



New Church Canadian

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of General Church in Canada

Issue 227

CYCLES OF LIFE

by Rev. Todd Beiswenger



Hosanna
in the highest!

Here we are approaching Palm Sunday and Easter again, and it feels like we just made it through the Christmas, New Years and school starting up again gamut of events. It is a relentless cycle of events—every year these same holidays come and cause ministers around the world to bang their heads against walls while wonder-

ing, “What am I going to talk about this year?!”

As annoying as writers block can be, I'm starting to realize that these yearly cycles are really quite useful. Too often we hear a message one time, nod our heads in agreement, leave church, class, or the lecture we attended thinking, “That was interesting,” yet within only a few short days that interesting and compelling message gets lost amongst the hectic pace of our life. Just because we heard a message once, doesn't mean we're actually getting the message. I see this all the time with children at school! They're told, “Don't throw snowballs at your friends.” Do some of them still throw snowballs at their friends? Yep. And it drives the teachers crazy at times.

What do you do that drives your heavenly father crazy? I'd guess most of us have experienced jealousy over somebody else's life. You find out that an old rival has landed a cool sounding job. It pays them well, others look on with envy, and you secretly wish that you could have a job that is so revered...

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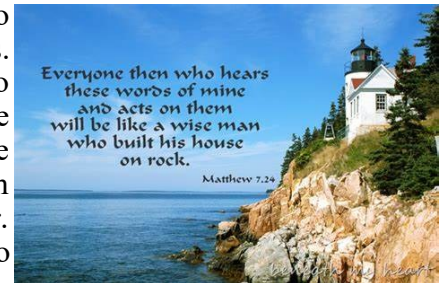
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yet how many times have you heard the Lord say, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth.?" Probably quite a number of times. Yet we still do. We still want to. We know better. But somehow, despite the fact that allowing ourselves to be jealous only makes us miserable by bringing a whole wide arrangement of other negative emotions and behaviours into our life, we justify our misery under the banner of, "It just isn't fair."

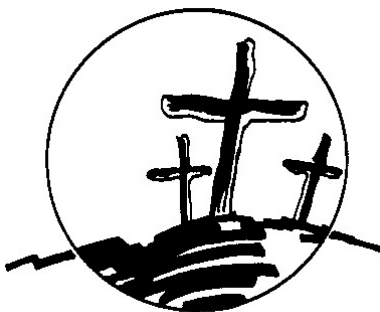
Eventually we get over it, return to our normal lives, and before too terribly long, the same thing will happen again. Somebody outdid us. These lessons that repeat can be quite difficult on us, but I've come to realize that they repeat because they're important. They repeat because we haven't learned the lesson. We're still throwing snowballs. Imagine what your life would be like if we had incorporated the teachings from the Word into our life and not worried about what we thought was fair. Isn't this the lesson Jesus gives us with the story about the man who built his house on sand instead of on a rock?



"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it" (Matt. 7:24-27)

Nowadays we tend to go for the idea that it isn't fair that the guy's house blew down who built it on sand. We might feel even worse when it gets knocked down by the next storm. This is a painful, repeating lesson. It is a lesson that would come with the natural cycles of the weather, that repeats because it is important for us to learn to build our homes on rocks. It's common sense, but are you doing it? Are you building your house on a rock?

All of which begs the question, "What is it that you haven't learned and implemented from the Easter story?" No doubt you know the basics. Despite having committed no crime, Jesus was crucified, and on the third day He rose again. Christianity sees this as Jesus' crowning moment where He demonstrates that He has power even over death. He'd already shown that He has power over ordinary things like bread and wine, but also over disease, and even the weather. Now He'd conquered death itself.



Two-thousand years later, and for the 30th, 40th, or 50th time that you're hearing the story, what is it that you need to hear? Perhaps you need to connect with the idea that somebody actually died for you? When you really think about it, it really is huge that God was willing to die for you. He didn't look down at your finite self and think, "Forget him/her. If he's too dumb to get his act together, then just let him suffer." We get frustrated with others in our life, and write them off. God does it differently: He comes down from heaven to be killed in order to save the lost. Not exactly what I do when my friends frustrate me.

