

Olivet New Church

CHATTERBOX

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The Sun of Righteousness

The Lord is many things. At Christmastime, we often celebrate the variety of the ways in which He's revealed Himself: He is Wonderful, the Counselor, the Mighty One (Isaiah 9:6)—and He is the child born in Bethlehem (see Luke 2:11, 12). Many of our favorite Christmas hymns also celebrate the Lord's various names; a good example is "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing." I'd like to share a few thoughts about the subject matter of this song.

The first verse of this song, which is almost certainly the more widely understood one, goes as follows:

Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King.

Hark! Their songs the heavens fill: Peace on earth, to men goodwill.

These lines were clearly inspired by the Gospel account of the heavenly host's appearance to the shepherds the night the Lord was born (Luke 2:13, 14). The Lord is called "the newborn King," and that is a perfectly appropriate and intelligible name for Him. There's nothing difficult about this verse.

The second verse of this song is the one I'd like to explore a little more closely; but before I do that I should mention that, though the version of this song printed in the blue General Church liturgy has only two verses, the original song (which is the version that you'll hear anywhere outside of a New Church congregation) has three verses. The original song was written by Charles Wesley in 1739, but somewhere back in the hazy past of the General Church, somebody or other decided that some of Wesley's lyrics smacked a little too much of atonement theology, and essentially condensed the three verses to two, cutting out the problematic parts (the song is old enough that it was never protected by copyright law, so this sort of editing wasn't a legal issue). The uncredited people who've been responsible for the General Church liturgy over the years have done this sort of thing more than once, which is why a number of the songs that you'll hear in church at Olivet are a little different from the versions that you'll find on popular CDs ("We Three Kings" is another prominent example).

Back to the actual words of "Hark! The Herald..." The second verse of the song (in the blue liturgy), goes like this:

Hail! The Lord, the Prince of Peace! Hail! The sun of righteousness!

Light and life to all He brings, ris'n with healing in His wings.

These are lovely words, but they aren't quite as accessible as the words of the first verse. Both verses are heavily inspired by passages from Scripture, but the Scriptural references in this second verse are almost certainly not as familiar as those in the first. It's well known that the Lord is "the Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:6), but the bit about "the sun of righteousness" is fairly obscure. This is a reference to a passage in *Malachi*: "But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings." (4:2)

The chapter from *Malachi* in which this statement appears is not, on the whole, an uplifting one. It's one of many Old Testament passages in which the Lord addresses the fallen state of His former church. In this chapter He makes it clear that, for those who have fallen away from charity and from true worship, His advent is not a peaceful event—it is a challenging one. This is an important truth. When we celebrate Christmas, we're celebrating the Lord's willingness to make a new advent to each of us as individuals and be born in our hearts. That process isn't purely a festive one. There are parts of us that find His advent challenging. That said, there's nothing wrong with looking to Christmas as a season of comfort and goodwill, rather than a season for spiritual challenges. The Lord wants to comfort us—seeking comfort is valid, and it's an important part of our spiritual process.

And the line from *Malachi* that's referenced in "Hark! The Herald" is indeed a comforting one. The imagery in this line is beautiful. First of all, the Lord is called the "Sun of Righteousness"—not the "*Son* of Righteousness," which is probably what most of us would have assumed we'd heard, if we'd only ever listened to "Hark! The Herald..." and never seen the lyrics printed. We usually picture the Lord in human form, and that's exactly how He tells us He wants us to picture Him (see TCR §787). But there's something really powerful about the idea that He is a sun. Perhaps the image that we're invited to see is of the Lord as a human being, but a human being who holds light and fire like the fire of the sun within Him and who lets that light and warmth shine out in His face and in His eyes and through His touch. Throughout the Scriptures, the word "sun" represents the Lord's love and His wisdom: His love is spiritual heat, and His wisdom is spiritual light. These things are always within Him—they are what He is—but it's wonderful to picture them not just in Him but blazing through Him. He is heaven's sun, and He is the sun that shines on our spirits; like it says in *Luke*, He is the Dayspring (1:78).

