30p Beaver Scouts	26 7p Closed AA Mtg	27	28 12:30p Drop In On The Pastor 7:30p Open AA Mtg	29 1p Early Dismissal 1p Parent-Teacher Interviews 7:30p H4H/NA	30
31 10:30a Worship (JJB) 12p Middle & High School Classes	Notes:					

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 3	***Personal information removed from online version***								
Mar 10									
Start of March Break & Daylight Savings Time									
Mar 17									
End of March Break									
Mar 24									
Mar 31									
Apr 7									

Every individual possesses potential qualities that they are privileged to share with their neighbours. To be human, understood spiritually, means to perform uses (*Divine Love and Wisdom*). If you would like to get involved, you can find the contact list of committee volunteer heads on the second page of the society phone list.

Meal Volunteer Schedule

Date	Cooks	Dishwashers
March 20 Wednesday Supper	***Personal information removed from online version***	
March 24 Potluck Lunch		
April 3 SWOT Summary		

Olivet Church, 279 Burnhamthorpe Rd, Toronto, ON, M9B 1Z6416-239-3054
 Olivet Church email address: contact@olivetnewchurch.orgFAX 416-239-4935
 Pastor, Michael Cowley.....647-883-3754
 Assistant to the Pastor, Jared Buss.....647-677-2600
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