

# New Church Canadian

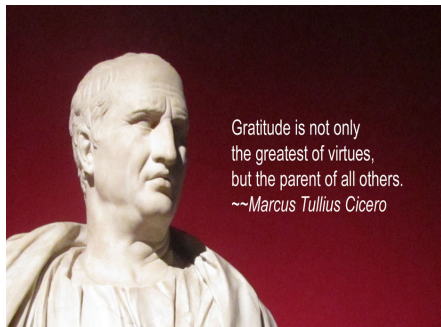
A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of General Church in Canada

Issue 224

**"OH, GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD,  
FOR HE IS GOOD, AND HIS MERCY IS FOREVER."**

**(Psalm 106:1-3)**

**By Rev. Michael Cowley**



Gratitude is not only  
the greatest of virtues,  
but the parent of all others.  
~~Marcus Tullius Cicero

**"The Roman philosopher Cicero once said,  
'Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues,  
it is the parent of all the others.'"**

The quote above about Cicero is found in Ray and Star Silverman's book, *Rise Above It*, in the section related to the commandment to Honour Your Mother and Father. It's a wonderful book filled with spiritual exercises, with this chapter focusing on ways to be thankful for parents and the 'community of saints' who helped raise you.

And of course the "Blessing" at the top is one good way to honour the Lord, our Heavenly Father, through thanksgiving. It's something we may say at the beginning of a meal when we "say grace" and honour the one who gives us everything.

Do you count your blessings on a regular basis? Do you keep a gratitude journal? Do you have some ritual or regular habit that keeps you in an 'attitude of gratitude'? The "Beautitudes", which are the opening verses to the Lord's 'Sermon on the Mount' (Mt 5,6,7) might provide a good outline for "counting your blessings" as they are the very words of blessing and gratitude from the Lord's own mouth.

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Spiritually they represent 9 or 10 different pegs or rungs in a gratitude ladder to heaven. We all start life naked, vulnerable and helpless. We are spiritually poor, mourning, meek, hungry and thirsty. We MUST depend on our Father and Mother to gift us with EVERYTHING necessary for survival. Starting on the natural level, and moving on to the social, moral and spiritual degrees of life, we survive and flourish only as these needs are met by others.

There are so many ways we can easily list off our gratitude for being enriched by a living ‘community of saints’ who have given us the ability to be sitting, right now, reading this newsletter.

The church is said to be our spiritual mother, that is, the community which nurtures us in our spiritual growth and development when young, and the community we are privileged to participate in so we can support and love others.

We are taken care of when spiritually poor, miserable, humble, hungry and thirsty, and then later we can take care of others in such states. But we never graduate out of these states.

Paradoxically we MUST REMAIN in each of these states to truly be grateful and honour the Lord with thanksgiving.



A hallmark of genuine love to the Lord, angelic celestial love, is that we know, deep down and with every fibre of our being, that the Lord alone is Life. Only He is good and nothing of goodness is sourced from our own selves. At the same time making that acknowledgement we can most fully FEEL that we can be a good influence in the world. We can serve others and bless them from “our” storehouse of goodness. “Blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Heaven can only be given us in in the measure that we are in touch with our own spiritual poverty and neediness. The same goes for the other first 4 “blessings” addressed to needy states. We can only receive comfort, be uplifted, and spiritually filled and quenched through acknowledgement of our miserable, humble and deprived states. Gratitude is heightened when we know the Lord will never leave us in those conditions.

The last 4 or 5 blessings which we can put on a gratitude list have to do with being merciful, pure of heart, peace makers and perhaps hardest of all, persecuted and attacked.

This is not to say we should look for ways to be attacked or persecuted, but to know that as we tread the “straight and narrow” way to heaven there is no way to avoid the hard struggles of temptations.

Be grateful every time the Lord can give you to return harsh words gentle ones, to “turn the other cheek” in the face of false accusations and spiteful slander.

**BLESS THE LORD, OH MY SOUL,  
AND FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS.**



# "SING TO THE LORD"

A Family Talk

By Rev. Lorentz R. Soneson

*O sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth.  
(Psalm 96:1)*



How can we say "thank you" to the Lord, who makes everything and gives us everything? One way is to sing aloud our thanks with love and energy. We say what we think, but singing is often the best way to express what we feel. When our hearts are full of joy and thanksgiving, it is natural to break into song to show others how we feel and share our happiness with them. In fact, we are told in the Word that we should sing to the Lord and make a joyful noise. One of the Psalms says, "**Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms**" (Psalm 95:2). This is something we can do at almost any time. When we are happy, we can whistle or hum or sing, and say grateful thanks to the Lord in our hearts for all that He has given us.

Most of the Psalms (which are songs) were written by David. The Book of Psalms in the Word was like a hymnal for the Children of Israel. They loved to sing, especially in worship, and David was called "the sweetest Psalmist of Israel." But when he died, the last thing David said was that he did not really write the Psalms. They were words from the Lord. David said, "**The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue**" (II Samuel 23:2).