The line from *Malachi* goes on to say that the Lord will arise with healing in His wings. This isn't the only place in the Word where He's said to have wings: in *Psalms* 91 we're told, "He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge" (v. 4). Again, we're encouraged to picture the Lord as a human being, not as something winged. But the idea that He has wings, or at least is capable of flight—capable of rising above the world's troubles and its darkness—is powerful. He is capable of lifting us above these things as well. He is a healer; He is *the* Healer. His light and heat are the medicine that our weary hearts and troubled minds have been longing for. At the moment, we're all dealing with COVID in one way or another, and it's clear that the world around us needs healing. The thought that the Lord is a healer doesn't have much power all on its own. But when we do His will and ask Him to be with us, His ability to heal is more than just a thought. His light and heat find a home within us, and we can communicate them. When we serve our neighbours, we share His healing spirit—that's when He arises upon this world with healing in His wings.

May His healing presence be with you for as long as COVID remains a part of our lives; and may His spirit warm and comfort your heart this Christmas season.

Rev. Jared Buss

From the Pastors

It seems whenever we think we have some good plans figured out for the month ahead, we are thrown a new set of circumstances. Just as the deadline for December *Chatterbox* arrived, we finalized our Christmas programming and wrote up the following. Then, two hours later, we received news that a new set of lockdown restrictions have been imposed on our Toronto region! Hold everything lightly! Stay safe and be kind to one another.

Tableaux: This year, we'll be incorporating our Tableaux into our Christmas Eve service, instead of putting on a special Tableaux service on December 13 as originally planned.

Christmas Eve: As ever, our Christmas Eve worship service will be held at 5:00 pm on December 24, and, as ever, it will be a candlelight service. Only this year, due to the now all-too-familiar

need for caution in the face of COVID, this will be a livestream-only service, and we'll be calling on you to provide your own candlelight!

We'll be putting on a small Tableaux as part of the Christmas Eve service. For obvious reasons, the Tableaux have to be significantly scaled down this year. What you see will involve just a small handful of actors (not unlike the New Church Day pageant that we did this year). But we will do our very best to celebrate the Christmas story and create a special experience, all the limitations notwithstanding!

We know that many of you also especially look forward to being able to sing your most beloved hymns during our Christmas services. We will be doing our best to find singers to either sing along with the hymns or to provide some special music during these services. Obviously, a solo singer isn't the same as a room full of voices, and that room full of voices is something we'll surely miss this year. But we can all still sing, and hopefully having someone to sing along with will make it that much easier.

Christmas Day: The Christmas Day service will be held at 10:30am on December 25, and it too will be a livestream-only service. We will be arranging special music and vocal accompaniment for the hymns for this service as well.

We are also hoping to have a socially distant outdoor carol sing in the afternoon on Christmas Day. Right now, this event is scheduled for 3:00pm. The idea is to give those who are interested at least some opportunity to see each other and sing together this Christmas season—just not too together! Those who participate in this event will have to avoid getting close to anyone outside of their own household, and we'll be asking everyone to remain within a demarcated space on the church lawn or parking lot. We won't be offering any food or social time—just a chance to sing.

Obviously this caroling event is subject to change in a number of different ways: it might have to be cancelled due to weather or COVID-related restrictions, and the time may also be revised. We'll send out more details when the event gets closer!

Warm regards,
Michael and Jared

From the Principal

Not surprisingly, our December activities at the school are significantly reduced this year, but we are still able to continue with some of our familiar events; they just have a slight twist this year! 😊

We are currently preparing for the Children's Choir Performance that typically happens in December. This year, the choir will be pre-recorded at school. Rev. Jared Buss will use the pre-recorded audio during the December 13 livestreamed service. Please join us on YouTube to enjoy the performance by the students.

This year the Christmas Concert, will also be pre-recorded and the video will be posted for parents to enjoy on our website. Due to privacy issues and photo release permissions, this will only be available to parents, who will access it with a secure password.

It has been announced by the provincial government that schools will be following the regular holiday break with no extensions at this time. Our Christmas holidays will begin on December 18, and we will return to school on January 4. As with everything these days, this could change, so we will wait and see what the next few weeks bring. The teachers are fully prepared to teach virtually should the need arise. I feel so blessed to work with such a committed group of people!

Laura Braam

Olivet School Registration

Registration is now open for Olivet School's 2021-22 year and we want to make sure that Olivet families have the first opportunity to register.

The enrollment process for JK to Grade 5 begins with setting up a Zoom meeting with our principal, Laura Braam and sending a copy of your child(ren)'s last two years' report cards (if applicable); this is followed by an invitation to have your child join a classroom for an assessment. Once that has been completed, the next step is to submit a completed registration form, record of immunization, and deposit.

