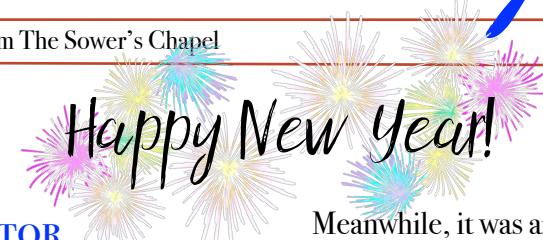




The Country Courier

News from The Sower's Chapel

January 2026



FROM OUR REGIONAL PASTOR

Welcome to another New Year, everyone! As some of us continue to age, and others come of age, this is always a good time to think about how our lives can in some ways fulfill the Lord's promise of true happiness and peace despite the many challenges we face, both personally and in the church. And, to state the obvious New Church truth, it all hangs on our commitment to useful work.

GREAT WORK FROM ALL YOU VOLUNTEERS!

That said, we would be remiss indeed if we did not acknowledge the tremendous support we have had throughout this last year from so many of you, young and old, who have committed time and energy to sustaining and improving life at The Sower's Chapel. Board and committee members, musicians, decorators, clergy hosts, Sunday School teachers, maintenance volunteers, and hey, just all of you who *show up on Sundays* to help make worship more rewarding for everyone.

Special thanks to all the ministers, especially the Rev. Chris Bown, who have given, and continue to give of their time and talent, connecting us with the Lord through His Word.

THE FUTURE OF PASTORAL WORK

As many of you know by now, Chris is looking to take care of some medical needs this new year, and also has in mind to downsize over the next 6 months so he can easily relocate when needed; he also wants to be free to travel much more throughout 2026. Both will impact his many crucial roles at The Sower's Chapel. Unfortunately, neither I nor the bishops have yet been able to identify a willing and viable candidate to assume this pastorate. But we continue to consider this need and to search on your behalf. In fact, a special topic for the bishop's Advisory Committee in January is this very issue.

Meanwhile, it was announced shortly before Christmas that the Rev. Howard Thompson has accepted a call to become the new assistant pastor and school principal for the Washington New Church in Maryland. He will be taking the place of Rev. Brian Smith, who has accepted a call to serve the church and school in Kempton, PA. (Yes, they have a lot of ministers there, but for many particular, personal reasons, most of them are really only part-time. Plus, Brian and his family are taking this opportunity to support his parents there, as they continue to age.)

Also, as you know, there are two NEW ministers serving their initial "residencies" in Oak Arbor and Pittsburgh. They remain committed to those congregations for at least another year, and it is too soon to speculate on where they might serve in 2027.

As for the theological school, there are men in the pipeline, but several of them will almost certainly be destined for service in Europe or West Africa. (There is one second-career Brit who I think would be a great fit for you, but then, the church in Britain will be anxious to get him if they can, since the last of our GC ministers will be leaving England to retire at the end of June.)

continued...

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THE SOWER'S CHAPEL

100 Iron Bridge Rd. • Sarser PA 16055

ph: (724) 353-2220

Rev. Mike Gladish, Regional Pastor

Ph: (301) 461-3521 • E-mail: mdgladish@gmail.com

Web page: www.sowerschapel.org

Miriam Heilman, Editor • e-mail: miriam.heilman@gmail.com

...From Our Regional Pastor continued

RECRUITING MORE MINISTERS AND TEACHERS

Now here is a dilemma. Even as the knowledge and acceptance of the Heavenly Doctrine is growing throughout the world, many of our congregations are dwindling! What does this mean for the training and employment of new ministers? Evidently, some creative thinking is going to be required, including the possibility that some will be called to serve part-time while also being engaged in other careers. We will also need to think open-mindedly about how we "do" church, so as to make it more appealing to more people.

You all know all about this, and many of you have been discussing it for years. But what about you who have not voiced your opinions? Is there anything we could do for you that would encourage you to participate a little more in the church? If so, please write to me at mdgladish@gmail.com.

With all this in mind, you should know that we now have a man working full time with the goal of recruiting new ministers and teachers for the GC. Baird Kistner, who works out of Oak Arbor, MI, is busy every day thinking up new ways to encourage men and women to dedicate their lives to these uses. So if you have any great ideas for him, especially if you have any viable LEADS on someone who might like to learn more about this, please consider contacting him at the following address: baird.kistner@newchurch.org.

HOLY SUPPER NEXT SUNDAY, THE 4TH

I look forward to seeing you on the first Sunday of the New Year, when I will present a sermon and children's talk on Seeing God, and so being conjoined with Him through reading and the sacrament. I will drive 325 miles to lead this service and I would be honored if you would join me.

