



# The Country Courier

News from The Sower's Chapel

July & August 2026

## FROM OUR REGIONAL PASTOR

### FREEDOM, THE STATE OF THE WORLD, AND THE 250<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES

In the book, *The Last Judgment and Babylon Destroyed*, published by Swedenborg in the year 1758, we read,

*“The state of the world hereafter will be altogether similar to what it has been thus far, for the great change which has taken place in the spiritual world [since the Last Judgment in 1757] does not induce any change in the natural world as to the external form. So after this there will be civil affairs as before, there will be peace, treaties and wars as before [and so on].... But as for the state of the church, this is what will be dissimilar going forward [because] from now on the people of the church will be in a more free state of thinking on matters of faith...because spiritual freedom has been restored” (LJ 73).*

On one hand, this is GREAT news for the whole world, in that people are freer than ever before to question dogmatic, authoritarian ideas and enjoy a more truly rational, spiritual faith.

On the other hand, as I mentioned last month, freedom cuts both ways. Because of the equilibrium that has now been restored between heaven and hell in the world of spirits (see HH 589 ff) people are just as free to choose evil as good, and falsity as truth. So the *tension* between these forces continues, and the battle for goodness and truth persists – both in ourselves and in the world around us.

Thus, it should be no surprise that although the American Declaration of Independence and the drafting of our Constitution were tremendous positive expressions of our new freedoms, it is important to remember that these very documents sparked what was really a civil war in the late 1700's, and set the stage for the truly awful civil war in the mid-1800's. Even today, we continue to experience an often bitter struggle between so-called

liberals and conservatives, we continue to battle crime in our cities, and we continue to be engaged in international conflicts. And while it is true that many have discovered new faith in God and a spirit of genuine charity, many others continue to be bogged down in horrible disorders.

#### WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THIS?

Well, not only has the Last Judgment taken place in the spiritual world, but a new revelation has been given to us in this world, and this revelation explains in great detail what is right and wrong in human affairs – and why. Not only can we share this information with the folks around us, but we can study to see how it applies in our own civil lives. It can even help us determine how to vote in elections, and what to tell our representatives in local, state and federal offices once they are elected.

For example, there are many teachings in the Heavenly Doctrine about the importance of integrity in leadership. \* It's not enough that a candidate have useful ideas, he (or she) must also have a life of personal integrity and humility, without conflicts of interest, lest he be subject to corruption in the execution of his duties.

When we know these things, we have the honor and the responsibility to act on them, letting our light shine so that people can see what is good and give glory to our Father in heaven (*Matthew 5:16*). If we do this, little by little, the arc of human history can and will move more and more toward true heavenly freedom, that is, the freedom to love and do what is right rather than the freedom (which is really slavery) to live under the influence of the hells.

Best wishes for a thoughtful, reflective, relaxing and rejuvenating summer.

–Mike Gladish ([mgladish@gmail.com](mailto:mgladish@gmail.com))

\* I wrote about this at length in an article published in *New Church Life* in October, 2020.

## TO THE SOWER'S CHAPEL,

I have decided to retire from providing stays and meals for visiting ministers. I've been doing this now for over 3 years, since Garry retired. It has been my pleasure to host the Reverends Nathan Cole and his boys, Mike Gladish, Nathan Gladish, Lou Synnestvedt, Michael Cowley, Elmo Action, Jon Lee, George McCurdy, Bishop Peter Buss, George McCurdy, Eric Carswell, Howard Thompson, Alan Cowley, Olaf Hauptmann, and their wives/fiancées on occasion. (My apologies if I overlooked anyone.)

What with my approaching 87 years, Mike Gladish's suggestion that the ministers get to know a broader spectrum of our membership, and Mike Brown's preparation of the manse for this purpose, I have decided to retire "Dan's Motel."

I usually take the ministers out for an evening meal on Saturday and prepare breakfast for them on Sunday mornings. Usually they are interested in watching a film Saturday night, for entertainment. I have limited the subject of theology during their stay, feeling they get this naturally from the service and congregation.

I have benefited from getting to know a pretty large contingent of our clergy in the process. I feel useful and grateful in being able to contribute in this way.

*Sincerely, Dan Heilman*

## FROM THE SOWER'S CHAPEL...

It is with deep gratitude that we extend a heartfelt *Thank you* to Dan Heilman for his gracious support these last three years. He has unselfishly opened his home to a parade of visiting ministers and the occasional Bishop, all while feeding and entertaining them week after week. Dan has allowed ministers to stay in his home *even when he was out of town*. Truly above and beyond. Truly appreciated.

Thank you, Dan, for stepping forward and supporting our journey forward in such a magnanimous way. You've been a cornerstone these last 3 years.

## KIDS' BIBLE STUDY

The Kids' Life of the Lord Bible Study will take a break for the summer and resume in September, meeting on the second Thursday of the Month at 4:00 PM at my house. Have a great summer! Please call if you have any questions. Trish Lindsay (724-584-6515)

## KNOB OUTDOOR SERVICES

Early in June we had our first outdoor Knob Sunday service, with Mike Gladish leading. It was a beautiful day and a great success!

The Knob location is simply majestic, and through the summer – weather permitting – we'll continue to have visiting ministers help lead us in worship there. The Knob service on June 28 is being led by Lou Synnestvedt, on July 19 by Dan Calvo, and on August 23 by Eric Carswell.

It would help out our older ushers if young folks would be willing to help those Sunday mornings, around 10am or so, with setup up – especially the directional road signs on Iron Bridge Road and the folding chairs on the Knob.

## THANK YOU!

On June 1, I had successful surgery for a full hip replacement. And I \*really\* appreciate the help and support I've received from a \*dozen\* church folks, members and friends, here in Sarver. I could not have done it alone, that's for sure!

*—Chris Bown*



## JULY & AUGUST CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Sun, July 5: Rev. Mike Gladish
- Sun., July 12 Rev. Nathan Cole
- Sun, July 19: Rev. Dan Calvo (Knob Service)
- Sun, July 26: Rev. Lou Synnestvedt
- Sun, Aug 2: Rev. Mike Gladish
- Sun, Aug 9: Rev. Nathan Cole
- Sun, Aug 16: Rev. Dan Calvo
- Sun, Aug 12: Rev Eric Carswell (Knob Service)
- Sun, Aug 30: Rev. Lou Synnestvedt

*Bible Study on hiatus until further notice.*

*Board of Trustees will meet next in September*





# REMAINING SUMMER CAMPS



## JACOB'S CREEK FAMILY RETREAT (JULY 23 - 26)

Jacob's Creek Family Retreat takes place at the Laurelville Retreat Center in the beautiful Laurel Highlands, found in western Pennsylvania. Under the auspices of the General Church of the New Jerusalem, this retreat has as its mission to serve campers of all ages with good spiritual food, warm friendships, and a community of faith in the light of the threefold Word. Visit [jacobscreekfamilyretreat.org](http://jacobscreekfamilyretreat.org) for more information, including registration

**LAUREL FAMILY CAMP 2026 (AUGUST 2-8; LAUREL HILL STATE PARK)** Kids (0 - 12) FREE; Teens \$50; Adults \$300

Laurel is a week of shared meals, worship, music, campfires, games, porch conversations, hikes, small groups, late-night laughter, and the kind of community life that stays with people long after the week is over.

If Laurel has meant something to you over the years, we hope you'll help spread the word and invite friends or family who may now be able to come because of these new tuition changes.

Registration is now open at [www.Laurelcamp.org](http://www.Laurelcamp.org)

