

Olivet New Church CHATTERBOX

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The First Advent Prophecy

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will tread down your head, and you will bruise His heel.

—Genesis 3:14-15

These words from Genesis are widely recognized as the first prophecy of the Lord's Advent. This might feel a little surprising. The symbolism in these verses is dense, and not necessarily easy to understand, but they don't seem to have much to do with Christmas. The woman referred to in these verses is Eve, the first woman, and the creature addressed here is the serpent who deceived her. What does a rivalry between these two figures have to do with the coming of the Lord? Other Advent prophecies—such as, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son" (Isaiah 7:14)—are much easier to identify. But it has long been understood (by Jewish, Christian, and New Church scholars alike) that the "He" referred to in these verses is the Messiah, and that makes this the Scriptures' first foreshadowing of His coming and the first indication of His purpose.

Prophecies of the Lord's Advent play an important part in the Christmas story and in the story of the gospel overall. He came to earth to fulfil those prophecies. Throughout His ministry, He was answering them. And when He was born they loomed over Him—waiting for Him, as it were. Though they're only words echoing out of the distant past (distant even at the time of the Lord's birth), they're essential to the establishment of tension in the Christmas story, and from that tension comes much of the story's wonder and beauty. Such a weight of history and expectation, so many years of waiting, so much scholarship and study, so much hope, all leaned down and rested on a baby lying in a manger.

Some Advent prophecies are easier to appreciate, in this context, than others. For example, in Isaiah we're told the names of the Messiah—and it's not hard to feel a touch of awe when we consider that those names belonged to Jesus Christ even as He lay in Mary's arms. That baby was Wonderful, the Counselor, God, the Mighty One, the Father of Eternity, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). The idea that that baby had come to earth to tread down a serpent's head is, perhaps, a little harder to appreciate. But it's a powerful idea nonetheless. Some of that power comes from the fact that this idea shows us the purpose of the Lord's Advent: He came to earth to conquer the serpent. His reasons for being born on earth are expressed in different ways in countless other places throughout the Word; in Matthew, for example, we're told, "He will save His people from their sins" (1:21). But because the prophecy in Genesis is the first of all the statements of His purpose, there's a sense in which it holds sway above them all. The Lord came to earth to conquer the serpent; that baby who lay in a manger was there because He needed to do battle with an ancient enemy. This can be a difficult idea to digest, and it's somewhat at odds with the peaceful and gentle themes that we love to celebrate at Christmastime. But the wonder of the Christmas story is that the baby Lord was so many things at once: He was a helpless child and He

was Almighty God; He was the Mighty One and the Prince of Peace. He was Divine innocence made flesh, and He was impelled by a zealous desire to save the human race from its oldest enemy.

The serpent is widely understood to be a symbol for the devil, or evil incarnate, or something like that. In Genesis, it whispers against God and deceives the first woman and her husband. In the book of Revelation, it reappears as a dragon doing battle with the forces of heaven—this dragon is referred to as, “that serpent of old, called the devil and satan” (12:9). In Isaiah we’re introduced to a figure who’s come to be known as Lucifer, regarding whom we read,

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! ... For you have said in your heart, ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...’... Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the pit. (14:12-15)

Christian thought has tended to associate Lucifer both with the serpent in Eden and with the dragon of Revelation, and those associations are supported by the teachings of the New Church (see Arcana Coelestia §§254 & 257). The point is that it’s not hard to identify this serpent as “the big bad guy”—the archvillain of the entire story of the Word, who disappears from time to time but always reappears. The New Church teaches that there is not one supreme leader of hell: “the Devil” and “Satan” are not names for an individual, but for hell as a whole (AC §251, et al.). This is an important teaching, because the idea that there is a lord of hell—the eternal archnemesis of the Lord of heaven—implies that God is not truly the god of all things. If He doesn’t rule over hell, He’s not omnipotent, and He’s not really in control. The truth is that the Lord Jesus Christ rules even over hell—though hell’s inhabitants do not willingly obey Him.