A different Easter message could be that God has all power, and that you need not to put limits on God's abilities. Is that central for you? Despite how many places that message repeats in the Bible, we still we complain over various things in our life, telling God how big our problems are when in fact we should be telling our problems how big our God is.

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All of this reminds me of a joke that one of my pastor friends told me... essentially, on the first Sunday for a new pastor, the new pastor preaches a great sermon. The next week, he preaches that same sermon again. People think this is a bit strange, but they're willing to roll with it and take it easy on the new guy. But then the following week he preaches that same sermon again! This time one of the congregation goes up to him and say, "Pastor, we really liked this sermon, but why do you keep preaching the same one every week?" He responds simply, "I'll stop preaching it when everybody starts living it."

Ouch. Now, it is true that sometimes we do learn a lesson, incorporate it, and really live it, but yet the cycle continues on...and guess what, it will always continue on because you and I will never actually be perfect. The reality is a bit of a paradox in that all these cycles and repetition that are given to us are designed to help us enjoy an eternity of perpetual change and personal improvement. All of which means that when you notice repetition you need to keep a good eye and ear out for what your heavenly Father telling you: did you miss a lesson the first time, or do you need to see that lesson from a different point of view? Either way, you're probably driving Him crazy because it isn't the first time He's told you.



OUR LORD GOD JESUS CHRIST

Adapted from talks by Rev. Elmo C. Acton and Rt. Rev. George de Charms

All four of the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—tell us how, on the third day after the Lord's burial in the cave of rocks, the Marys and other women who loved the Lord came to the sepulcher "very early in the morning, on the first day of the week"; how they found the stone rolled away from the mouth of the sepulcher and heard the comforting words of the angel, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead..." (Matthew 28:5-8).

The same story, with little variation, is told by the four writers of the Gospels because it is of such great importance. The fact that the Lord rose from the tomb with His whole body, leaving nothing behind but the white linen garments in which Joseph of Arimathea wrapped Him, is the most holy and important teaching concerning the Lord's resurrection. By it we are taught beyond doubt that the Lord is God—that the Lord Jesus Christ, who had been born as a baby in Bethlehem, who had lived with people on earth teaching and leading them, healing their diseases and giving them comfort in their troubles, was not a man as other men,

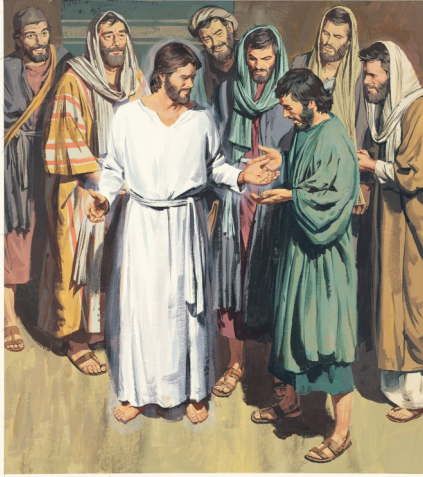


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but was and is our God and Savior. He alone rose from the grave with the whole body. Other people rise only with their spiritual body. They leave their natural body in the grave. The Lord, then, by rising with His whole body, showed that He is God. This is the first and most important truth to be seen and acknowledged in the Lord's resurrection.

And, in order that all people might believe and not doubt, the Lord appeared to His followers many times after His resurrection, and not just to one or two people but to all His disciples and also to some others. The Word tells us about nine occasions on which the Lord showed Himself after His resurrection. He was seen five times on the first Easter Day, and four times later, over a period of several weeks, so that slowly every doubt might be dissipated.

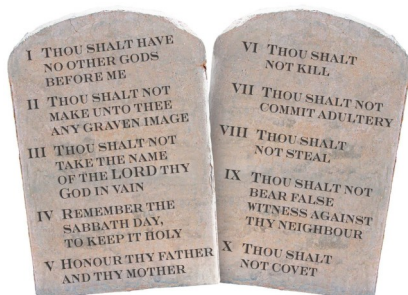


On Easter itself we are told that the Lord appeared to the women as they were leaving the tomb and to Mary Magdalene by herself as well. Simon Peter saw Him at some point during that day. And two men met the Lord on the road to Emmaus, but they did not know Him until He broke bread and gave it to them. Later that night, the Lord appeared to ten of His disciples in a room in Jerusalem. He reassured them that He was no ghost, but had risen with His whole body; He showed them the marks on His hands and on His side from the wounds of the crucifixion, and He ate some bread and fish with them.

