



# PEACE RIVER NEW CHURCH CURRENT

NEWSLETTER OF THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

NOVEMBER 2013



## BAPTISM

By Rev. Coleman Glenn

As you might expect, I have babies on the mind. Some time this month, Anne and I will become parents, and I've been assured by every parent I've talked to that our lives are about to change forever. (That permanent life-change will begin with a few months of sleep-deprivation, I'm told, so please bear with us if we seem a little zombie-like!) I've invited Rev. Brad Heinrichs to come preach on November 17<sup>th</sup>, and Rev. Jim Cooper to preach on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Besides giving me a bit of a break, having these guest ministers will give us the opportunity to have our new baby baptized, hopefully while our parents are still here visiting.

Preparing for our baby's baptism has me re-reading the chapters on baptism in *True Christian Religion* and *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine*. I'm extremely grateful that we have these chapters and these books. For centuries Christians have debated whether or not infant-baptism is a good practice, and asked just what exactly baptism accomplishes. Does it save a person? Does it guarantee that a person will receive the Holy Spirit? Is it merely a sign, or does it have some actual

spiritual effect? These chapters from the Doctrines of the New Church provide some clarity.

Baptism is first and foremost a sign – a “sign that a person is of the Church, and for a memorial that he is to be regenerated” (NJHD 202). The water in baptism represents the truth of faith, and being symbolically washed means that *if* a person lives according to the truths of faith, they will be regenerated. Because it is a sign, “a person may be baptized as an infant; and if not then, he may be baptized as an adult” (NJHD 206).

These passages from *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* place a big emphasis on the symbolic aspects of baptism. Reading them, a person could come away with the impression that baptism doesn't actually have any spiritual effect at all. Isn't a person regenerated by living according to the truth whether or not they've undergone a ceremony that represents this? There's some truth to that; we do not believe that a person who dies without being baptized is automatically destined for hell. But the chapter in *True Christian Religion* – a longer chapter than the one in *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* – gives more insight into the actual *effects* of baptism.

*True Christian Religion* lists three uses of baptism:

The **first use of baptism** is introduction into the Christian Church, and at the same time insertion among Christians in the spiritual world (TCR 677). What does that mean? It means that baptism is a symbol that a person belongs to the Christian Church – which we already knew from NJHD 202 quoted above – but that it is a sign *not only in this world, but spiritually as well*. And that means that *baptism actually changes the spirits who are present with a person*. We tend to be completely oblivious to the fact that all our thoughts and feelings come from the spirits around us, and yet this is the case. Baptism is a sign in the spiritual world that *Christian* spirits should be with the person being baptized. Now, the spirits who are present with us change depending upon our

decisions in life, but there is still a very real effect that comes from the symbolic washing of baptism – because it changes the spirits associated with us, it changes the thoughts we will think and the affections we will feel.

The **second use of baptism** is that the Christian may know and acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and Savior, and follow Him. (TCR 681) When we baptize someone, we baptize them according to the Lord's commandment "into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." And that "name" they are being baptized into is the Lord Jesus Christ. And because the second purpose of baptism that a person may know and acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ, and to follow Him, baptism not only involves the symbolic washing – it also involves a promise. In the case of an adult, that promise is that he will shun evils as sins and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. In the case of an infant baptism, the parents make that promise for the child, promising that they will raise the child to know and follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

The **third use of baptism** is that a person may be regenerated (TCR 684). This is the use that was mentioned earlier in *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine*, and the primary symbolism of the washing of baptism. But it is key that this follows *after* the first two uses. A person is only regenerated by knowing, acknowledging, and following the Lord Jesus Christ. And to truly acknowledge Him, we must live according to His truth, which makes us clean. Again, the baptism itself does not save a person – but there is a power in the representative act, in that it confirms and strengthens a person in their relationship with the Lord. *True Christian Religion* sums it up this way:

As these three uses follow in order, and unite in the ultimate, and consequently to the angels appear to combine as one, therefore when Baptism is performed, when it is read of in the Word or mentioned by name, angels who are present do not understand Baptism, but regeneration. Therefore, by these words of the Lord, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16), the angels in heaven understand that he who acknowledges the Lord and is regenerated is saved. It is for this reason also that Baptism is called by Christian Churches on earth the laver of regeneration. The Christian accordingly should know that whoever does not believe in the Lord cannot be regenerated, although he has been baptized. (TCR 685)

So what is baptism? It is the outermost expression of a spiritual reality: the reality that a person has been introduced to the Lord Jesus Christ, and if that person continues to follow the Lord, they will be born anew. And as parents, it is a promise: a promise that we will raise this child to learn the Lord's commandments, to know the Lord's prayer, and to more and more come into a living knowledge of who the Lord God Jesus Christ is.

