

New Church Canadian

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the General
Church in Canada



Pelee Island, James Cooper

FIFTEEN RULES TO MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER

By Rev James Cooper

It's summer, a time for play and relaxation. So, I thought I'd try a playful approach to my New Church Canadian article. Many of you are aware that I have been pilot of general aviation airplanes for more than 50 years. One of the things I've learned along the way is that the discipline required to complete a flight successfully is very similar to the discipline we all need to complete our lives on earth successfully. For those of you who prefer life on the water, everything here applies to piloting a boat, too. Here are fifteen rules that might amuse you as well as provoke a thought or two about how to improve the course of your life.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE

There's nothing like being alone in an airplane 5,500 feet above the ground to bring home the fact that you and you alone are responsible for finding your way safely through changes in weather, poor visibility, and traffic to land safely at the right airport. There's no one to turn to, no one else to blame. Whatever happens, you have to fall back on your training and figure it out on your own. When you are in your own home, or at your place of work, there are lots of other people around who you can reach out to, share the responsibility, or even hand them the job. But you need to ask yourself, have you really handed it off? In the final analysis, aren't you responsible for all the things that happen in your life that are the result of your choices? Instead of blaming others, we need to stand up, take responsibility, and do the right thing.

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ATTENTION IS LIFE. INATTENTION WILL BE AT LEAST MINIMALLY HARMFUL IF NOT DEADLY.

Even Canada geese pay attention. Have you ever noticed that when they are feeding, there is always at least one goose with his/her head up looking around, ready to raise the alarm? There are good reasons why pilots are encouraged to look out the window instead spending too much time with their head down looking at a map – or why there are strict rules about not looking at your mobile phone while driving, and why it's not a good idea to look at your phone while you are crossing the street. There are lots of other things that cause us to take our attention off the task at hand. Taking “just a minute” to “glance” at social media. Getting in an intense political “discussion” while you are driving. With so many examples from life (I'm sure you can come up with others) it's an easy step to see that this also applies to your spiritual life. The natural world is VERY distracting. The life of heaven can seem so far away that we let our attention turn away from eternal, spiritual things. Be aware of that and make it a habit to refocus your attention on your eternal life on a regular basis.

THERE IS ALWAYS A CURRICULUM. PREPARATION IS ADVISED.

In the olden days, you got a printed manual with every gadget you bought. Now they save paper and just give you a link to the manual online. But wherever the manual is, you really should look at it. One real life example is when a person I know bought a brand-new snow blower. They put gas in it and fired it up. It ran beautifully for about three minutes – then the engine seized, the piston welded to the cylinder wall. They didn't read the tag that told them to put oil in the crankcase before running the engine...

Sometimes people complain that people should come with an owner's manual. Well, we did, there's a book, called “the Word” written by God that explains pretty much everything we need to know. That's the study sheet. The test will be along in due course. Preparation is advised.

A WELL-LIVED LIFE, LIKE FLYING, REQUIRES CONSTANT ADJUSTMENTS.

Have you noticed that things are constantly changing? When you are flying straight and level you have to constantly monitor the situation. Winds change. The plane gets lighter as fuel is burned off and begins to climb so you need to adjust the trim. And so on. In terrestrial lives, children grow up before our eyes, jobs change, we suddenly become grandparents, our physical abilities change. We shouldn't be surprised, but we should be prepared to adjust as necessary instead of complaining that things aren't the way they used to be.

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK OR KEY THE MIC.

There are tens of thousands of airports in Canada (there is not an exact figure because there are so many private strips and seaplane landings) but there are only 42 airports that have control towers where someone watching a radar screen talks to pilots and keeps them safely separated. So, at the “uncontrolled” airports we use our radios to talk to each other and play nicely. On a nice Saturday at an airport with a flight school, the frequency can get busy with lots of people announcing where they are and what they are planning to do. Since only one person can speak at a time, you need to think carefully about what you are going to say, wait for a pause, then say it briefly and clearly. “Burlington Traffic: Tiger Quebec India Echo is on short final for three two.” Legal, brief, and highly informative – at least to the other pilots in the area.