Eight days later, He came to the disciples in a room again, this time to all eleven so that Thomas, who had not been present the first time, could see the Lord for Himself, could be sure that it was truly Him, risen from the dead. We are told of a time when Peter and several of the other disciples were fishing at night, and the Lord appeared to them on the shore at dawn, and they came and ate breakfast with Him. The Lord also appeared to the disciples on a mountain in Galilee and finally, He came to them one last time on the Mount of Olives, at the village of Bethany, and spoke with them, and they all saw Him ascend up into heaven.

As well as letting them see and touch Him, the Lord brought messages to His followers after His resurrection, messages of peace and joy. He reassured them that He would always be with them—this was possible because He was God. For the Lord who rose from the tomb and showed Himself to the disciples was not partly God and partly human. He was wholly God—even to the bones and flesh. From His appearance to them, the disciples knew that the Lord was God, and they prepared to go forth and announce this truth to all the world.

Today, the principal reason for us to celebrate Easter is because we believe and love the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one and only God of heaven and earth. We have been entrusted with this truth, as the disciples were long ago, to proclaim it to the world. We acknowledge and believe this when we worship our Lord God Jesus Christ and live according to His commandments.



“THE ROAD TO EMMAUS”

by Rev. Christopher R. J. Smith

Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they knew Him... (Luke 24:30-31).

The men in the story of the Road to Emmaus had a remarkable experience on that evening. It changed them and changed their whole outlook on life. Why? Because they had been given visible proof that the crucifixion had not ended the life of Jesus Christ.

For them the day had begun in sadness. They felt lost, aimless, very unsure of their future. By the end of that day, however, they found something special. They found a goal. They knew what they had to do.

The sadness, the loss of a sense of direction in their life, came after they witnessed the crucifixion. They had seen the chief priests and rulers crucify *“Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people” (Luke 24:19)*. They could not believe or understand how this could have happened because, as they said, *“We were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel” (Luke 24:21)*. These two men were probably feeling very sorry for themselves. They had expected Jesus to redeem Israel—to become their King and deliver them from the hated Romans. It did not happen.

They had heard, yes, but really they had not listened. They had seen, but really they had not understood what Jesus Christ had both taught and demonstrated. The result was that they would not accept the news from the women who had been to the sepulcher and had reported seeing angels who said Jesus was alive. It made no difference. They had made up their minds to leave Jerusalem and walk to Emmaus, an obscure mountain village in the west. They turned their backs on what had been the center of their lives.

But leaving Jerusalem and walking the road to Emmaus brought them no comfort. In fact, they continued to discuss the disaster that had just taken place. They were sadly realizing that there was now no meaning in their life. As this state hung heavily upon them, the Lord came. He asked, *“What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?” (Luke 24:17)*. They stopped, stood still. *“Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, ‘Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?’” (Luke 24:18)*.



In total disbelief that someone could not know what had happened, the two companions explained the subject of their discussion and sadness. Of course, the Lord already knew their thinking. But it was only after they had expressed their thoughts that He could show them that the real cause of their unhappiness and confusion was in their own stubborn attitude.

And He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself (Luke 24:25-27).

“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe.”

This was the same state of mind, the same attitude shown by John the Baptist when he was in prison. He sent messengers to the Lord, asking Him if He really was the promised Messiah or if they should look for someone else. The Lord’s

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answer was patient and understanding. He did not answer John “Yes” or “No”, but rather showed His desire to reason with us.

The Lord’s answer was: **“Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me”** (Luke 7:22-23).

Consider the facts and draw your own conclusion, because you will not believe anything that you do not understand for yourself.

