

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2026

New Church Canadian

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the General
Church in Canada



IMBOLC

By Rev. Michael Cowley

“I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.” Psalm 27:13,14

We’ve been doing this a while now, haven’t we? Entering a new year in the middle of winter. The yearly cycle is most ancient. This can be a hard time. “Be of good courage.”

It’s interesting that in telling the story of Lord’s birth no mention is made of what time of year it was. It could have been spring or summer as easily as winter. The main reason winter and the darkest part of the year was chosen had to do with bringing Christianity to tribes of people who already had a Yule festival of lights, trees and logs around the Winter solstice. It was “easier to join ‘em than to fight ‘em” so early missionaries took the Norse, Celtic and Germanic year and revised the pagan festivals to become Christian holidays.

But it’s not a bad thing. Pretty much the same thing happened with the Second Coming as the First. Jesus’s birthday is celebrated three days after the winter solstice and New Church “Day” is announced three days before the Summer solstice. Easter did take place at the appointed time of the Passover, but the Spring festivities related to fertility and new growth after winter is directly

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tied into the Spring Equinox. The Glorification of the Second Advent is the high point of the year.

A favourite, lesser known Celtic celebration is Imbolc. It's when the worst cold of winter is broken. Those longer days of sunshine in the new year begin to "pay off" with the following of warmer ones at Imbolc on the first day of February. Christians took the pagan holiday and canonized the goddess Brighid to become Saint Brigid; the pagan Imbolc became Christian Candlemas. I prefer to see this as an Ancient Church relic echoing through the ages. A prophecy about new life. I can imagine the Lord's birth more appropriately taking place during the coldest week of the year instead of the darkest.

And so here we are in the coldest part of the year with the temperatures dropping lower and lower, but we know it can't last forever. And we know we can't do a thing about it. It is what it is.



Spiritually we can look at the ancient lore of the pagan cycle and make out some Ancient Church origins, even Most Ancient Church beginnings. The Golden and Silver Ages spoken of in the Word had extensive mythological impact on the festivals and celebrations of ancient cultures around the world.

We bask in the glow of these traditions from prehistoric times. The seeds sown during the Advent season are able to germinate during the season we are enjoying now. Imbolc means seeds in the earth and lactation to nourish new birth. Yes, it is a dark and cold time we are now in, and an opportunity awaits if we are willing and able to focus.

One good way is to germinate some seeds in your house. We have two acorns found in the fall which we set upon acorn vases. Over the past weeks we've watched as a single root shot down into the water and weeks later a stem reached for the sky. Today we have two small trees with a half dozen leaves on each.

One fascinating feature of this project is watching the acorn grow smaller and smaller as the roots and stem get larger and larger. EVERYTHING the new tree needs to begin and sustain growth is/was already supplied within the acorn. That's provide-ance... Providence.

What a wonderful analogy for our own lives and this time of the year. We often think we don't have enough, or we aren't enough. Just as the mighty oak is already contained in the tiny acorn, so all we need to begin angelic life has already been given to us by the Lord. We are "enough" in the sense that we cannot add "one inch to our stature." We cannot grow of ourselves into regeneration or study our way into heaven. What we need right now, the Lord has already given.

Again: Divine Providence. Like the “remains” implanted through years of Christmas celebrations and the spiritual struggles and lessons of our past, the spiritual nutrients for heavenly life are already supplied. “The Kingdom of Heaven is within.”

The acorn is shrivelling because it is putting everything into the development of the roots and stem. Another lesson for us is reflected here. The appearance may be that this is the “worst time of year” when it may actually be the best. It is the end of natural life as things are frozen solid in the ground and on the lakes and ponds. The season is shriveling up to put everything into the coming Spring.

We are told this same thing must happen in our spiritual growth. Unless the natural is put beneath the spiritual, unless the “head of the serpent is crushed”, unless the love for the natural world shrivels into subservience to love for the neighbour and the Lord’s Kingdom, our spiritual life’s can not take root, and we can not be lifted toward heaven. All that we have is given so we can be given to the Lord. And the Lord does all the lifting, as He has done with all the giving.

This time of year can be hard. I wait to celebrate the average daily temperature going up not down. But the anticipation is a most hope filled time of year. “This too will pass” they say, and yet here is a good opportunity to meditate and focus on the meaning of life. Self life must decrease in order for angelic life to increase. Yes, I look forward to a few weeks in Florida to warm up, but we know spiritually the only true Warmth is from the Sun in Heaven.