This is an excellent rule for our personal conversations. Think before you speak is pretty obvious and good advice. Where we really fall down is waiting for the other person finish their thought before replying, and too much elaboration. We all interrupt each other, and we all think that story we're about to tell needs the full backstory. Stick to the point, and don't step on the other guy's broadcast.

THE PEOPLE OR INSTRUCTORS YOU DISLIKE CAN STILL TEACH YOU MUCH.

It's our natural tendency to put people in boxes with labels. And then we decide whether to listen to that person, or respect their opinions based NOT on the clarity of their thought but based on our pre-conceived notions about how people in that box think. Someone could be grumpy because they are having a bad day, or something from home that's on their mind – but that doesn't take away from the value of what they may be able to contribute.

THE AIRPLANE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT YOUR PEDIGREE. NEITHER DOES LIFE.

My flying club is made up mostly of men, mostly retired. There's an investment banker, a programmer, a doctor, an English beat copper, a session bass guitar player who's played with a lot of top bands, and a minister. My wife's quilt guild is the same with people from all walks of life. When we get together, we're all just pilots or quilters who want to share what we know and learn from each other.

IF YOU ARE NOT PUTTING YOUR LIFE OR THE AIRPLANE WHERE IT NEEDS TO BE, IT'S YOUR FAULT AND YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FIX IT.

It's very rare that the airplane messes up a landing. It does exactly what you tell it to do. It's usually PIO (pilot induced oscillation) that's to blame. So, when things get squirrely, we put the power in, go around and try to do better next time.

I can attest that I have never deliberately tried to mess up someone else's life, so I

think I can be pretty sure that, even though I'd like to blame other people for my failures, it's really just me. Time to go back to the books, figure out what I did wrong, and try again.



Pilot and Copilot, Karen Cooper

USE THE CHECKLIST. PLAN YOUR ACTIONS WELL, AND BE READY FOR THE INEVITABLE EMERGENCY. IT'S COMING.

I use a checklist when I go to the store for ONE thing. When I fly commercially, I put my boarding pass on my smart phone because it's what the kids all do. I also put it in two different places on the phone. And I print out a paper pass because when a flight is delayed and you spend 2 hours looking at Facebook, you might not have enough battery to show your boarding pass. I'm sure it wouldn't take much thought for anyone to remember the time they forgot something and they anxiety it caused.

CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESSES YET REALIZE THAT YOUR LIFE'S CURRICULUM WILL REQUIRE MORE OF YOU TOMORROW. IT'S THE 'WAY.'

Just because today's project went well doesn't mean that all will be well tomorrow. The reason we have these experiences and challenges is for us to learn, grow, and become better prepared to face what tomorrow brings.

AS IN FLYING AND LIFE, THE PATH TO HAPPINESS IS FREEDOM; THE PATH TO FREEDOM IS COURAGE.

...and trust that the Lord is leading you, every step of the way, by His Divine Providence.

YOU NEVER EARN YOUR WINGS JUST ONCE.

There is a great feeling of satisfaction when you accomplish a difficult task. You should enjoy that feeling – but know that it's not the end of things. You may be tested in the same way again. The good news is that if you pay attention to what you have learned from past experiences, it will be easier the next time you have to deal with it.

*...and trust that the
Lord is leading you,
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Providence.*

KEEP ON LEARNING, ESPECIALLY FROM YOUR MISTAKES AND THOSE OF OTHERS.

We know that experience is a great teacher. But the good news is that the Lord has provided each one of us with what we call the “imaginative degree of the mind.” That means that we don't have to experience every mistake ourselves. We can observe what happens when the other guy tries it and say to ourselves, “that's not for me!” Even better, we can just use the power of our own minds to imagine

ourselves doing something and then imagine the results. Then after seeing how it will affect our lives, and the lives of our loved ones, we can know how to proceed. The good thing about that is that the people around us only see the decisions we made, not all the things that we thought we might do.

YOU ARE NOT AS COOL OR AS SKILLED AS YOU THINK. HUMILITY IS ADVISED TO OVERCOME INCAPACITY AND NEGLECT.

So many illustrations of this come to mind. 5 perfect landings in a row and then you flare a little too high and “arrive abruptly.” That presentation that you worked so hard on and then the projector won't link to your laptop. When your teen only hears the restriction of their freedom, not the message of love.