One of the songs taught to David by the Lord was a song for the sabbath. It begins, "**It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High**" (Psalm 92:1). Another song, Psalm 105, says, "**O give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples. Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him...**" (Psalm 105:1-2). These beautiful words were a part of the Israelites' temple worship. At one time four thousand Levites took part in the musical duty in the temple. The same God who put songs into the hearts of those ancient worshipers puts song into our hearts today, so when we sing, it makes us feel better. It brings pleasure to those who hear it, and it sends a message about how we feel.



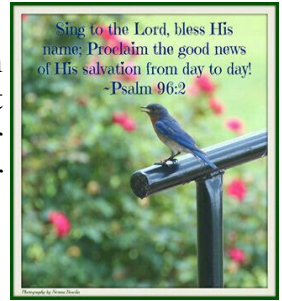
In the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church we are taught that the people in heaven also love to sing. After all, heaven is a place where people are happy and thankful to the Lord for just being there. So angels often raise their voices in song. We are told that in the other life, "**they also have songs, and sing from them precisely as in the world. The spiritual angels are exceedingly fond of songs**" (Spiritual Experiences 5603). There are special choirs that can be heard every day in heaven, and people open their doors and windows to let the sound come in.

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So whenever you sing hymns to the Lord, keep in mind all the things that He has given you. All that He asks in return is for us to give our thanks in prayer and in song. Let the Lord hear that you really are grateful by singing loudly and cheerfully from your heart. And think of all the songs you will be singing in heaven to eternity with other angels who love the Lord!

"Sing to the Lord, bless His name."



## "GIVING THANKS TO THE LORD"

DOCTRINE FOR THE YOUNG from NewChurchVinyard.org

It is good to give thanks to the Lord,  
And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High.  
(Psalm 92:1-2)

One way we can express our gratitude and thanks to the Lord for all the wonderful things He has given us is by singing "praises" to Him. For singing is the way our hearts can most fully express themselves. Songs are a very powerful way to tell others of our feelings for them. This is why so many of the Psalms—which we are told in the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church "*are nothing but songs*" (Apocalypse Revealed 279)—are used to express praise and thanksgiving to the Lord.

In heaven, we are told, every day starts out with singing:

*Every morning, songs of the utmost sweetness [are] sung by virgins and young girls...and the whole city resounds with them. Each morning, some special affection... is expressed in sound... [and] is perceived in the song as though [the affection] itself were the song. It flows into the souls of the listeners, stirring them into correspondence with itself Such is heavenly song (Conjugal Love 17:2).*

If you were in heaven today, you might have awakened to singing that expressed thanksgiving to the Lord for all the gifts of creation. The affection sung might be gratitude that the Lord has foreseen our needs and provided for them, and gratefulness for the rich variety of gifts for our bodies, our minds, and our eternal spirits with which we have been blessed.

The angels use songs in their celebrations for they know that not only the way we think, but also, more importantly, the way we feel can best be shown in music. For, we are told in the Heavenly Doctrines for the New Church that:



*gladness of heart is especially expressed by a song, because in a song gladness breaks forth as it were of itself into sound.... From this it is that the glorification [praise] of the Lord among the ancients ...were performed by means of songs, psalms, and musical instruments of various kinds; for the ancients ...had a joy [in praising the Lord] that surpassed all other joys (Arcana Coelestia 8261).*

When we know these things—when we know that music and song are ways to express our love and appreciation to the Lord for all His gifts—then we can wake up like the angels in heaven, knowing with full hearts that

"it is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High."



## Blessings for the Harvest

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

The eyes of all look expectantly to You,  
And You give them their food in due season.  
You open Your hand  
And satisfy the desire of every living thing.  
My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord.  
Amen. (Psalm 145:15-16,21)

*This is the day which the Lord has made;  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.  
Amen. (See Psalm 118:24)*

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good;  
Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!  
Amen. (Psalm 34:8)

*The Lord is good to me,  
and so I thank the Lord  
for giving me the things I need:  
the sun and the rain and the apple seed.  
The Lord is good to me. Amen.*

# NEWS FROM THE REGIONAL PASTOR

by Rev. James Cooper

Welcome to Candidate for the ministry Thomas Jackson who is currently serving his practicum at Carmel Church in Kitchener. In addition to his work in Kitchener, he will be travelling to Olivet Church and to Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie so that he can experience the all the wonders of working in Canada.

## THANKSGIVING

Karen and I were out for dinner in some little bistro on a busy street in Toronto recently. Looking at all the different people going about their business on the street outside, or enjoying a meal with friends and family inside got us thinking about other places we've visited or lived and by comparison how thankful we are to be living in Canada. We know that no place on earth will ever be 'perfect' but I think that it's a good idea for us all to sometimes look around and appreciate the things that are going well and be thankful for them. There's plenty of time to notice the potholes and other irritations so that we can work on them. But we have wisely set aside this one day a year to change our focus, see the good people around us, and thank the Lord for His many blessings.