Happy New Year. May this coldest time of the year bring you opportunities to reflect on the Lord giving you everything you need to survive what would be spiritual death without His Providence.

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.” Psalm 27:14



UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION

In the last issue of the New Church Canadian, we shared the news of Val Younan’s new role as International HR Manager, a full-time position supporting both the General Church and the General Church in Canada. Please note her updated email address is gcichumanresources@gmail.com.

AN OBSERVATION

By Rev. James Cooper

So, what's the New Church all about?

From time to time, we are all faced with trying to explain to a friend or acquaintance what the "New Church" is all about. Usually it comes from a pleasant conversation and a genuine friendly interest, but the brain freezes. You picture the 40 green volumes, all filled with big ideas and small print, and you wonder how in the world are you going to explain all that in a few words.

Do those green volumes provide a tool that can help? Here's a passage from Conjugal Love where Swedenborg, while visiting in the spiritual world, faces that very situation, only from someone who is clearly not happy with him. Please note how he summarizes the core ideas with just five simple statements.

Conjugal Love (Rogers) 82. After this a man came rushing from the northern zone in a rage, and looking at me with a threatening expression and speaking in a heated tone, he said, "You are the one who is trying to lead the world astray by establishing a New Church, which you take to be meant by the New Jerusalem that will come down out of heaven from God, and by teaching that people who embrace the doctrines of this church will be blessed by the Lord with truly conjugal love, whose delights and happiness you exalt to the sky! Is that not something you just made up? Are you not just saying it as a snare and inducement to get people to go along with your new ideas?"

"Tell me in short, however, what these New Church doctrines are, and I will see whether they hang together or not."

So I replied, "The doctrines of the church that is meant by the New Jerusalem are as follows:

- "1. There is one God, in whom is the Divine Trinity, and that God is the Lord Jesus Christ.
- "2. Saving faith is to believe in Him.
- "3. Evils must be abstained from because they are of the devil and from the devil.
- "4. Good deeds must be done because they are of God and from God.
- "5. These good deeds must be done by a person as though he were doing them from him-self, but he must believe that they are from the Lord in him and by means of him."

[2] When he heard this, the man's rage subsided for several minutes. But after some consideration, he again looked at me with a fierce expression, saying, "These five precepts – are they doctrines of the faith and charity of the New Church?"
And I answered, "Yes."

Perhaps these five points will provide a good basic answer. Some people will be completely satisfied by this and move on to talking about the weather or what their kids are up to. For those who are interested, it provides a good place to start a friendly conversation.

FROM THE REGIONAL PASTOR: AN INVITATION TO A PARTY!

The General Church in Canada has been asked to host regional clergy meetings in 2026. Clergy from Canada, the US Midwest, and the US West (and one from Sweden) will be meeting at a conference centre near Pearson Airport January 27-29. As of this writing, we are expecting about 15 active and re-tired ministers to attend.

One of the things we like to do at regional meetings is have an opportunity for members and friends from both Olivet and Caryndale to meet and greet the clergy. We are planning to have a meal and social time on Thursday evening the 29th at Olivet Church. It seems appropriate to have a party then since it happens to be Swedenborg's birthday! I'm not sure of the exact starting time yet, so contact me (or check your local newsletters) a week or two before the 29th.

Since the GCIC is providing the meal, we are going to need a head count ahead of time. Please email me at rev.james.cooper@gmail.com if you would like to attend, and be sure to say how many will be in your party.



SCHOLARSHIPS FOR THOSE ATTENDING THE ACADEMY SCHOOLS



A brief overview of the Canadian Scholarship program:

It has two goals. First, to encourage Canadian students to attend Academy schools by helping to over-come the huge financial burden compared to attending schools in Canada. Secondly, to assist the Academy financially by taking the place of scholarship grants deserving New Church Students would normally get from the Academy allowing that money to go to other deserving students.

The program is open to New Church families who are bona fide Canadian residents - not citizens of Canada living elsewhere. The student is given a "Canadian Scholarship award" of 95% the tuition and room and board, which is then billed to the GCIC. The student is responsible for the other 5%.

Who decides who gets the Scholarship? The GCIC has a Scholarship committee that receives applications and then notifies the Academy bursars at the Secondary Schools and College of who is eligible. I am currently the chair of that committee, so please reach out to me if you know someone who would like to attend the Academy Secondary Schools or the Bryn Athyn College of the New Church from anywhere in Canada.