But it doesn't mean you should stop trying or give up. It just means a little self-examination may be in order before you try it again.

YOU'LL MEET REAL JERKS ALONG YOUR PATH; DON'T BECOME ONE.

Yeah, please: don't be a jerk. Nobody likes that. Read the “owner's manual.” (See above)

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER - LEE HORIGAN

Contributions can be made directly to the GCIC by utilizing your bank's electronic fund transfer option.

Payment can be sent to GCICTreasury@Outlook.com.

All contributions are recorded automatically, are Auditor friendly and will make issuing tax receipts at year end much easier.

REGIONAL PASTOR AND EVP

First of all, a warm welcome to our new Editor of New Church Canadian, Lindsay Hyatt. This is the first issue in what we hope will be a long series!

Every 3 years the 3 Bishops meet to talk about how things were going and if any adjustment needed to be made. It turns out that, among other things, Brad Heinrichs has a growing interest in West Africa, and Dave Lindrooth thought that Canada would blend nicely with his responsibilities in the American West, especially with the development of the cross-border Cascadia group. So, Canada moves into Dave Lindrooth's portfolio, including gradually taking on the Regional Pastor duties. As for the GCIC, I will continue as EVP because this role requires more familiarity with Canadian systems and government. I am delighted with the new arrangement.

As for the GCIC, at our June meeting we granted a request from Olivet Church to assist with the cost of hiring someone to help with marketing the church and school. Olivet is hoping to learn from the success that Caryndale has had in this area and update their presence in social media and other modern tools.

The GCIC Scholarship program has also provided substantial assistance to 4 Canadian students to attend the Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools for the 2025 – 2036 school year. If you know of any Canadian resident who is associated with the church and wants to attend the Academy Schools, have them contact me.

Finally, the next GCIC Board meeting will be on Saturday, September 13 at 11:00 EDT, by Zoom.

Rev. James Cooper
EVP GCIC

FROM THE EDITOR

By Lindsay Hyatt

I am excited to be the new editor of the New Church Canadian! Sandy has left very large shoes to fill and I will do my best! I am open to suggestions if you have great ideas for this lovely newsletter.

If you feel moved to write an article, please send it to me at any time. For anyone wanting to contribute to our next issue, I would love for our readers to share their back-to-school memories. Our next issue will be coming out in September so please have any submissions in to me by the last week of August.

Also please reach out if you would like to switch to our email version of the newsletter or update your mailing address. My contact information is on page 15.

SEASONS AT MAPLE LEAF ACADEMY

- A NEW CHURCH CAMP FOR TEENAGERS SPONSORED BY THE GENERAL CHURCH IN CANADA

In the other life there are no compass directions, just as there are no times and seasons, but only the conditions symbolized by directions and time periods. The state of our ability to understand things resembles conditions at different times of day and seasons of the year and also in different quarters of the globe. A day goes through the stages of evening, night, morning, and midday; a year goes through those of fall, winter, spring, and summer; and conditions in the four quarters are those of the sun in the west, north, east, and south. Similar to these conditions are the states of our ability to understand.

(Secrets of Heaven §1458)

We all go through seasons in our lives; some are more outward and obvious, and others understandable only to the Lord and hopefully to ourselves. During a fall season, we may feel both beauty and impending loss, in winter we may struggle to understand truth and feel love, in spring we have renewed hope, and summer may be full of both usefulness and rest. Adolescence is a particularly precious season during which confidence in the love and providence of the Lord can make a significant impact on one's life path. The theme of "seasons" for the 2025 session of Maple camp felt very apt. Having completed our 56th year of Maple, the camp itself is in a season of growth. While we would love to share our camp with even more youths, the 14 campers who attended seemed to be the perfect selection of caring young people to create a sphere of belonging and openness to spiritual growth. As one staff member commented, many of them may turn out to be future leaders in the church, but no matter their paths, we hope they carry the warmth of a restorative and beautiful summer week in their hearts wherever they go next.