—Mike Gladish (mgladish@gmail.com)

VISIT WITH REV. NATHAN GLADISH

Nathan Gladish will be our visiting minister on Sunday, January 11. He is offering to meet-up with anyone interested over the Jan 10-11 weekend while he is here. If you would like to visit with Nathan, his contact details are: cell - 520-820-5148 or email nathan.gladish@newchurch.org



A JOYFUL CHRISTMAS SEASON

Despite the weather nixing the Freeport College Club Christmas Music in the Country program, we of The Sower's Chapel enjoyed a full, joyful and well attended Christmas season.

Many of us stepped forward and helped in so many ways—all wonderful, welcome and integral. The music was wonderful, the church beautiful, the Tableaux lovely and meaningful, the gifts to be treasured. Some of us took part in decorating the church, played a role in the Tableaux, organized behind the scenes, and some of us organized gifts for all the families present. The musical offerings were delightful. Our visiting ministers went above and beyond, and were welcomed and housed with open arms.

So many individuals gave their energy, talent, and love to the Christmas season here at The Sower's Chapel. We are truly blessed.

LIFE OF THE LORD BIBLE STUDY

The Kids' Life of the Lord Bible Study will meet on **January 8 at 4 PM** at Trish Lindsay's home. The kids are asked to bring their Bibles and their copy of *The Life of the Lord* to the meeting. Please call if you have any questions. Trish Lindsay (724-584-6515)

MANSE PROPERTY MANAGER NEEDED

Before renting the downstairs on a month-to-month basis, the Board is searching for someone to assume the position of Property Supervisor. Glenn Heilman is willing to take care of outdoor issues at the manse, but would like someone else to be responsible for the interior. This is a very important corner in our operations.

Please let one of the Board of Trustees know if you feel you are willing to take on this important role. Maybe more than one person can share the responsibility.





JANUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS & VISITING MINISTERS

Sun, Jan 4: Rev. Mike Gladish (Holy Supper Service)
De-decorate after church!

Thu, Jan 8: 4 pm - Youth Bible Study @ Trish Lindsay's

Sun, Jan 11: Rev. Nathan Gladish

Tue, Jan 13: 1:00 PM - Bible Study @ TBD
7:00 PM - Board of Trustees

Sun, Jan 18: Rev. Dan Calvo

Tue, Jan 20: 1:00 PM - Bible Study @ TBD

Sun, Jan 25: Rev. Nathan Cole

Sun, Feb 1: Rev. Mike Gladish



BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2025-26

Rev. Mike Gladish, Regional Pastor
Miriam Heilman, Chair
Ian Heilman, Secretary
Bill Kronen Sr., Treasurer
Trish Lindsay
Al Lindsay
Chris Bown
Mike Brown
Glenn Heilman

GLENCAIRN AWARD

2026 PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

On January 5, 2026, the Glencairn Award Committee will begin accepting written nominations for the 2026 award.

The award is given to an outstanding teacher or a member of a New Church community for past achievements and/or contributions in the fields of religion, science, education, the arts, literature, or community service. Such achievements are the sole criteria for the award. The award may not be given as compensation for service or as a supplement to salary or based on the financial needs of the recipient.

All nominations must be made on a nomination application form and submitted electronically or by mail to Committee's Secretary, Phillip R. Zuber, Esq. (address, email, and phone below). The Secretary is not a member of the Committee and has no input on who receives a Glencairn Award.

You may obtain a nomination application by either DOWNLOADING the document using either of these links:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/zfsflkob2ws3hmr7q61xv/GAC-Application-2026-fillable.pdf?rlkey=y4w5e76ivonbvsxjmpuuewawo&st=j0li34l0&dl=0>

[GAC Application-2026-fillable.pdf](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/zfsflkob2ws3hmr7q61xv/GAC-Application-2026-fillable.pdf?rlkey=y4w5e76ivonbvsxjmpuuewawo&st=j0li34l0&dl=0)

Or requesting a nomination application form from the Committee Secretary.

To be given consideration for an award in 2026, the nomination application form must be completed and submitted to the Committee Secretary by **March 27, 2026**.

All nominations and any other information provided to the Committee about the nominee will be kept in strict confidence by the Committee. Further instructions on how to make a nomination are contained in the nomination application form. A subsequent announcement will be made on when and where the 2026 award(s) will be announced.

PHILLIP R. ZUBER, ESQ.

SECRETARY to the Glencairn Award Committee

P.O. BOX 711 / BRYN ATHYN, PA 19009-0731

PHONE: 301-518- 7115

EMAIL: phillip.zuber@anc-gc.org