So it’s best not to get carried away thinking of the serpent as an individual with its own identity and personality. Nevertheless, the Word does sometimes represent hell as a single monster—and that’s a powerful image. It gives us something to be afraid of, something to recoil from; it gives us a reason to need a Saviour. Of course, the truth is that hell exists not somewhere beyond the world’s edge, but within human hearts. The uncomfortable truth is that, as often as not, it is our own selfish choices and evil actions that are the enemy. The Lord came to tread down the head of the serpent, and He came to save us from our sins; the two are one and the same. The enemy within is one we can’t easily take refuge from. We can deny that it exists, but we can’t stop feeling its presence. But this only means we need a Saviour that much more desperately. The enemy is at the door; the enemy has power over us; yes, we have a part in it, but it’s also a monster, a serpent, a dragon that preys on us. It’s a creature that’s hunted the human race from the beginning; yes, we made it ourselves, but it is also not us. It need not be us—and because of that, we can be saved from it.

And that’s what the Lord was born to do. Strangely and wonderfully, He came to us as something poor and gentle, seemingly weak. When He grew up and began His ministry, there were times when He spoke sternly and times when His Divine power flashed from Him. But He also never stopped being unexpectedly gentle, unexpectedly humble. That’s the tension of the Christmas story, and the tension of the gospel: the Lord Jesus Christ is so many things at once, so many things that don’t easily converge within our limited conceptions. The baby Lord was a warrior—that was what made Him a Saviour. And yet, He was Innocence itself, and thoughts of Him will never cease to stir hearts with impressions of holy peace.

Rev. Jared Buss

From the Pastor

Spiritual Offspring—Our Church Ministries: “The offspring from the Lord as Husband and Father and from the Church as Wife and Mother are all spiritual offspring, and this is what is meant in the spiritual sense of the Word by sons and daughters...born of the Lord by the Church. The Lord is the source from which all good and truth flow, and it is the Church which receives this good and truth and puts them into effect...” (Conjugal Love 120)

What are all these “effects” that are being referenced? First and foremost, they are our individual spiritual development and progress. We are to be regenerated, rebirthed by the Lord working through the Church as our spiritual mother. Added to this, we members of the Church as His agents engage in “extended family” work. All the

various outreach services, educational programs, spiritual guidance objectives, and community-oriented events that the church facilities as a working organism. These are like the children of the church, the offspring of the Lord.

Olivet School Direction Plan: Thank you to all who came out (or sent in proxies) to the society special meeting to review the progress and plans for the Olivet School. We had very good attendance and discussions.

The Society delivered a clear mandate with a two-vote process—with one vote on the overall determination to support the school and a second, more specific, decision to resume the Olivet School Direction Plan, which we took a hiatus from three years ago.

Principal Britteny Wilson did a superb job of describing the timeline and measurements, the staffing and projections, and the financial and enrolment numbers for the present and upcoming years.

We foresee a bright future ahead with strong Society support to carry on this precious use of our spiritual offspring.

Upcoming Activities: Please review the calendar for all the upcoming Christmas celebrations. And, mark your calendar for January 29, 2020, when we will hold an Olivet Town Hall meeting. We will delve into more ways we can serve the Lord in the many other services and outreach of the church. We'll review the Soni Werner process and outcomes and consider ways to bring alive the uses suggested then.

Michael

From the Assistant Pastor

December this year looks to be as busy and as exciting as ever. Justine and I are going to be working together (along with a host of wonderful volunteers) to bring you another Christmas pageant—see the advertisements further on in this issue. On December 18, I will be leading a Wednesday evening doctrinal class on the subject of the wise men from the Christmas story; we'll be exploring what the Heavenly Doctrines teach about who these wise men really were and what their story tells us about how we can worship the Lord.