Campers represented congregations in Toronto, ON; Kitchener, ON; Glenview, IL; Oak Arbor, MI, Kempton, PA; and Pittsburgh, PA. Pastoral staff included Rev. Alan Cowley and Rev. Elmo Acton. Steph Kuhl ("Chief Leaf") and Claire Hurd brought decades of Maple experience and enthusiasm as well as their "soft skills" from their respective careers in education and health care. Ethan Daum provided his usual wonderful musical direction (and his guitar was often accompanied by percussionist campers). Siblings Max and Phoebe Tozer brought 20 something-counselor energy

as well as a wide selection of expertise that was interesting to the campers, on subjects spanning theatre, horticulture, philosophy, tabletop games, and more.



Our worship services aim to draw each of us closer to the Lord and often use experiences to evoke deeper thoughts and affections. We hoped campers would consider how Joseph felt as his circumstances worsened in Egypt and the prison walls closed in.



We led them on a path of reflection toward the campfire, considering something that must “wither” in their lives and what might grow in its place, and then we rejoiced together in the glow. We experienced all the seasons in one service, including a childlike opportunity to play, a guided trust walk, experiences of cold and contemplation, and then planting seeds with rejoicing. We were able to traverse an earthly labyrinth while hearing of how newcomers to Heaven were led through a false heaven that accorded with their expectations; but the Lord is the way. Most importantly, we tasked the campers to be angelic to each other.

Just as visitors to another false heaven in the spiritual world learned, one cannot engage in formal worship services and listen to speakers all day! There was plenty of time for fun and enjoyment of nature through a variety of sports, swimming in both pond and pool, indoor and outdoor games, art projects, puzzles and challenges, and opportunities to spend time sharing in smaller and larger groups.

The beautiful space that Maple rents, the Ecology Retreat Centre, provides a peaceful setting alongside a creek and a delicious variety of customized food. Over the winter, it experienced the loss of one of its buildings, the meeting hall where we used to have most of our group activities. Though returning participants felt the absence of a space where many precious memories were made in years past, we adapted readily to the use of another room. We hope a new space will be built in which we can build new memories as camp continues to grow and adapt. Though the last time the theme of Seasons was used in the early 2000s, dozens more campers were able to attend, its current season fit its space and participants.

Maple Leaf Academy seeks to provide the space and time for teenagers who have completed any year of high school, from across the General Church and beyond, to connect with each other and with the Lord. All those involved believe it is a very special place to spend a precious week of summer and a worthwhile investment in the spiritual lives of young people. We hope that readers will spread the word so we can welcome even more teens in 2026 and for years to come.



REFLECTION ON LIVING WATERS FAMILY CAMP

By Denali Heinrichs Schorran

Living Waters Family Camp is ramping up for its 11th year, and we're so excited to welcome both returning and new campers! Camp is a special place where families and individuals gather for fun-filled days of worship, shared meals, doctrinal classes, projects, games, campfires, and so much more.



One of my favourite parts of camp is seeing multiple generations come together to learn about and worship the Lord. I've been attending since camp first began in 2013, and it has been a blessing to experience it through different seasons of life—as a teenager, a young single adult, and now as a wife and mother of small children. Each stage has brought new perspectives, while the core elements that make camp so meaningful have remained constant.

As a teen, I loved playing with the little kids, lighting candles during worship, helping babysit during the Holy Supper so parents could participate, and enjoying beach trips with my peers. As a young adult, I continued to enjoy those connections with the younger campers, but I also found myself diving deeper into doctrinal discussions and sharing meaningful conversations around the campfire. Now, as a parent, I'm deeply moved watching the teens—who were once the little kids at camp—take on the roles I once held. It's powerful to witness the next generation of our church fully engaged in the life of camp.

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 to point 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)." (Rt Rev. Brad Heinrichs)

I can't wait to see what this year brings and many more to come!



NEW REVELATION

WHAT IS THE HEAVENLY DOCTRINE, AND WHY DO WE TRUST IT IS FROM GOD?

By Rev. Pearse Frazier, newchurch.org

I hope this article helps people find the words—and the love—to share the Church with their friends. Rev. Pearse Frazier

The New Church draws its teachings from the Bible and something called the Heavenly Doctrine, a body of spiritual teachings we believe the Lord revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg in the 1700s.

That may sound surprising. New revelation through one person naturally raises questions, and we think that is a good thing. We do not expect anyone to accept these writings on faith alone. In fact, the Heavenly Doctrine itself teaches that belief should never be blind. Faith must be thoughtful, tested, and freely chosen.