The Lord did much the same thing for the two men on the road to Emmaus. After gently reprimanding them for their stubbornness, for not believing what had even long ago been taught about the promised Messiah and how He would die, the Lord patiently then instructed them. **“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”**

The whole of the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church tell us about the Lord God Jesus Christ, who is our Father in the heavens. When we read them, He speaks to us. And if we do not hear, truly hear, then it may be because a proud heart and a stubborn attitude have got in the way. That is why we have to pray, implore, and even beg the Lord to have these mental barriers removed.

When we read the Word with a sincere desire to know the truth for its own sake, not for the sake of confirming our own opinions, not for the sake of going through the motions of piety, and certainly not for the sake of loading up on doctrine so as to impress others; then and only then is the Lord able to teach us something, something about Himself, and we are able to actually learn. When this happens, we may sense a gradual change—something like spring following winter. Pride and stubbornness melt away as a certain warmth comes into our hearts. This was the experience of the two men walking to Emmaus.

After the Lord disappeared again from their sight, they reflected on what had happened and remembered: **“Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”** (Luke 24:32).

It is a real warmth that we feel—the spiritual sun of heaven shining upon us—when we see something living in the Word and are affected by it. It is something we see as being very worthwhile, something we want to take home and use.

How did these two men come to feel this way? Consider what the Word teaches us. All its truths form one heavenly voice urging us to love one another by finding and doing things that are useful—things that show concern for not just our own but other people’s lives as well. The two men showed something of this concern, this love for the neighbor, when they pleaded with the stranger who had walked with them to accept their hospitality: **“And they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, ‘Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.’ And He went in to stay with them”** (Luke 24:28-29).



By this small token of love and care for the neighbor who was a stranger to them, the two men were able to be conjoined with the Lord. That is why we are told that He broke bread with them, letting Himself be recognized (see *Arcana Coelestia* 3863:14). **“Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they knew Him”** (Luke 24:30-31).

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We are taught in the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church that since ancient times, breaking bread and eating it together has been a sign of mutual love (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5405). When bread is offered by the Lord Himself, it is a sign of conjunction or friendship with Him (see *Apocalypse Explained* 617:21). Breaking bread with the Lord surely must be an amazing, wonderful experience. Who is able to do it? Any person who wishes to receive the bread of life—to receive its spiritual nourishment and then let it work in one's life.

Who is this person and how does he know if he is being spiritually fed? It is the person who wants to be of service, to be useful, who has a clear idea of the meaning of charity. Such a person's heart warms when he hears the Lord say, for example, that ***“the life of charity is to wish well and to do well to the neighbor, to act from what is just and fair, and from what is good and true, in like manner in everything we do; in a word, the life of charity consists in performing uses”*** (*Arcana Coelestia* 8253). He understands that ***“He who loves his neighbor as himself perceives no delight in charity except in its exercise, or in use; and therefore a life of charity is a life of uses.... The more noble the use, the greater the delight”*** (*Arcana Coelestia* 997).

Showing mutual love in our uses to each other is symbolized by breaking bread together. And when this bread is broken and eaten in the holy supper, it expresses our desire to be with the Lord, receiving and returning His love. As this bread of life—the goodness and love He offers—is received, we change. We become very sure of His presence, realizing that the Lord's is alive and with us, providing for all our needs. This is all that really matters.

It is a changed person who knows in his heart that without the Lord he can do nothing, nothing at all. ***“Abide in Me, and I in you.... I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing”*** (*John* 15:4-5).



Such a person is able to live his life without any fears or worries. He is able to walk through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil, simply because he knows that his life has meaning and purpose in the presence of his Lord and God.

The change in one's life that replaces a sense of confusion with a sense of purpose is shown when Cleopas and his friend immediately returned to Jerusalem. The Lord had disappeared from their sight. But now they had lost their doubts and confusion. That is why we are told that ***“they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven.... And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread”*** (*Luke* 24:33,35). It was a journey during the night, some seven miles on a mountain path. But they did it gladly. Their hearts were burning and they wished to share their joy with the eleven disciples still hiding in Jerusalem.

These two men had left Jerusalem earlier that same day, frustrated and confused. They left for the obscure village of Emmaus. Is this state not common to us all? Are there not times when we feel very unsure of ourselves? Have we not all felt the frustrating experience of indecision? The very process of making it from one day to the next can seem a muddle!