I'll also be continuing to host a Friday evening Scripture Study class. Between the time of the publication of this issue and the end of 2019, we'll only meet two more times—on November 29 and December 20. But we'll carry on strong in the new year! Anyone who'd like to join this class is most welcome; we meet from 8:00 to 9:30 pm in the church lobby. The readings for November 29 and December 20 are Matthew 5 & 6 and Matthew 7 & 8, respectively.

I wish you all a peaceful and a joyful holiday season.

Jared

From the Principal's Office

Olivet School staff have breathed a collective sigh of relief and gratitude following the November 6 society vote to keep supporting the school and to resume the School Direction Plan initiated in 2013. We're so happy for the school to be continuing its amazing work, and, at the same time, cognizant of the "no" votes and the people who are still waiting to be heard and cared for. We feel motivated to do everything possible to combine energies wherever possible and move forward with listening, respect, and kindness.

We had our Fall Open House on November 13, with wonderful tours of the classrooms and halls and displays of student artwork. We also enjoyed the amazing talents of professional storyteller, Nathalie Vachon, who kept the crowd fully entertained and enthralled.

Reminders and Notices: Be reminded that school registration for next year is open, so please be sure to get your children enrolled. The school will be participating once again in the Etobicoke-Lakeshore Santa Claus Parade, December 7 at 10:00 am. We hope you'll join us! We'll be meeting at the Second Street School at 8:45 am. We will have our Christmas Concert on Wednesday, December 11, followed by a Christmas Market/Bake Sale! Olivet School students will be providing a choir performance in church on Sunday, December 15.

With grateful hearts the faculty and staff thank the society for their support and the Lord for all His blessings.

Britteny Wilson, Laura Braam, Val Younan



**You are invited to the
Christmas Tableaux,
Olivet School Children's Choir Performance,
& Potluck Lunch
Sunday, December 15, 2019 at the Olivet Church
Tableaux Worship Service: 10:30 am
Potluck lunch: 12:00 pm (Please bring a dish to share.)**

Christmas Tableaux 2019

An invitation: Please join us at 10:30 am on Sunday, December 15 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 (acting or singing) or behind the scenes (props, costumes, etc.), please contact director Justine Buss at justinebuss@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 9 and Tuesday, December 10, and a mandatory dress rehearsal will be on Saturday, December 14 from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm. A tasty lunch will be provided.

Not all performers will be needed for every rehearsal period. Cast members will receive a more detailed rehearsal schedule once casting is finalized. 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 talents to this special service!

Justine Buss



**You are invited to the
Men's Christmas Turkey
Dinner and Carol Sing
at the Olivet Church Hall**

Date: Friday, December 13, 2019

Time: 7:00 pm

Cost: \$20.00

**Please RSVP to Patrick Horigan
at phorigan@cogeco.net**

or 905-873-0873

**You are invited to the Women's Christmas Potluck Dinner Party
at the the manse (across from Olivet Church)**

Friday, December 13, 2019 at 6:30 pm

Please bring a dish to share and a gift to donate to the Women's Habitat Shelter (for women and children). Gifts that are useful to this shelter are: toiletries, winter gear (hats, gloves, and scarves) and nonperishable food items.

Contact person: Gwenda Cowley – 647-882-1620

Pittsburgh Youth Weekend—September 27–29, 2019

Forty-five full-time and three part-time teens attended the Pittsburgh Youth Weekend (sponsored by the General Church in Canada) from September 27 to 29, 2019. The breakdown of numbers from eight New Church societies was as follows: Fourteen teens attended from Kempton with Rev. Brett Buick and Katrin Jungé, eight teens attended from Kitchener with Rev. Nathan Cole, eight teens attended from Washington, DC with Rev. Judah Synnestvedt and Carina Heinrichs, five teens attended from Pittsburgh with Rev. Calvin and Maggie Odhner and Gabby Uber, four teens attended from Glenview (Chicago), one teen attended from Oak Arbor with Cindy Parker, three teens attended from Sarver, two teens attended from Toronto and Sudbury with Rev. Jared Buss and Naomi Reid, and three additional teens from Pittsburgh and Sarver attended part of the weekend. Our Pittsburgh hosts, Rev. Calvin and Maggie Odhner, worked very hard to make this a well organized, fun, and successful New Church youth event. I don't think that the amount of careful planning it takes to make these youth weekends work well can be overstated, but they rose to the challenge.