What we have found is that these teachings open a higher meaning in Scripture—one that brings clarity to questions about God, human freedom, marriage, the afterlife, and the life of love we are all called to live.

This article offers a starting point: what the Heavenly Doctrine is, why we believe it is from the Lord, and how it might speak to your own spiritual search.

The Bible Fulfilled Not Replaced

We hold the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God. But if you have read the Bible closely, you may have found parts that are difficult to reconcile with a loving God: stories of violence, strict laws, or conflicting messages. These are not flaws in Scripture, but signs that it was written in layers of meaning, suited to people in different spiritual states.

The Lord said He came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). The Heavenly Doctrine shows how He did just that. Teachings about murder and adultery become not just rules for external behaviour, but teachings about our inner life—our anger, contempt, lust, and love. That same shift in meaning runs throughout Scripture. Within the literal stories is a higher message about spiritual growth and divine love.

The Heavenly Doctrine does not replace the Bible. It reveals the purpose behind its stories, the symbolism within its characters, and the Lord's presence throughout. It helps us read Scripture not just historically or morally, but spiritually—showing us how every part points to the Lord's work in our hearts and lives.

Revelation for a Changing Humanity

Why did the Lord not explain everything clearly from the start? Because humanity was not ready. The Lord knows how to gently lead people toward loving ideas in ways that they follow freely.

The Old Testament was given to a culture that could only receive truth in external, symbolic forms. A message about inner humility or marriage as a partnership of equals would have been rejected. For example, teaching that marriage is based on mutual respect and love, rather than property or dominance, would not have been acceptable to the people of those times.

The New Testament brought greater clarity. The Lord Himself walked among us and taught love, forgiveness, and spiritual rebirth. But even then, He said, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now” (John 16:12).

We believe the Heavenly Doctrine is the next step: truth revealed in a more direct and rational form, suited to a world that values spiritual maturity and freedom. It speaks plainly to core spiritual concerns—how we grow and repent, how we use freedom, how marriage can be spiritual and equal, what happens after death, and how to love the neighbour as a path to loving the Lord.

Its purpose is not novelty but clarity. It reveals what has always been true—that the Lord is love itself, that we were created to love one another, and that Scripture is a living guide for our spiritual lives.

What We Mean by “Revelatory”

When we say the Heavenly Doctrine is revelatory, we mean we believe it is from the Lord—not from Swedenborg himself. He served as the means, not the source. The Lord used him, as He did prophets and apostles before, to deliver teachings for a new era.

Emanuel Swedenborg was a scientist and philosopher who spent decades studying the natural world before experiencing a spiritual awakening in midlife. His background shaped the way he wrote, bringing a love of order, reason, and clarity to the theological works he recorded.

Because we believe it is from the Lord, we treat it as if it has authority. Not the kind that demands blind submission, but one that invites humility. It frames how we think and live. It helps us understand the Bible in a higher way and recognize the Lord’s love at work in all things.

To be humble to revelation does not mean setting aside reason. It means using reason to see more clearly. The Heavenly Doctrine encourages us to approach faith freely and thoughtfully, always seeking new clarity in the Lord’s Word. Belief must grow from understanding.

Many people who have studied and applied the Heavenly Doctrine find it transformative and fulfilling, helping them grow spiritually and live with greater clarity and purpose.

The Invitation

If you have ever wondered whether there is more to Scripture than meets the eye, or if you have ever felt stuck between blind faith and total skepticism, we want you to know that your questions and doubts are welcome here.

Whether you are exploring, searching, or uncertain, you are invited to take your time. The New Church community values where you are in your spiritual journey and hopes to support you as you seek higher understanding and connection with the Lord.



The Heavenly Doctrine offers a spiritual framework that welcomes both thought and love. It is not about replacing what you believe but about deepening and expanding it—helping you see the Lord's love more clearly and how that love can guide your life.

We invite you to explore these teachings. Read them. Ask questions. Reach out to us. You do not need to agree with everything at once. But if you are looking for a faith that values reason, spiritual growth, and the unshakable love of the Lord, the Heavenly Doctrine may offer something new for you. Because in the end, all revelation, whether ancient or new, points to the same divine truth: We were created to love, and to be led by love.