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

A friendly reminder from your Treasurer that financial support for the uses of the General Church in Canada is now easier than ever. Gifts can be sent via eTransfer directly to the Church from any Canadian bank or banking app.

Simply send an eTransfer to: GCICTreasury@Outlook.com

And the funds will be safely deposited to our account along with direct tracking of your contribution. That makes it easier for us to issue tax receipts and also makes our bookkeeper and auditor happier.

Or if you are feeling old school, you can send a cheque by post to:

GCIC Treasurer
Olivet Church
279 Burnhamthorpe Road
Etobicoke, ON M9B 1Z6

For all those who presently support the Church in volunteer time and financially, a heartfelt “Thank you”!

thank
you

INTRODUCTION SERIES TO LOGOPRAXIS

Starting February 9, 2026






As the New Church, we have access to and teach an abundance of ideas. However, what we struggle to provide is guidance on exactly how to engage in reading the WORD in a practical way so that the Lord can challenge us, teach us, and help us make meaningful change. True learning is from the Lord alone. Logopraxis Life Groups goes a long way in filling this gap. In this introduction series of 8 Life Group meetings (run Bi-Weekly), you will learn all the basic ideas to help guide you in practicing the WORD in the life of your mind. No amount of mental strength can make the heart humble before the Lord; it is only through application and practice that the Lord can effect change. This program invites you to engage the WORD in a way



that you have never done before and discover the power of the Lord's WORD in deep and beautiful new ways.

Logopraxis is not a sharing group, but a working group. We have all been given freedom and the ability to compel ourselves. There is no higher purpose for these gifts than to use them in our personal spiritual work. You will be asked to commit to reading the WORD and to do your own inner work, and then to bring your work to the group. Logopraxis provides the structural foundation for inner spiritual work. It may not be for everyone. The Logopraxis Life Groups also facilitate the development of a deep spiritual community.

Across 8 bi-weekly sessions, you'll be guided through:

-  The Six Step Logopraxis Cycle: a structured rhythm of reading, reflection, and spiritual tasking.
-  Spiritual Literacy: learning to "read" your thoughts and affections in light of Divine truth.
-  Inner Observation: seeing the proprium (our selfish sense of self) at work in everyday life and experiencing the freeing power of insight into this (proprium) and its disconnection from Divine life.
-  Life Group Practice: participating in a collective spiritual body, mirroring the Divine Human form.
-  Regeneration in Action: discovering how failure becomes success, and how resistance reveals the path to transformation.

Each session combines readings from Swedenborg's book Heaven and Hell with personal task reflections and small group work, helping you embody the Word in your daily life. Whether you're new to spiritual practice or seeking deeper alignment, this course offers a living framework for awakening, healing, and Divine connection.

Readings will begin during the week of 9th February 2026, and the first Life Group meetings will be 2 weeks after the first reading post.

From Carmel, we will be hosting an Online Group on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm and an In-person Group on Friday evenings at 7:00pm. Interested persons can contact Pastor Mark Allais.

If the Carmel days and times do not suit, as a global community, various alternative days and times will be on offer to accommodate different schedule, send an email to logopraxis.institute@gmail.com.

To find out more about Logopraxis Visit: <https://logopraxis-institute.online/>

NEW CHRISTIAN BIBLE STUDY

Did you know the GCIC collaborates with the New Christian Bible Study each year? Here are some “factoids” about them!

Through generous donations the New Christian Bible Study has accomplished much over the years.

Accomplishments By the Numbers

28/49

We are spreading the Word and the Writings in a lot of languages. (The Writings in 28 languages, the Bible in 49.)

5,670,000

Website visitors.
(5.67 million unique visitors last month!)

23,211 by 671

We have translations, articles and illustrations from many creative people. (23,211 explanations by 671 people!)

2,415

We are a hub/clearinghouse for a lot of New Christian videos on social media channels. (2415 videos!)

42,300

We have a lot of messages being nicely handled by our NC Chatbot. (42,300+ messages as of a week ago.)

Lots!

We have a lot of productive strategic relationships with all the church branches, the schools, the clergy and many other New Christian groups.

2025 Highlights:

1. A New Church Bible translation system - the first human-in-the-loop AI translation systems for making New Church translations of the Word.
2. Using a similar human/machine iterative method they have also built a translation system to translate the Writings- completing partial Arcana Coelestia translations and working to fill in the gaps in the 28 target languages and additional languages in the future.