The weekend started after all groups arrived on Friday evening about 6:30 pm, with pizza and energetic group games. After this, everyone went outside to enjoy a lovely warm evening with crickets chirping contentedly and sat around the sunken garden in front of the church for a campfire and a vespers service led by Rev. Odhner. One of the ideas he shared with the group was Swedenborg's Rules of Life, which are stated as "Diligently to read and meditate on the Word of God. To be content under the dispensations of God's providence. To observe propriety of behavior and to keep the conscience clear. To obey what is ordered, to attend faithfully to one's office and other duties and in addition, to make one's self useful to society in general." He kindly gave everyone a lovely printed version of these wise words to live by. I was glad to receive a copy of this and will be putting it up above my desk so I can read it when I need to remind myself to trust in the Lord's leading. After the vespers service was over, some teens stayed around the campfire to

visit with each other and sing songs, while others went inside to visit or play games. Later on, it was time for snacks and then everyone went to their sleeping quarters. It had been a long day's drive to get to the teen weekend event, so it seemed that the teens didn't take too long to settle down and go to sleep.

On Saturday morning, everyone woke up bright and early to enjoy a hot breakfast that was prepared by kind volunteers from the Pittsburgh New Church society. By 8:30 am, everyone piled into vehicles to drive to "Camp Guyasuta," which has lots of fun group activities. The staff at this camp divided our large group into four smaller groups of teens and led them through various challenging team-building exercises. After they learned how to work together cooperatively as a group, they were allowed to try the zip line and the elevated ropes course. (All teens were attached with a safety harness before they could participate in either of these fun activities.) A few of the chaperones tried out these activities while others gave their support from the safety of the ground. Everyone ate lunch at the camp before returning to the Pittsburgh New Church. We then walked over to Frick Park and sat on the circular stone wall for a doctrinal class led by Rev. Nathan Cole. The class focused on the importance of Holy Supper and how we make a connection with the Lord by participating with sincerity and being in state of repentance. After the class, the teens had free time to play games, socialize, or take showers, while some of the adults worked to prepare a surprise birthday celebration and BBQ dinner for Rev. Calvin Odhner and all of the participants of the teen weekend. We had almost finished eating when it began to rain and had to move things indoors. After the rain stopped, Rev. Odhner took the teens to Frick Park to play capture the flag. Finally, it was time for an evening vespers service with Rev. Brett Buick, who explained what is involved with the Holy Supper and that the correspondence of wine is spiritual truth from the Lord and bread is spiritual love from the Lord and that by taking these things into our bodies a powerful connection with the Lord is established. After the service, there was some time for socializing and then everyone went to bed.

On Sunday morning, all the teens helped Maggie Odhner prepare a lovely lunch (company chicken, beans, mashed potatoes, salad, and a variety of home-made pies). The teens would be serving this lunch to the members of the Pittsburgh society before sitting down to eat themselves. The group finished cooking in time to pack up their belongings, clean the church and get ready to attend church at 11:00 am. In his sermon, one of the things Rev. Jared Buss preached about was not needing to fear death if we have trust in the Lord and obey His commandments. After church, everyone enjoyed the lovely meal outside in the sunken garden while they visited with each other. After the meal it was time to head for home.

If this recollection of events was all that I chose to write about, you would not get any sense of all the good that was accomplished throughout the weekend. The teens were given several opportunities to learn important spiritual information for their lives and also got the chance to strengthen old friendships and form new connections with each other. The ministers and chaperones also got the chance to make meaningful connections and support each other in the work they do, while working together to support this important use for the young people of church. I observed that the teens interacted positively with each other and were helpful to adults whenever they were asked to be. Additionally, I also appreciated the beautiful and powerful singing that happened during the Sunday service and was privileged to hear the lovely descant voices of some members of the Pittsburgh society. The strong and beautiful singing voices reminded me that when we get together to form a larger New Church group, we can feel stronger, and it is wonderful when a group of like-minded people work together to serve the Lord by serving the young people in our congregations. Rev. Odhner smiled warmly at the young people as he told them that they are the future of our church.

