



FROM OUR REGIONAL PASTOR

Lent – Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and many other Christian groups are presently observing a thing they call LENT. In the New Church we have never made much of this observance, but it can be useful, and in any case, it will be good for us to know something about it.

Lent refers to a period of 40 days leading up to Easter, and it involves a special focus on prayer, fasting, abstinence from sensual pleasures, and charitable giving. It is done in remembrance of the Lord's own 40 days of temptation and fasting (in *Matthew 4:2*), and also of Moses' 40 days of fasting on Mt. Sinai (in *Exodus 34:28*). The point is to try to identify with the self-denial that the Lord Himself suffered as He gave His life for the redemption of the human race, and to practice that self-denial in preparation for our celebration of His resurrection.

Lent always begins on what is called Ash Wednesday, which this year was February 18th, and goes until April 4th. Whether we consciously observe any of the suggested practices for Lent, or not, we would do well to be aware of our neighbors' observances, and, of course, it's always a good idea to practice the four virtues that it calls to our minds.

Easter Week Holy Supper – You have a tradition at The Sower's Chapel of commemorating the Lord's Last supper on the day of the week that it actually happened, that is, Maundy Thursday, right before Easter. Maundy is a term that means *a mandate*, and refers to the Lord's act of washing His disciples' feet at that time, which, He did as an example, saying we should also do the same for one another (*John 13:12-17*). So some Christians include a ceremony of foot washing on that evening, though in the New Church, we tend to focus on the spiritual cleansing it represents, and we take the Lord's example – there and

elsewhere – to mean that we also must love and care for our neighbors (AE 254:2).

In any case this was the night of the Lord's Last Supper, and it is about the most appropriate time we could imagine for celebrating the sacrament, the whole purpose of which is to help us focus on redemptive power of the Lord when we receive His love and wisdom into our lives. As He said at the time, "This (bread) is My body, which is given for you; **do this in remembrance of Me**" (*Luke 22:19*).

But what if we don't feel worthy to do it, or just don't "get it" or don't feel quite ready? We all have our "what ifs" that discourage us from participating, but the bottom line is this question: do we want what the Lord is offering us, or not? The only real disqualifier for the holy supper is an attitude of disrespect for it. In reality *no one* is worthy of it on the basis of merit! It's just a way of connecting with the Lord and asking Him for the spiritual nourishment and support it represents. Remember, He knew that Judas would betray Him (no doubt, from pride or misunderstanding), and yet even Judas was included in that sacrament.

continued...

The Country Courier

THE SOWER'S CHAPEL

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So let's not be shy about it, and if necessary, let's consider carving out some time for it, even if it is on a "regular" weekday night. What better way could there be to prepare our minds for the celebration of Easter?

Easter Sunday, April 5th – Don't forget, this will be a family service to celebrate the most important event in human history, the Lord's glorification and resurrection. Non-perishable and floral offerings will be welcome at the chancel, most likely during the second hymn, to commemorate the new life made possible by **His** life in the world. More details about this service will appear in the *Courier* for April.

And finally, the OLYMPICS! You may not have watched a lot of the recent Olympic games in Italy, but you have to admit, it is astounding what those athletes can do with their bodies: twists and turns, death-defying ski jumps, perfectly choreographed ice dances, and speed-skating or luge medals won over long distances by mere *hundredths* of a *second*. It was nothing short of amazing. How is all of this accomplished? – Of course, raw talent is part of it, and the competitor's attitude is also key, but by far and away, the biggest factor is practice. Practice, practice, and more practice! What can we learn from this about the improvement of our spiritual lives?

–Mike Gladish (mgladish@gmail.com)

Society Annual Meeting Saturday, April 18, 2026 @ 10 AM

The annual Meeting of Members of the Freeport Society of the General Church is scheduled for Saturday, April 18 at 10 a.m. at the church.

This is an essential annual gathering in which we elect members of the Board, review our budget, and discuss the state of the congregation and what we might focus on moving forward.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The nominating committee has put forth the following slate of society members to fill open positions on the 2026-2027 Board of Trustees:

- Bill Kronen, Sr for Treasurer
- Ian Heilman for Secretary
- Al Lindsay to begin his second 3-year term
- Trish Lindsay to begin her second 3-year term

Any member wishing to serve or nominate someone for board membership should contact Glenn Heilman, Chair of the Nominating Committee, a minimum of seven days prior to the Annual Meeting on April 18, 2026. Any nominations made by someone on behalf of another individual must be made with knowledge and permission of the nominee. Nominations from the floor are not permitted.

Respectfully submitted

Glenn Heilman, Chair, Carol Kronen, & Sally Lindsay

MANY THANKS

Thank you to Zarah Blair for allowing the donations given to The Sower's Chapel in memory of Ken Blair *to be used to offset the cost of new curtains. The new curtains were installed this week!* The new curtains actually are replacing the drapes that were contributed to the Chapel in 1986 by none other than Ken and Zarah Blair! Our committee and those who approved the selection we made are doubly grateful for the Blairs' steady support of all the uses and activities of The Sower's Chapel over the years.