For more information about the exciting future developments at New Christian Bible Study please visit <https://newchristianbiblestudy.org/projects>.

GCIC BOARD MEETING: NOVEMBER 22, 2025

By Karen Cooper, GCIC Secretary

Our meeting opened with a reading by Rev. Cooper from a book of the Writings called Faith. He reminded us that knowing and learning truths are useless unless we actually put what we know into practice. But if we actually do good, then it brings the truths to life, and then the more truth we learn, the more that good can bring that truth to life! This reading was relevant to this meeting for two reasons: one is that, as a board, we are encouraged to use the funds given us to do good things and not just save them, but also, as a church, our goal is to help people to learn more truths so that they can do more good so that they can learn more truths!

Bishop Pete Buss was present at this meeting (via Zoom—as were all of us) because he likes to check in with the various groups in the church worldwide. He expressed gratitude specifically for the ways that the GCIC has been able to help the General Church at large financially, but also for our support in general ways.

Bishop David Lindrooth was also present at the meeting, in his relatively new role as Bishop for Canada.

Jim Cooper, as the Executive Vice President for the GCIC, spoke about several items. One big piece of news is that there will be Regional Clergy meetings held in Toronto during the last week of January. The region that they're going to be including is almost comically large though—all of Canada plus the American west, and one minister from Sweden! The ministers (and some of their wives) will stay at a local hotel (near the airport so no one will need to rent a car) and use a conference room there. There will be three days of meetings, and on the Thursday evening, there will be a dinner at Olivet Church to which all of you are invited! It's always nice to be able to get a chance to meet ministers from far and wide, and to have them meet us—friendly Canadians that we are. As an added bonus, that evening just happens to be Swedenborg's birthday, so we can pause and remember his contributions to this all. (If you live close enough, and would like to come to dinner, please let Jim Cooper know.)

There was some discussion about Young People's Weekends. The most recent one was held in Toronto, and had 58 kids in attendance! We are obviously thrilled that so many young people are interested in church events, so GCIC certainly wants to continue to support these weekends. Later in the meeting we voted to increase our financial support of youth weekends involving Canadian students.

One of the uses we support is the New Christian Bible Study, and we agreed to increase our financial support. They are utilising a New Church software developer (Nat Borketey Kwaku—the son of a NC minister in Ghana) who lives in Canada, so logically we could hire him as an employee of the GCIC in combination with invoicing NCBS. (If you're not familiar with NCBS, please check them out at <https://newchristianbiblestudy.org>. They also have an app for your phone! Good stuff.

Lee Horigan, our administrator and treasurer, then gave his report. There was some discussion about insurance for our summer camps—one of those necessary details that boards need to deal with. He is also working with Bishop Lindrooth to develop a new strategic plan to better support the specific uses that the GCIC serves.

It is that time of year when we need to form a Nominating Committee to find a new board member or two. Denis deChazal from Montreal is the head of this board, and we need to get a current board member and somebody else who is a GCIC member to form a committee. We really are hoping for better national representation, and not just folks from Ontario, so if you could spare a bit of time, please let us know! (We are looking for volunteers for this nominating committee, but obviously also to be on the board. The nominating job will involve several meetings and reaching out to people, and will be finished by mid-spring. If you're willing to serve on the board, that would be a commitment of several years, but does not involve much more than attending and participating in Zoom meetings that are held 4-5 times per year. Please consider helping out your church in one of these ways!)

With his treasurer hat on, Lee spoke about donations to the GCIC. Here's an interesting fact: donations have exceeded the budgeted amount, but that's because of the generosity of western members! Those of us in the eastern half of the country need to step up and contribute more. Our endowment fund is continuing to grow nicely. It is not growing by leaps and bounds, but that is because our financial managers are committed to safe investing—thank goodness!

We had guest reports from the pastors in attendance. Todd spoke about the raging success of the Young People's Weekend, and Michael Cowley spoke about his travels amongst the many groups that he helps to support.

Denis deChazal proposed a plan for outreach which would involve donating Swedenborgian books to local libraries and bookstores. This discussion was postponed for now, and the actual figures involved will be discussed at our next meeting.

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FROM THE EDITOR

I would love to hear from anyone who participates in the Logopraxis Series. If you feel inspired to write an article reflecting on your experience, please don't hesitate to send it my way!