After the event was over, I asked one of the young people if he noticed any difference between the teens he got to know at the New Church youth weekend and the teens he is friends with in his public school. He let me know that although he had good friends in both places, he felt that the friendships that he had with the teens that were part of the New Church were much deeper than the friendships he had out of the church. I would be willing to bet that many of us feel this way.

Naomi Reid

Olivet Library

Did you know that the Olivet Library does not just include the school's library? All the books in the lobby and the narthex have been catalogued to make it easier to search for books. If you would like to borrow something from our vast collection (arguably one of the largest collections of Swedenborgiana in Canada) speak to me and I will quickly and easily register you as a borrower. Then anytime you want to look for a book, you can use the library computer (the one closest to the window) to find what you're looking for and then check it out. There are instructions clearly posted on a sign beside the computer, and I'm happy to help too. This applies to anyone who would also like to check out children's books from the school library as well—talk to me, and we can easily arrange for check-out privileges, and I can walk you through the steps.

Karen Cooper



**Invitation to the
Children's Christmas Party**
Sunday December 1, 2019
11:00 am–12:30 pm
Olivet Church

Activities:
Christmas craft, cookie decorating,
& nativity scene setup.

Snack will be served.
RSVP to the office by:
Friday, November 29, 2019

*You are invited to a
Ladies Christmas Craft Night!*

Date: Saturday, December 7, 2019

Time: 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Location: Olivet Church Hall

Cost: \$25.00

Refreshments will be served.

Craft—Design a lighted 18th century Christmas caroling scene inside of a lantern!

Supplies may be limited, so please RSVP no later than Sunday, December 1, 2019 to hostess Naomi Reid at 416-503-4945 or naomi_er001@yahoo.com

All proceeds after expenses will be donated to the church.

Teens: Save the Dates!





The dates for **Maple Leaf Academy Camp 2020** are set! If you're in **Grade 8 or high school** right now, please mark your calendars and join us from Thursday, June 25 to Wednesday, July 1 at the Ecology Retreat Centre near Orangeville, Ontario for a week full of joy, laughter, friendship, and spiritual growth. "**Light**" is our theme this year.

Registration forms will be available by March 2020. Watch this space for more information in the months to come. If you have any questions, you can also contact the Chief Leaf, Steph Kuhl, at stephkuhl@live.ca, or your friendly *Chatterbox* editor and camp staff member Claire Hurd at wordsmithclaire@gmail.com.

Reminder to all Olivet Church parents of pre-kindergarten aged children

We have a Monday morning Tots' Time program for the youngest ones, aged 16 months to 3 years old (with accompanying caregiver). The running of this program is contingent on a minimum enrollment by September 1.

From Tuesday to Fridays, 9:00-11:30 am, we have a Playschool program for preschoolers aged 30 months to 4 years of age (a limited number of children younger than 30 months may be admitted— inquiries welcome).

Please avoid disappointment—these spots fill up! Call the office now to reserve your spot for September 2020!

New House for Rent in Caryndale

Chalon Estates is currently building houses on the land behind the Carmel Church and our next unit is expected to be available February 1, 2020. This is a two-bedroom, two-bathroom, bright, lower-level unit (of a duplexed bungalow) with a walkout and its own single garage. Rent for this unit is \$1150.00. Our priority is to provide an opportunity for church members hoping to move into Caryndale with a smaller and more affordable option than many of the properties in our area.

If moving to Caryndale is something you are considering in the future, we will be building many more houses over the next few years. Please let me know if you are interested! This will help us to decide on the type and number of units to be built.