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NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

From Crooked Creek

By Lavina Scott

On Monday, June 25th, we had the pleasure of having Bishop and Mrs. Louis B. King and Rev. Bill Clifford join Ken and I for lunch at our place. Then we packed up the Word, candles, flowers, and June 19th Sunday School visual aids needed to hold a church services in the rented United Church building in Debolt. The Bishop and his wife wanted to change out of their travel blue jeans into clothes more appropriate for church. However Bishop King soon discovered that what he had brought from Dawson Creek was a hanger holding his shirt on top of Freya's slacks! Ken offered him a spare pair of dress pants, but they were the wrong size, so with a bit of amusement at the predicament, and his customary calm in spite of unexpected circumstances, Bishop King guessed that his blue jeans wouldn't be that notieable under a robe, so we set off in time to be in Debolt by 4pm. But Providence hadn't forsaken us, for there in the basement of the church was a box of clothes collected for a United Church rummage sale, and on the very top was a pair of dress pants exactly the right size! Bishop King said he'd heard of sharing a pulpit, but he thought providing pants for the visiting Bishop must be an extraordinary example of the ecumenical spirit!

Bishop King gave the six assembled families (totaling 12 adults and 11 children) a very inspiring family worship service to celebrate June 19th. His sermon included a summary of the Book of Revelation and its meanings. Also he administered the Holy Supper.

After the service we all went to the basement and enjoyed a supper together, as all the ladies had brought food. Then the Bishop talked to all of us about June 19th, using the Sunday School visual aids display that had been taped to the wall. And Bill Clifford handed out the candy bags

that had been brought for all the children and teenagers. In the evening Bill Clifford took all the children across the road to the park while Bishop King held a short business meeting with the adults. Then we all had coffee and pie and ice cream and adjourned for the day.

Also From Dawson Creek

By Bill Clifford

Not long after the Bishop left us, we had our annual Family Camp. Fortunately, summer arrived just in time for our camp. This year was probably the best attended camp we have ever had. We gathered out at Moberly Lake (which interestingly, happens to be of about the same area as the Sea of Galilee) beginning on a Friday night for getting settled in and socializing. Our youngest attendee was 5 month old Amanda Myatt, and our oldest was Grandma Friesen (86). We also had Luella Mack and her two children come from the furthest away (Winnipeg, Manitoba); while Earl Friesen drove 13 to 14 hours from Prince Rupert, BC to visit her family at camp.

On Saturday the Pastor gave two classes to the younger children on correspondences and creation. For the teenagers there was a class based on the memorable relations about the Temple of Wisdom For the adults, that evening, there was a class on the love of the world. The first question came from a ten year old.

Saturday afternoon was spent in , above and under the water all depending on whether you were swimming, boating or how good you were at water skiing.

Sunday morning saw the Pastor get thrown into the lake (but not without some justification). Afterwards, we had a worship service based on lessons from the Writings about the Word, and which related to the different classes given on Saturday. After church, there was time for questions, and answers.

Social life took place largely around the campfires, and community meals.



SUMMARY OF THE GREAT LAKES REGIONAL YOUTH WEEKEND - MAY 2025

By Naomi Reid, Olivet New Church – Youth Weekend Chaperone

18 youth and 10 adults (pastors/chaperones/drivers) attended the Youth Weekend from May 9-11. The weekend was hosted by Rev. Elmo Acton, assistant pastor of the Glenview New Church. Participants came from five New Church Societies in the United States and Canada including the Glenview New Church (Chicago, IL) Rev. Elmo Acton, Phil Parker, Brent Smith; Pittsburgh New Church (Pittsburgh, PA) Rev. Jared Buss, Burgandy Smith; Oak Arbor New Church (Detroit, MI), Denielle Schnarr; Caryndale New Church (Kitchener, ON) Cailin Hill and Olivet New Church (Toronto, ON) Rev. Todd Beiswenger, John and Naomi Reid.

