



The Country Courier

News from The Sower's Chapel

November 2021

GUARDIAN ANGELS

The other day someone asked, "Do you believe in guardian angels?" My answer was, "Yes." However, that "yes" comes with certain qualifications. This is because the New Church understanding of the presence and role of guardian angels is likely a little bit different than the ideas held by some others. So, the following is a brief review of what I believe the New Church teachings are on the subject.

It is very possible, and indeed common, for Christians to have the impression that angels are a different subset of the Lord's creation. While there does not seem to be any direct verse of Scripture that says this, a common reading of Genesis 1 suggests that angels were present to witness God's creation of the physical universe. However, New Church teachings make it clear that "all angels were once people, born in the world, and none were created angels directly." (Apocalypse Revealed 818) In other words, in the New Church we believe that a new interpretation of the Creation story in Genesis is needed. [Please come to the Bible study class on Tuesday, November 2, advertised below, to consider all this further.]

Thinking then about guardian angels, we should note that from ancient times people have had a sense that God had assigned someone otherworldly to watch over them. This sense has been built upon scenes like this one from the Book of Daniel:

Then suddenly a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." (Daniel 10:10, 11)

Scripture expands on this idea in the Book of Revelation, when John was told to write to the angels of the seven churches in Asia Minor. (Revelation 1-3)

There is no question that there are guardian angels. The Lord says so much with the words in Psalm 91:11, "For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways." Even the Lord Himself, when He was in the world, gained reassurance in the Garden of Gethsemane from the angel who "appeared to Him from heaven, comforting Him." (Luke 22:43)

Perhaps no New Church message gives us as clear a picture as this one from Heaven and Hell 391:

"Broadly speaking, angels of all communities are assigned to us to protect us, to lead us away from evil feelings and the

evil thoughts that these cause and to instill good feelings to the extent that we are freely open to them. These serve to control our deeds or works by removing our evil intentions to the extent that this can be done. When angels are with us they seem to dwell in our affections, near us to the extent that we are engaged in something good because of truth, and distant to the extent that our life is removed from such engagement. ... However, all these tasks are things the Lord does by means of angels, since angels do them not on their own but from the Lord."

It is good to feel assured that the Lord will never leave us as He says at the conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew, "And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." His guardian angels will always be close by, doing His will and helping to steer us away from physical and spiritual danger. It is, of course, not perfect protection. Bad things still happen to people here in the world. But, no matter what the circumstance, the Lord and His angels are with us. Our eternal wellbeing depends on it.

- Garry

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Tuesdays at 1 PM @1833 Coffee and Tea, corner of 5th and High Streets, Freeport

Our Tuesday afternoon Bible study continues to attract more and more people, most from inside our existing congregation plus a few who are new to us. Throughout October we have read and discussed the Book of Jonah. Beginning November 2 we will have a new 4-week study of the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis. Here is the study outline:

Nov. 2: Genesis 1-31, 2:1-3 – The Seven Days of Creation

Nov. 9: Genesis 2:4-25 – The Creation of Men and Women

Nov. 16: Genesis 3:1-24 – Eating the Forbidden Fruit

Nov. 23: Genesis 4:1-7 – Cain Kills Abel

continued

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The Sower's Chapel

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Each week's Bible reading is accompanied by passages from the Writings for the New Church to help more fully understand the Lord's message for us.

The following Tuesday, November 30, we will transition to a 4-week study of the Christmas story as it is given to us in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The exact breakdown of this study is still being developed.

Bibles are provided or you are welcome to bring your own. Different translations can bring interesting variety.

THANKSGIVING WORSHIP

We look forward to our traditional Thanksgiving morning worship service, Thursday, November 25 at 11 AM. You are invited to bring a non-perishable food offering or cash donation that will go to the local Cabot Food Bank.

*"O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!
For His mercy endures forever."
(Psalm 107:1)*

TIME TO DECORATE FOR CHRISTMAS!

Please join us with your gloves and nippers on Saturday, Nov. 27th at 9am to decorate the Sanctuary for the Christmas season. Remember, many hands make light work. We'll share a luncheon after we've decked the halls!

4 WEEK EVENING STUDY GROUP

Our 4-week evening study group of *The Doctrine of Life*, led by Chris Bown, began October 27th, and will continue through November 17th.

It's an exciting book to explore. The opening sentence is perhaps one of the most famous passages of the whole Writings: "All religion is about life, and the life of religion is to do what is good."

Please join us to discuss this most important work, and contact Chris Bown if you have any questions or suggestions. Text or call 412-352-6332 or email chrisbown@icloud.com

TOYS FOR TOTS @ 1833 COFFEE & TEA

1833 Coffee & Tea Co. is collecting gifts for the Toys for Tots program. From now through the first week of December, you can drop off a new, unwrapped gift that can be distributed to children who may not otherwise receive Christmas gifts.

Please support this worthwhile program!

ANGEL TREE GIFTS

The tree will be set up at church by November 27th, with gifts to be wrapped and brought to the church by Dec. 12th.

DEAR FRIENDS,

A major objective of my Regional Pastor work is to support your pastor in his work. In order to do that effectively, he and I would both like to know some of your specific thoughts about what is really wanted and needed here at The Sower's Chapel. This is NOT a review of Garry's work, but rather an appeal for information that will help us set some benchmarks for success.

To get your input we have designed a short survey that we would very much like you to fill out and return to us by Sunday, November 21st. You can do this electronically with the form that will be sent to your email address within the next few days, OR by filling out the paper forms that will be available at the church on October 31st. Please, though, just one survey per member, OK?

Thank you very much, indeed, for your support and encouragement.

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NOV. CALENDAR DATES

Nov. 2: 1 PM at 1833 Coffee - Bible Study, Genesis
7 PM at the church - Pastor's Council

Nov. 3: 7 PM at the church - *Doctrine of Life* study

Nov. 7: Chris Bown leading worship at The Sower's Chapel;
Garry leading worship in Lake Helen, FL.

Nov. 9: 1 PM at 1833 Coffee - Bible Study, Genesis
7 PM at the church - Board Meeting

Nov. 10: 7 PM at the church - *Doctrine of Life* study

Nov. 16: 1 PM at 1833 Coffee - Bible Study, Genesis

Nov. 17: 7 PM at the church - *Doctrine of Life* study

Nov. 23: 1 PM at 1833 Coffee - Bible Study, Genesis

Nov. 25: 11 AM - Thanksgiving Worship

Nov. 27: 9 AM - Christmas Church Decorating

Nov. 30: 1 PM at 1833 Coffee - Bible Study, Christmas Story

AFTER-CHURCH LUNCHEON - DECEMBER 5

Our next society luncheon is scheduled for the first Sunday in December. Please join us!

December Courier Deadline:

November 24, 2021