The enrollment process for Tots' Time (16 months to 3 years) or Playschool (30 months to 4 years) is simple—contact the office to send you a registration form, complete it, and send it back with the record of immunization and deposit.

Once we have your completed registration form and deposit, your child(ren)'s spot is guaranteed. We are holding spots for Olivet congregation children until November 30 and then we will open those spots up to the community.

From the Treasurer

This is a reminder that the end of the year is coming, and with it your ability to have donations that you make reflected on your 2020 tax receipt.

At the end of October, the total contributions received by Olivet were \$10K less than the average amount that the church has received by this point over the last three years. We are short of our targeted donations by 33%, or roughly \$20K. Any donation helps us toward this target and is greatly appreciated.

We are not sure what is happening with the Christmas Tableaux this year but would like to remind you there is a yellow envelope for the Kenyan orphanage charity. I would encourage a donation to this useful charity. We also have yellow envelopes for gifts to the Pastor. If you would like to give to these two uses and aren't using the yellow envelopes, please indicate on the memo line what the donation is for. Please do not combine the two, as one is tax receiptable and the other is not.

For your convenience there are different ways to donate:

1. Cheque made payable to the Olivet Church of the New Jerusalem. **Please put "Attention: Treasurer on the envelope when sending this in.**
2. EFT direct bank account withdrawal: I process this when I have your permission and information. Money goes directly from your account to Olivet's.
3. Credit card: Processed by me once you give permission and information
4. Etransfer: Use treasurer@olivetnewchurch.org as the email address. You can put a note directing your donation to the above mentioned uses or general purpose uses.
5. Canada Helps: We are registered with this organization, which you can find online. If you do donate through Canada Helps, they issue the tax receipt.

Please don't hesitate to contact me by phone or email if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Jerry

You're Invited to the Olivet Women's Christmas Party

Gwenda and Justine are hosting a Zoom version of our annual Christmas party on **Saturday, December 5th from 8:00 – 9:30pm**. While we certainly wish we could gather in person this year, this pandemic won't stop us from connecting as festively and safely as possible. In fact, there are many aspects of our usual party that we can still make happen!

1. Donations

We always make a point of giving to those in need at our usual gathering, so this year we encourage all of you to participate in Toronto Miracle – get more details and sign up at torontomiracle.org. All you have to do is leave a nonperishable item outside your home (or in your condo lobby) on the morning of the party (December 5) and volunteers will come and collect it. It's that easy!

2. Festive Food

While we can't do a proper potluck, we can all commit to enjoying Christmassy food and beverages during the party. We also encourage you to send in a recipe of what you would have brought to this year's gathering if it were happening in person. Just email Justine at justinebbuss@gmail.com and she will then share the collection of recipes with all party goers. Maybe the fun of sharing and making each other's recipes will bring us closer this holiday season.

3. Worship

The first hour of the party will just be a chance to visit and check in with one another. Starting at 9pm, we will have a mini worship service to bring our attention to the joy of the Lord's birth.

4. Great music

While we can't all sing along together, we can enjoy jolly Christmas carols accompanied by Fran Raymond. We might have to sing along "muted" on Zoom, but at least we will be able to see hear the music and see everyone's happy faces. And of course, we will wrap up the evening with "Calm on the Listening Ear of Night"—it's tradition!

We hope you can join us in our virtual gathering this year. If you're interested in attending, **please RSVP by Friday, December 4 to justinebbuss@gmail.com**. Merry Christmas!

New Church Career Network

A new program called the *New Church Career Network* is being launched in support of the General Church Office of Outreach. Its goal is to provide career support for New Church young adults by connecting them with New Church professionals in their field of interest. This is being headed up by "our own" Aaliya (Mapp) Gunther, who is the Career Network Coordinator, in Bryn Athyn.

I have agreed to be the volunteer liaison for Olivet, to help our young adults by connecting them with a professional in the Olivet congregation (or other NC societies) who have current or past experience in the field that they are interested in. The hope is that this connection would help the young adult build their network and could potentially even lead to a job opportunity.

If you are an adult who would be willing to be a "mentor" of sorts, or provide input to a young adult regarding your skills and experience, please let me know (email below). I will add you to a list of willing participants! If you are a young adult looking for information and possible mentorship in a particular area of interest, please also reach out to me via the email below and we'll see who we can connect you with.

Who knows what great things this could lead to?!