This year's spring Youth Weekend was held at the lovely Somerset Beach Campground, which is located an hour west of Ann Arbor, Michigan, just south of Highway 12 and west of Highway 127. This large, private campground has all the amenities that any group could ever want including a communal use meeting/dining room with a large fireplace, large windows looking over the lake, areas on either side of the meeting room (separate sides for men and women) with four rooms per side. Each room had eight beds and private washroom. The building had a large kitchen, so we were able to prepare our own meals. A huge thank you to Phil Parker and Brent Smith for taking care of the menu, food shopping and meal preparation.

On Saturday the teens got to choose various activities such as zip lining, hiking around the lake, canoeing, swimming and other options. After the outside activities, the teens designed their own "heavenly garden", with all pieces designed and 3D printed by John Reid. The end results of the little scenes were indeed heavenly!

Saturday classes and Sunday church services were held in the meeting room by Rev. Elmo Acton, Rev. Jared Buss and Rev. Todd Beiswenger. Thank you also to Rev. Todd Beiswenger for leading the singing and accompanying guitar. After dinner and activities like ice breakers, volleyball and basketball in the gym, the evening Vespers services were held around a campfire by the lake. At our second vespers service, Rev. Beiswenger even had some help from two talented teens who played their ukulele's.

Before the weekend started, the teens weren't told what the camp theme was, because the presenters didn't want to give away the punch line to the presentations. The presenters, reflecting on their own experience as teens, rare aware the basic trouble that plagues most teens: they think they know everything and everybody else knows nothing. As a result, the goal of the weekend was to try to show them in the Word, and in the world of science, that we can easily be deceived by our physical senses and as a result throw our spirituality away.



We see this throughout the Word. Isaac is tricked when Jacob wears a disguise to steal Esau's blessing. Isaac hears Jacob, but feels Esau, and makes a bad choice. Adam and Eve see that the fruit looks pleasing to the eye and chose poorly.

However, these days there are lots of videos that demonstrate this idea that we can be deceived by our senses. We can prove it! These stories from the Word can be strengthened by being able to see that even the natural world agrees that your eyes can see things that aren't there, taste things that didn't exist, feel pain when not touched and hear sounds that were never made. It's pretty amazing! If only Adam and Eve knew not to trust their senses when it came to matters of faith!



We watched an old episode of "The Twilight Zone" titled, "The Howling Man," that was used to discuss the weekend's theme. I'll not give away what happened but suffice it to say there was some deceiving going on, along with a twist ending that left the audience with much to talk about!

The final chapels left the students with two questions: "How do you hear the Lord's voice," and "Who are you listening to?" As you might imagine, the goal was to nudge them to hear the Lord's voice, and listen to Him as opposed to the thoughts and opinions they are likely to find on social media.

A highlight for me, was listening to the teens as they sat around the fireplace singing beautiful hymns and other songs in harmony. I wish I could have recorded their lovely singing. It is noteworthy that they chose to do this on their own. I also appreciated the kind attitude I witnessed between the older and younger teens. I enjoyed all the effort the teens put into making their "heavenly garden" projects beautiful. I could see they were pleased with what their creations and since it was a Mother's Day weekend, some mother's may have received the gardens as gifts.

Teens had plenty of time to get to know each other better. They really were a pleasure to spend time with. If the New Church is to be judged by them, then we're in good shape. Thank you to all the parents who sent their teens and to all the adults who helped make the camp a success. Also, a special thank you to the G.C.I.C. and the Glenview New Church for your financial support that made this special event possible. I really do believe the Lord's work is done during these weekends. Overall, the weekend went really well, which is a credit to not just the staff, but the kids who were participating.

In closing, I want to share our Canada to US border crossing story. Along with the regular rigmarole of border-crossing questions, the agent surprised us with a "trick" question after finding out we were going on a religious retreat. He asked us what does Romans 6:23 say? We answered honestly we didn't actually know. Then the border guard encouraged us to look it up. When we could, we did look it up. It says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord". In the New Church, we know this to be true. It was nice to meet a fellow Christian who knew and believed this too, and wasn't afraid to share it with us. What else should we be learning while we spend our time living on this earth! Spending time understanding and applying what we learn from the bible (and learning the deeper spiritual applications to our lives). Thanks to the U.S. customs officer for this important reminder! Will he ever know that he made an impact? Yes, someday he will.



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Comments, letters and articles are welcome!