As always, you are also very welcome to write in and share your thoughts or experiences about your life as a New Church Canadian.

To be included in the next issue, all articles must be submitted by February 20, 2026. I look forward to hearing from you!



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**Editorial Deadline for the
March - April 2026 Issue:
February 20, 2026**

Comments, letters and articles are welcome!

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General Church in Canada Worship Services



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



Dawson Creek New Church
Dawson Creek, BC

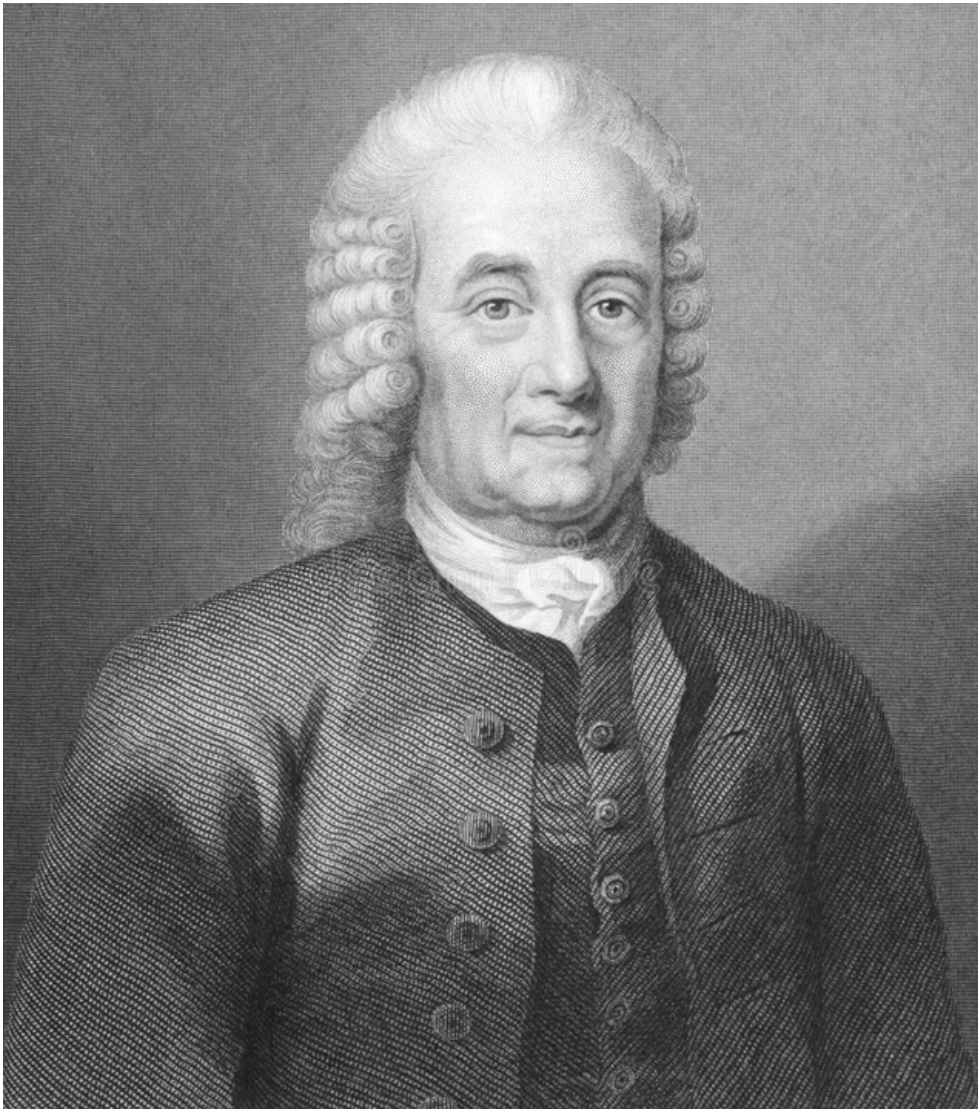


Olivet New Church
Etobicoke, ON
10:30 AM Sunday
in person & online



New Church Canadian

c/o 279 Burnhamthorpe Rd.
Etobicoke, ON, CANADA
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Emanuel Swedenborg

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) on engraving from the 1700s. Swedish scientist, inventor, philosopher and theologian. Engraved by W. Holl and published in London by A. Fullatron & Co.