Whenever we do not have a living knowledge of the Lord and His presence with us, we are like the two companions who left Jerusalem, walking to Emmaus, very disillusioned. But He draws near to help us change. Then we can understand and believe. We put aside a foolish heart, so that we hear, with crystal clarity, when He says to each of us,

“Where I go you know, and the way you know” (*John* 14:4).

And if we do know the way,
shall we not follow it?

Lessons: *Luke* 7:11-23; *Luke* 24:13-35;
Arcana Coelestia 3863:14-15

NEWS FROM THE REGIONAL PASTOR

by Rev. James Cooper

From the Regional Pastor:

- ◆ The GCIC Annual meeting is coming up. Members should have gotten a copy of the Annual report either by email or by Canada Post. If you did not get one and think you should have, please contact the Secretary of the GCIC, Karen Cooper, at Karenanncooper@gmail.com
- ◆ And, while we're at it, if you are not a member of the GCIC but would like to be, please contact Karen at the above address for an application form. It may be worth mentioning that when you become a member of the General Church unincorporated, and sign the role of a congregation, you don't automatically become a member of the General Church in Canada, Inc. – or the General Church, Inc. They are distinct legal bodies with their own by-laws and rules about membership.
- ◆ This is a good time to remind folks that there is scholarship help available for *bona fide* residents of Canada who wish to attend the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools or the Bryn Athyn College of the New Church. Please contact me at rev.james.cooper@gmail.com to find out more.
- ◆ The search for the new editor for the New Church Canadian is now in the interview stage. Hopefully, we'll have this all taken care of and allow Sandy (and her crew of volunteers) to have a well-earned retirement very soon.



CANADIAN CALENDAR

Scheduled Services:

- ◆ Worship services every Sunday at Carmel Church at 11:00 am. Search “Carmel New Church” on Youtube.com for livestreaming or previously recorded services.
- ◆ Worship services every Sunday at Olivet Church at 10:30 am. Search “Olivet New Church” on either Youtube.com or Facebook.com for livestreaming or previously recorded services.
- ◆ Michael Cowley will be returning from South Africa soon and will return his visits to Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie according to the schedule that he has circulated to the members of those groups.
- ◆ And please check with your local congregation about their plans for Easter. Palm Sunday is April 13th, Good Friday is the 18th, and Easter Sunday is the 20th – and Happy Easter to all!

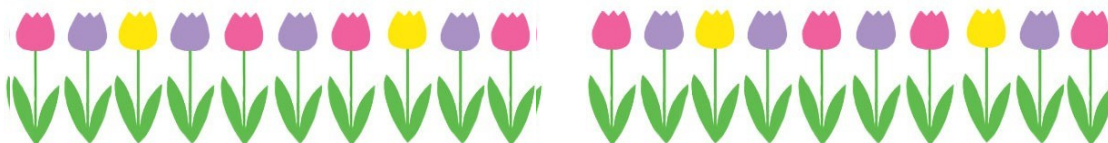
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Held at the Ecology Retreat Centre in Mono, Ontario

Theme: SEASONS

*"He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.
Psalm 1:3 NKJ*

SAVE the DATES!

**We look forward to welcoming campers!
Saturday July 5 – Friday July 11, 2025**

This will be a week of friendship building, laughter, restorative relaxation, and spiritual growth for teens who will have just completed any year of high school.

Want to register or get more information?
Please visit maplecamp.com or contact
Stephanie Kuhl, Camp Director, regarding any questions
at gcic.mapleleafcamp@gmail.com

Maple has been serving New Church youth since **1969**; it is sponsored by the General Church in Canada and is staffed by experienced volunteers.

After GCIC contributions, regular camper fee is **\$300**, with discounts for early bird registration (before May 1) or for "junior staff" (returning campers finishing high school). A deposit of at least **\$50** (\$5 non-refundable) is required with registration and full payment is due by **June 16**.