Please email Stephanie Kuhl (Chalon Board member) at stephkuhl@live.ca if you have any questions or would like an application.

~ Olivet Church and Olivet School ~
~ December 2019 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:30a Worship (MKC) 11a Sunday School Christmas Party	2 6:30p Beaver Scouts 7p Scout Leader's Meeting	3 7p Closed AA Mtg	4 3p Broader Horizons (Nov. 27-Dec. 18)	5 10:00 Arcana Class 7:30p Open AA Mtg	6	7 Santa Claus Parade, Etobicoke-Lakeshore 7p Ladies' Night Out - Craft Night
8 10:30a Worship (MKC)	9 Report Cards (Fall Term) 6p Tableaux Rehearsal 7p NO pastor's council in Dec	10 6p Tableaux Rehearsal 7p Closed AA Mtg	11 3p Broader Horizons (Nov. 27-Dec. 18) 6p Christmas Concert	12 6:30p AA Christmas Party 7:30p Open AA Mtg	13 6:30p Ladies' Christmas Party at the manse 7p Forward Sons' Christmas Dinner & Sing	14 8a Tableaux Rehearsal
15 10:30a Children's Choir Performance at Tableaux Service 10:30a Tableaux (JJB) 12p Potluck	16 7p Board Meeting	17 7p Closed AA Mtg	18 3p Broader Horizons (Nov. 27-Dec. 18) 7p Refreshments 7:30p Doctrinal Class (JJB)	19 7:30p Open AA Mtg	20 Chatterbox Deadline 1p PA 1/2 Day (1 pm Dismissal) 8p Scripture Study Class	21
22 10:30a Worship (MKC)	23 Christmas/New Year Holidays	24 Christmas/New Year Holidays 5p Christmas Eve service (JJB) 7p Closed AA Mtg	25 Christmas Christmas/New Year Holidays 10:30a Christmas Day Service (MKC)	26 Boxing Day Christmas/New Year Holidays 7:30p Open AA Mtg	27 Christmas/New Year Holidays	28 Christmas/New Year Holidays
29 Christmas/New Year Holidays 10:30a Worship (JJB)	30 Christmas/New Year Holidays	31 Christmas/New Year Holidays 7p Closed AA Mtg				

Sunday Volunteer Schedule

Date	Usher	Chancel	Organist	Sunday School 1 (PK-1)	Sunday School 2 Gr2-4)	JOY (Gr5-8)	Greeters	Refreshments	Flowers
Dec 1	S Cho	C Horigan	A Nater	K Jutras and N Reid			L Holmes	A Schnarr	L Starkey
Dec 8	M Braam	S Bradfield	A Nater	K Jutras	N Reid		J Freer	J Freer	L Starkey
Dec 15 Tableaux & Children's Choir Potluck	P Horigan	J Parker	F Raymond	K Jutras			M Broderick	M Broderick	L Starkey
Dec 22	P Bailey	C Horigan	A Nater	K Cooper			J Parker	M L La C Kumar	L Starkey
Dec 24 Christmas Eve	G Cresswell	J Parker	A Nater				Cowleys		L Starkey
Dec 25 Christmas Day	M Hasen	J Parker	A Nater			Buss's	L Starkey		
Dec 29	L Horigan	S Gatti	A Nater	N Reid			D McDonald	J Jorgenson	L Starkey
Jan 5	C Reid	C Horigan	A Nater	K Jutras	N Reid		L Holmes	A Schnarr	B Horigan

December Anniversaries

Denis and Sharene Young.....December 4, 37 years
 Dr. Basil and Marnie Orchard.....December 15, 58 years
 Adri and Mieke Braam.....December 19, 50 years
 Andrew and Claire Hurd.....December 30, 8 years

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

Social Meal Duty Roster

Date	Cooks	Dishwashers
December 15 – Potluck after Tableaux Service	K Cooper & K Parker	Volunteers
December 18 – Refreshments	K Cooper & J Jorgenson	Volunteers

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