## SOME CALENDAR ITEMS

October is a busy month. The annual celebration of the granting of the **Charter** which created the Academy of the New Church will be on October 11<sup>th</sup> in Bryn Athyn, Pa.

**Canadian Thanksgiving** is on October 14<sup>th</sup>.

Young people from Canada will be attending the **Young People's Weekend** in Mitchellville, Maryland October 18<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup>.

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## SCHEDULED SERVICES

### **Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie**

September: 29: Rev. Michael Cowley  
October 13: Candidate Thomas Jackson  
October 27: Rev. Michael Cowley  
November 3: Rev. Michael Cowley  
November 17: Rev. Michael Cowley

### **Vancouver**

October 20: Rev. Lou Synnestvedt

### **Ottawa**

October 6: Rev. Michael Cowley



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## THE FRUITS OF CREATION

Author Unknown

The created universe is wonderful gift from the Lord to each one of us. Nature, from the littlest things to the greatest, is a form of His Infinite giving. The world is like one grand harvest, to which we are invited, so that we may enjoy the fruits of it. For our bodies, for our minds, and for our eternal spirits, the Lord has fashioned a world of order and beauty in which every fruit is a blessing to us, formed with seed within itself so that it shall be the means to lead to further blessings. Creation is like a giant *"fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself"* (Genesis 1:11).



For our bodies the gifts of the world are unlimited. Our surroundings are a rich storehouse filled to overflowing with gifts from the Lord, for which to be thankful. Think a minute about the vegetable kingdom. The grass carpets lawns and fields; it holds the soil in place, provides pastures for horses, cows, and sheep, and looks so beautiful. At harvest time, the golden grain bends under the weight of its fruit. Some plants dig into the soil for food and moisture and develop roots which we eat such as beets, carrots and potatoes. Other plants reach up for air and sunlight, growing wholesome leaves such as lettuce, or stalks like corn and sugar cane.

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Other plants reach out to us in beauty like daffodils and violets, roses and gardenias — the lilies of the field which surpass all man-made splendor and glory. Flowers give our minds a fragrant glimpse of heaven. Then there are bushes full of berries, and vines bent low with purple grapes. And finally, at the top of the plant kingdom, we have trees, which have so many uses. Their thick foliage gives us shade. We use their wood for building and burning to keep us warm. We use their bark for cork and spices, their sap for sugar. And their fruit — olives and figs, dates and pomegranates, apples, peaches, and pears — are all designed to satisfy our sight, smell, and taste and to provide us with food, energy and life.



What's more, the Lord's way of doing things is evident in the vegetable kingdom. For He wills to give to us ever more abundantly. The Lord endowed plants with some of His own qualities, so that we may see Him in His creation. There is no end to the giving of the Lord. Consequently, each plant yields fruit whose seed is in itself. For the very fruit we eat contains many, many seeds for future plants and fruit. In this way the Lord has endowed each plant with His own qualities of infinite giving — with seeds and fruit and new seeds and fruit stretching into infinity.

But the Lord desires to give things not only to our bodies, but to our minds and spirits as well. For this reason He has ordained that we can learn about the plants we eat. We can, as it were, chew over in our minds what we learn and discover the order and truth of all created things. Our minds can delve into nature and come to understand the order of growth and many other wonderful knowledges about the plant kingdom. These knowledges are like soil in which eternal truths can germinate and grow in our minds. We can come to understand how seeds develop, step by step, to become full-grown plants, producing roots, stems, branches, leaves, blossoms, and finally, the fruit in which new seed lies hidden. We can learn how, in marvelous ways, plants use their food and sunlight and transform the simple chemicals of the earth into complex leaves, and stalks and fruits. Such knowledges can prepare us to understand order itself, the Lord's order in creation, and consequently, the Lord Himself.



When we come to see the Lord in His creation, then our minds can be filled with appreciation and gratitude for all the things He does for us everyday. The fruit of genuine thankfulness can ripen in us, to nourish and delight our souls. And this fruit has seeds which lead to eternal growth. For when we think of the Lord in this way, when our hearts are filled with grateful thanks, He can be present with us as the Sun of Heaven, causing spiritual growth that can go on to all eternity. The Lord can work the miracle of creation in us, saying,

**"Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth" (Genesis 1:11).  
And it can be so!**





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## General Church in Canada Worship Services

**Carmel New Church**  
Kitchener, ON



11:00am  
In Person  
and  
Online

**Dawson Creek New Church**  
Dawson Creek, BC



**Olivet New Church**  
Etobicoke, ON

10:30am  
In Person and Online




**Editorial Deadline for the**  
NOVEMBER—DECEMBER ISSUE is OCTOBER 31, 2024  
*We always welcome your comments, letters and articles!*  
Please send submissions to Sandy Kuhl, Editor NCC  
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