With sincere appreciation,

*The Curtain Committee: Trish Lindsay, Mary Lindsay,
Joy Lindsay and Zarah Blair*

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

MIKE BROWN, USHERS COORDINATOR

Mike has graciously accepted the task of organizing the ushers and their schedule. Thank you, Mike! Please contact him @ 724-272-7155 if you are willing to join the rotation of ushers and help with this important weekly function.

LIFE OF THE LORD BIBLE STUDY

The Kids' Life of the Lord Bible Study will meet on **March 12th 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)

CALLING ALL NURSERY ATTENDENTS!



What a lovely use! We finally have a toddler who loves the nursery more than the sermon. Please consider this wonderful use. Anna has so much to show you, and already knows her way around upstairs. It could not be easier.

Yes, clearances are needed for volunteers over 16. Many of us already have them. Those who don't, call me – Miriam at 724-584-1562 – and I will come to you and get you all cleared up!

The more of us willing to fill this need, the fewer the times we'll each miss a sermon. Please call me and tell me you can help!
– Miriam 724-584-1562



MARCH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Sun, Mar 1: Rev. Mike Gladish
- Tue, Mar 3: 1 PM - Bible Study @ Zarah Blair's
- Sun, Mar 8: Rev. Nathan Cole
- Tue, Mar 10: 1 PM - Bible Study @ Zarah Blair's
7 PM - Board of Trustees
- Thur, Mar 12: 4 PM - Kid's Bible Study @ Trish Lindsay's
- Sun, Mar 15: Rev. Dan Calvo
- Tue, Mar 17: 1 PM - Bible Study @ Zarah Blair's
- Sun, Mar 22: Rev. Lou Synnestvedt
- Tue, Feb 24: 1 PM - Bible Study @ Zarah Blair's
- Sun, Mar 29: Ian Heilman, Lay Leader (Palm Sunday)
- Tue, Mar 31: 1 PM - Bible Study @ Zarah Blair's



WORSHIP SERVICE TIME CHANGE

At the Committee of the Whole meeting held February 28th, it was decided to change the time of our weekly worship service to 10:30 am beginning April 12th (the Sunday *after* Easter Sunday).

SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2026 SUPPORT WORSHIP IN ASIA

Through Translation of the Writings

The General Church has members and 4 ministers in South Korea and Japan,

Forty years ago, only one book of the Heavenly Doctrines was available in Korean, "Heaven and Hell." That translation passed through four languages (Latin > English >- Japanese >- Korean), which led to significant inaccuracies by the time it reached Korean readers.

Supporting this project now helps ensure the writings are accurate and accessible for generations to come. This careful, scholarly work requires time, expertise, and sustained financial support.



Give online or by check. Please note *Asia Appeal 2026* on check.

Mail to:

General Church

PO Box 708 • Bryn Athyn PA 19009



Keep reading. There is Summer Camp & Retreat info on the next page...



SPRING & SUMMER CAMPS



CAMP TIONESTA

April 10-12 for grades 3-6, April 17-19 for grades 7-10.

Hey kids, come out to the great outdoors this year for our annual trip to the lodge in Tionesta! Enjoy a weekend with old friends and make some new ones playing games, hiking with a cookout, and plain old fun.

Chaperones are needed to help with transportation.

Contact Rob Alden to register at: rmalden1461@icloud.com, 724-647-8809

MIDWEST REGIONAL YOUTH RETREAT

This year's retreat is set for April 30 - May 3, 2026. The brochure and registration forms are attached to the email this Courier came in. There will be a handful of brochures already printed at the church.

ANC SUMMER CAMP 2026

July 6-11, Bryn Athyn, PA

Registration is open for all current 8th & 9th graders.

Go to: www.ancss.org/summerncamp or follow the QR code:



FROM NewChurch.org: CAMPS & RETREATS

LAUREL FAMILY CAMP is a summer church camp with activities, worship, and instruction based on the Lord's Word and the Writings of [Emanuel Swedenborg](http://EmanuelSwedenborg.org). The focus of this camp is to draw people together and build a true sense of spiritual community. Several sessions (one week each) are held in Laurel Hill State Park, Pennsylvania, in July and August of each year. Visit www.laurelcamp.org for more information and registration forms.

JACOB'S CREEK FAMILY RETREAT is a summer church retreat held in the mountains of Western Pennsylvania. Besides daily worship, the retreat includes instruction and activities revolving around the Lord's Word and the Heavenly Doctrine as revealed through Emanuel Swedenborg. The focus of this retreat is to assist participants in building a strong foundation of doctrinal understanding for spiritual growth. Visit jacobscreekfamilyretreat.org for more information.

MAPLE LEAF ACADEMY is a teen church camp in Palgrave, Ontario in Canada. The campers are mentored towards spiritual growth in an environment filled with music, worship, prayer, and wholesome fun. There's plenty of social interaction ranging from small group exercises to communal activities. Visit their website at www.maplecamp.com or contact gcc.mapleleafcamp@gmail.com to learn more.

TOOLS 4 LIFE is a career and life skills camp held in Bryn Athyn PA designed to help teenagers who have completed grades 10 and 11 develop the tools and confidence needed to make choices about their path after high school. The camp offers 6 days of activities and workshops under the mentorship of skilled counselors. Visit Tools for Life Summer Camp or email tools4life@brynathyn.edu to learn more.

Check out NewChurch.org for more camp and retreat opportunities.