Please contact Val at valeriyounan@rogers.com

New Church Career Network

The New Church Career Network aims to provide **career support** and opportunities for New Church young adults by **connecting** them with professionals in their field of interest. We are working to **build community** through professional connections, mentorship, and career development.



"Charity itself is acting justly and faithfully in our position and our work."
—True Christian Religion
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Recipes Request

Inspired by the events and struggles we all faced this year, the ladies of the Bryn Athyn community have joined efforts to put together a community cookbook, a collection of recipes gathered from the kitchens of our family, friends, and neighbors, including those at Olivet! If you would like to share one or more of your battle-tested recipes, please contact bacookbookladies@gmail.com and we will provide you with instructions. **Submissions must be received by no later than Tuesday December 1.** Cookbooks will go on sale approximately one month after the recipes are finalized (details to follow). All proceeds will benefit a local charity.

Erika Lee Synnestvedt, Organizer, The Bryn Athyn Cookbook Ladies

Scholarships Available

Bryn Athyn College scholarships: **Two** education scholarships will be offered for the 2020-21 school year. This annual award is for the purpose of supporting women attending the Bryn Athyn College of the New Church who desire to become New Church teachers and declare education as a major or minor (or part of an interdisciplinary degree).

The annual scholarship award amount is \$2,100 (\$700 paid directly to the college at the beginning of each trimester), for up to two recipients. One award is for an incoming freshman and one award is for a current Bryn Athyn College of the New Church education student. It may be used toward tuition, fees, and/or books.

Three scholarships are available to women students of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church who have a 3.0 GPA and are studying **religion** (major, minor, ID), are in the **MARS** program, or are **international** students. There are (2) \$2,000 and (1) \$1,000 scholarship awarded to eligible recipients who exemplify the teachings of the New Church. These are annual merit-based scholarships that can be used for tuition, college fees, books, or supplies.

Two scholarships are available to women who are attending Bryn Athyn College of the New Church earning a Master's Degree and have a 3.0 GPA or higher. Each annual award is \$2,000 (paid directly to the college at the beginning of each trimester). These are annual merit-based scholarships that can be used for tuition, college fees, books or supplies.

Applications are due February 1, 2021.

To apply: email ancdaughters@gmail.com or call Sarah Wong at BAC 267-502-6085 or see the BAC website.

Academy of the New Church scholarships: **Two** annual scholarships are now offered for the 2020-2021 school year in the amount of \$2,500 for up to two young women who exemplify the teachings of the New Church. The scholarship may be used toward tuition, books, or fees. These are annual merit and need-based scholarships and may be applied for yearly.

Applications are due March 1, 2021.

To apply: email ancdaughters@gmail.com to request an application.

Theta Alpha Journal

Copies of the November Theta Alpha Journal have been mailed to the church. Please contact the church office for curbside pickup or to have a copy mailed to you.

December Anniversaries

Denis and Sharene Young.....	December 4, 38 years
Dr. Basil and Marnie Orchard.....	December 15, 59 years
Adri and Mieke Braam.....	December 19, 51 years
Andrew and Claire Hurd.....	December 30, 9 years

[W]ith those who think religiously of marriages, the marriage of the spirit precedes, and that of the body is subsequent; and these are those with whom love ascends towards the soul, and from its height thence descends[.] — CL 304

~ Olivet New Church and Olivet School ~
~ December 2020 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Olivet School opens spots held for Olivet and returning families	2 3p Broader Horizons 8p Online Discussion Class	3	4	5
6 10:30a Worship (MKC)	7 Report Cards Distribution 7p Pastor's council	8	9 3p Broader Horizons (Dec 2-16)	10 10a Arcana Class	11	12
13 10:30a Pre-Recorded Children's Choir Performance 10:30a Worship (JJB)	14 7p Board Meeting	15	16 Pre-Recorded Christmas Concert available for viewing 3p Broader Horizons 8p Online Discussion Class	17	18 Chatterbox Deadline 1p Early Dismissal (PD 1/2 Day)	19
20 10:30a Worship (MKC)	21 Olivet Winter Break	22 Olivet Winter Break	23 Olivet Winter Break	24 Olivet Winter Break 5p Christmas Eve Worship (JJB)	25 Christmas Olivet Winter Break 10:30a Christmas Day Worship (MKC) 3p Outdoor Carol Sing	26 Boxing Day
27 10:30a Worship (JJB)	28 Olivet Winter Break	29 Olivet Winter Break	30 Olivet Winter Break	31 Olivet Winter Break		

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