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General Church in Canada Worship Services



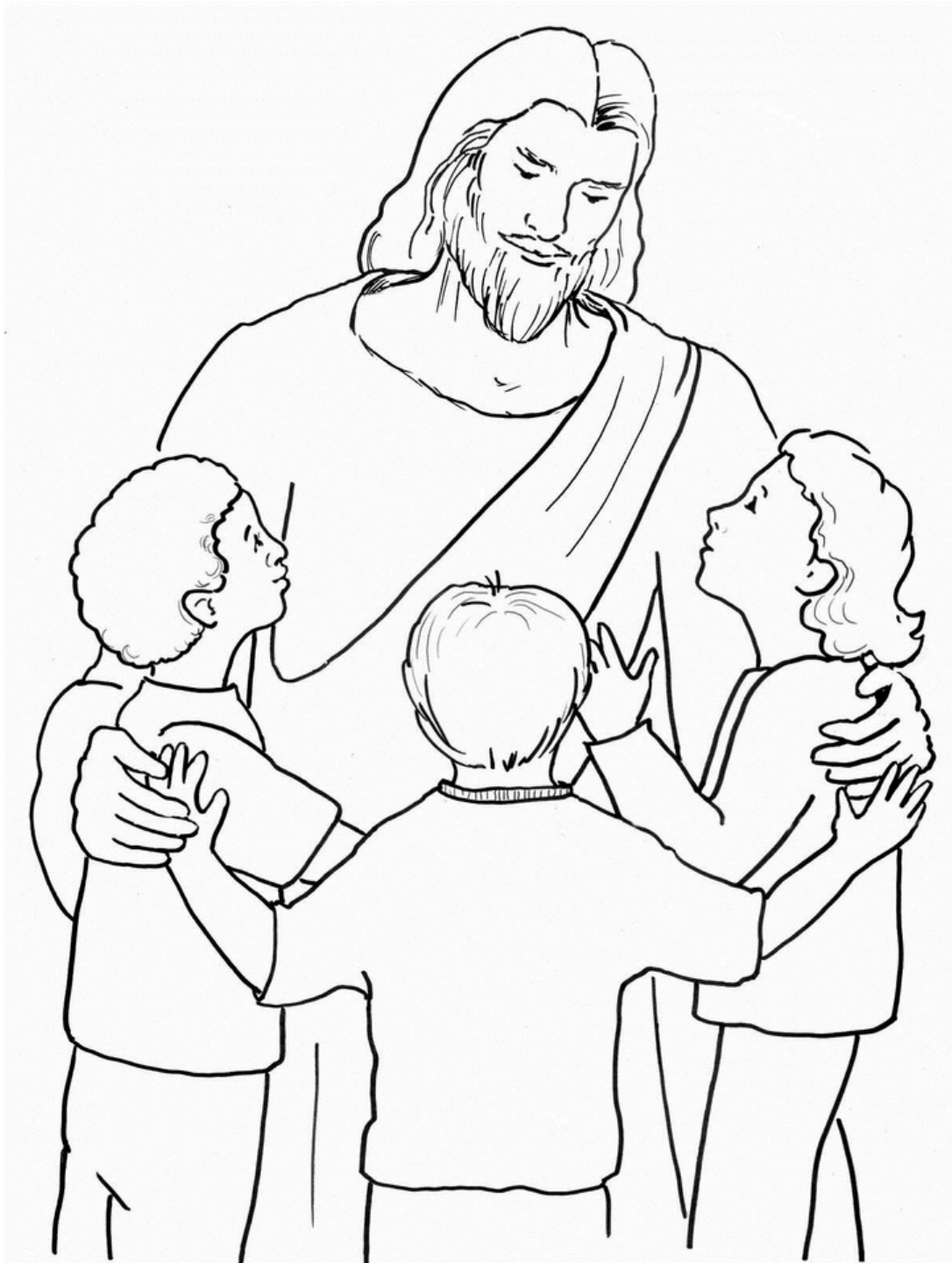
Carmel New Church
Kitchener, ON
10 AM Sunday
in person & online



Dawson Creek New Church
Dawson Creek, BC
Aug 3 & 31



Olivet New Church
Etobicoke, ON
10:30 AM Sunday
in person & online



"Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:31-32).

Give You the Kingdom, by Marguerite L. Acton