LIVING WATERS FAMILY CAMP

Thursday, July 17 - Sunday, July 20, 2025

This Year's Theme

"The Covenant"

Now is a great time to start a family tradition where Grandparents, Parents, and Children can all go to a summer camp and worship, learn, pray, and play together. These family camps provide a fantastic opportunity for the Lord to store up some cross-generational New Church "remains." Every good church camp has the Lord at the center of it, and the opportunity to learn about Him from His Word and to worship Him with thankful praise!

The theme for our camp this summer is "**The Covenant.**" The Covenant that the Lord makes with each individual of the human race is in short form contained in the Ten Commandments. We will be taking a deeper look at the nature of this sacred Covenant that the Lord makes with us. One passage points out how the purpose of this Covenant with the Lord is so that we may be conjoined with Him: ***"There were two tables, one for God and the other for man. Conjunction is effected by the Lord, but only when man does what is written in his table; for the Lord is continually present and wishes to enter in, but man, by the freedom which he has from the Lord, must open to Him"*** (True Christian Religion 285).

The sheer volume the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church has to say about the Ten Commandments is amazing, and hopefully you will come away with the idea that not only are they vitally important, but that these laws were given for your happiness! As the Lord said to His disciples, ***"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love.... These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full"*** (John 15:10-11).

The camp is located near Paisley, Ontario on the Saugeen River and is called Hidden Valley Christian Camp. It is only 194 kilometers from the Olivet New Church and just 154 kilometers from the Carmel New Church. It is also an easy trip across the border for our Southern neighbors from the United States. Canoeing and fishing are available, and the camp is just 20 kilometers from a beautiful beach on Lake Huron. There are cabins, rooms, and service hookups available for campers.

The General Church in Canada has been wonderfully supportive of this venture and, there are scholarships available to ensure that the camp is affordable enough for most everyone to attend! If you would like to register online, please go to: <https://livingwatersfamilycamp.wordpress.com/> and sign up!

If you would like more information about **Living Waters Family Camp**, you can email LivingWatersFamilyCamp@gmail.com or call Brad Heinrichs at 215-870-0591.

Currently, the ministers on staff are Todd Beiswenger, Justin Schorran, and Brad Heinrichs.

Rt. Rev. Brad Heinrichs

"Living waters" are often mentioned in the Word, and by them are meant truths that come from the Lord and are received. These are living, because the Lord is Life itself, as He Himself teaches, and that which comes from Life itself is living." (AE 483:1)



General Church in Canada



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General Church in Canada Worship Services

Carmel New Church
Kitchener, ON



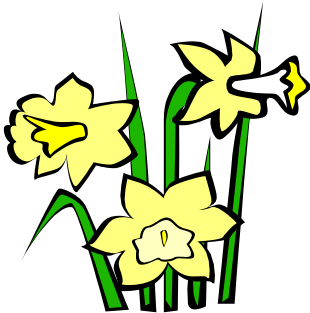
11:00am
In Person
and
Online

Dawson Creek New Church
Dawson Creek, BC



Olivet New Church
Etobicoke, ON

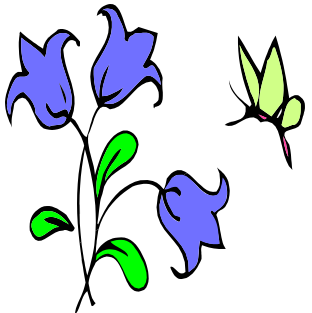
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In Person and Online

Editorial Deadline for the
MAY- JUNE ISSUE is MARCH 30, 2025

We always welcome your comments, letters and articles!

Please send submissions to Sandy Kuhl, Editor NCC
548-Unit 3, Evenstone Court,



Prayers for Easter

O Lord,

*You can no more be absent from me
than the sun can be absent from the earth.
Help me feel the warmth and see the light
of Your continual presence.*

We pray that You will abide with us, Lord.

*Open to us the beauty and power
of Your Word,
that our hearts may burn with in us,
as You talk to us along the way.*

*Give us Your bread of life,
so we may feel Your holy presence*

O Lord,

*True peace can come only from
confidence in You.*

*Help me to trust that You direct all things,
provide all things, and in everything
lead to a good end.*