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## SOCIETY MEETING NOVEMBER 23<sup>rd</sup>

On Saturday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 7:00 p.m., Rev. Jim Cooper would like to meet with as many people as possible from the congregations of Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie to discuss the future of pastoral service for the Peace River Region. My (Rev. Coleman Glenn) initial three year-term here will finish at the end of June, and whether I continue to serve here or not, we need to discuss the best way to serve the Peace Region going forward, whether that is with a resident pastor or a visiting minister. **Please make every effort to attend!** The meeting will take place at the church in Dawson Creek.

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## TABLEAUX COORDINATOR NEEDED

Hard to believe it, but it's that time of year again! Christmas will be here before we know it, and we're looking for volunteers to organize the Christmas tableaux service, which will take place December 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00 p.m. There are several people who have already volunteered to *assist* whoever is in charge, so if you do volunteer to take the lead, you will not be on your own. Please let Rev. Coleman Glenn know if this is something you'd be willing to take on. Thank you!

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## BABY SHOWER

You are invited to a **baby shower** in the church basement for **Anne Grace and Coleman Glenn on Sunday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, immediately following the morning church service.** Everyone is welcome and a catered luncheon will be provided. If anyone is interested in donating towards the lunch or is in need of gift suggestions, please contact me (Jillian Crandall) at (250) 782-1010 or by email at [jillian\\_crandall@hotmail.com](mailto:jillian_crandall@hotmail.com). Hope to see you all there!

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## REPORT ON THE SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

The semi-annual meeting of the Dawson Creek Church of the New Jerusalem took place on Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>. After reviewing the minutes from the annual meeting in January, and going over this year's budget, we discussed various church uses and upcoming events. Among the highlights:

1. Donations so far this year are up from last year; in fact, they are the highest to date that they have ever been. (It's important to note, though, that last year's donations at this point were high as well but we ended up falling short of our goal, since we did not have as much extra donations at Christmas time as we often have in the past).

2. The church lawn got a little out of control over the summer. We discussed the possibility of selling the back lot, in part to make lawn-mowing more appealing; that idea was set aside, though, as we asked how many people would be willing to mow the lawn if a mower was supplied, and found that we had enough volunteers to cover the summer months. It was determined that we need to have volunteers signed up for specific tasks at specific times, rather than assuming someone will drop by and do whatever needs to be done.

3. We discussed the possibility of looking at Hommy Park for our next family campout, due to its convenient location between Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie, and its lower rates. A small committee volunteered to visit the park and assess its usability.

Several other matters were discussed as well, which have been mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, e.g. the need for a tableaux coordinator and the upcoming meeting with Rev. Jim Cooper to discuss the future of pastoral care for Dawson Creek. Church members can expect a full report from the board secretary in the near future.



### THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSAEM

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(250) 782-8035

**Worship: Sundays at 11 a.m.**

For information on services in Grande Prairie & Debolt, please contact Mrs. Lavina Scott at (780) 957-3625.

**If you have news or other information for this publication, or if you have any pastoral concerns, please call the pastor, Coleman Glenn, at (250) 782-0710 or (cell) (250) 467-2313, or e-mail [pastor@dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca](mailto:pastor@dawsoncreeknewchurch.ca).**

# CHURCH CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER 2013

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3 <b>11 a.m.</b> Family Service	4	5	6	7	8 <b>7 p.m.</b> Doctrinal Class (Silver Valley)	9
10 <b>11 a.m.</b> Traditional Service <b>4:30 p.m.</b> Worship & Class (Grande Prairie)	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 <b>11 a.m.</b> Traditional Service w/ Rev. Bradley Heinrichs <b>12 p.m.</b> Baby Shower for the Glens	18	19	20	21	22	23 <b>7 p.m.</b> Society Meeting with Rev. James Cooper
24 <b>11 a.m.</b> Traditional Service w/ Rev. James Cooper <b>4:30 p.m.</b> Traditional Service (DeBolt)	25	26	27	28	29	30

**Note: All events take place at the Dawson Creek Church of the New Jerusalem unless noted otherwise.**