

FISCAL YEAR 2019
GENERAL CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT

a **YEAR** *in*
REVIEW

Upon this rock I will build My church

— MATTHEW 16:18



The mission of the General Church is to help people live a heavenly life through the teachings of the Lord God Jesus Christ in His Second Coming.

Letter from the Bishop



I had the privilege of presenting a sermon on the subject of “Constants in a Changing World.” The story from the Word was the Lord’s parable of the house built upon a rock (Matthew 7:24-27). We read in the Heavenly Doctrines: “‘The house founded upon a rock’ means the church and the people of the church who have founded their doctrine and life upon the Divine truth, which is from the Lord, thus upon those things that are in the Word” (*Apocalypse Explained* 411).

Seen from the perspective of the central administration of the General Church, the year that is the subject of this report was one of transition—a new Episcopal team nominated and affirmed, countless conversations about where we are and where we are headed, a review of many of the forms that drive the central General Church engine, some significant retirements and pastoral moves.

Yet for many people in the congregations and schools that make up the General Church, life would have felt pretty normal. Worship services happened as they have for years. Christmas, Easter and New Church Day celebrations took place in familiar fashion. New babies were welcomed in with baptism services, and departed friends were honored with memorial services.

We know that there will always be this balance of constancy and change. As we look ahead into the next fiscal year we aim to implement some new forms (e.g. a Bishop’s Council), resurrect some traditional forms (e.g. General Church Retreat 2020), and initiate some plans around things like communications, and support for the church globally.

A prayer that I have for the General Church is that it continues to anchor its activities in the Word, and constantly recommits to turning to the Lord in all things. This is the “house founded upon the rock.” This is the core of what we are about, and the fundamental reason that people turn to the Church for support in their spiritual lives. This is what will help us weather any storms that arise and rejoice at any new opportunities to serve that come our way.

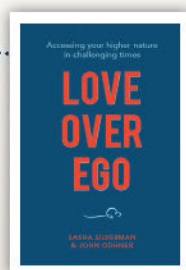
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter M Buss Jr".

Peter M. Buss Jr.
Executive Bishop
peter.buss.jr@newchurch.org

OUTREACH



Journey: At least **16 congregations** around the world participated in the 2018/2019 Journey program, *Love Over Ego*, with more than **570 books sold**, and more than **1530 views** on the *Love Over Ego* videos.



Grand Human Project: Outreach has been working with a social engagement platform to help reach the thousands of people interested in engaging in Swedenborgian community, many of whom have no New Church nearby. The new website will not only serve as a hub for spiritual seekers, but will equip people to form and support their own in-person communities, grounded in New Church principles. Our initial prototype for testing will roll out in Fall 2019.

The *Glencairn Foundation* awarded General Church Outreach a significant grant to support this effort.

New Church Audio: Now mobile friendly

Visiting Ministers program: included **175 visits in the USA** alone.

Connecting online with members and newcomers:

- ▶ **455,361 visits** to newchurch.org
- ▶ **1614 subscribers** for the Christmas Readings
- ▶ **1545 newcomers** subscribed to various Journey Programs via email
- ▶ **724 newcomers** contacted us via email for various discussions or questions
- ▶ **20,094 people** connected around the globe on the New Church Facebook page
- ▶ **3,477 people** currently subscribe to receive the Daily Inspiration email from Swedenborg's Writings
- ▶ **22 published episodes** of the "Spiritable" podcast launched and produced



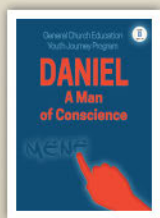
Science Curriculum Meetings: GCED hosted **25 science teachers** from seven New Church schools for an interactive and

productive workshop based on best practices in teaching science and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in June. The second day was focused on the newly updated K-8 science curriculum which incorporates NGSS. The opportunity to collaborate, communicate and collectively think about bringing the curriculum to life based on what they learned, in addition to bringing New Church thought into their lessons, was well-received by the teachers.



GCED's YouTube channel: has reached more than **1.8 million** views and more than **2,200 subscribers**.

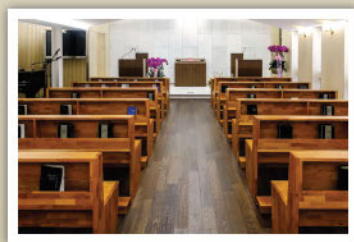
GCED republished: *The Lord Is Our Lawgiver*, which is part of the series of Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons which are used to teach the same religion curriculum taught in our elementary schools to children at home or in Sunday school. The republication has been significantly revised making it easier to use, with lessons all the same length and a broader range of updated activities for families and teachers to choose among.



Daniel: A Man of Conscience: GCED published a new Youth Program on the book of Daniel. These step by-step lesson plans include games, plays, songs, videos, pictures to color and lots of hands-on projects. Discussion guides help children discover what the New Church teaches about the meaning of the story of Daniel for our lives. The three books are aimed at ages 3-6, 7-10 and 11-14.

Society Milestones:

- ▶ Dedication of Community / Sunday School Center—
Boynton Beach (January 27)
- ▶ Dedication of Seoul New Church—
Korean Project (January 12)



Seoul, Korea



Regional Clergy Meetings:

Regional Clergy Meetings occur every three years, instead of having all clergy gather for plenary meetings in Bryn Athyn. Throughout the year, clergy gathered in Brazil, Canada, Sweden, Australia, Arizona, and Bryn Athyn. Two more sessions have happened in FY20, in Kempton and Ivory Coast, with one last set of meetings set to take place in South Africa in the near future. These smaller meetings do a great deal to bond clergy together as they seek to serve effectively.

The Healthy Church Match campaign reached its final year:

The program began in 2009 providing a dollar-for-dollar match to assist General Church congregations with local fund-raising initiatives. The General Church **matched \$10,035,131 of contributions** from more than **700 donors**.

Thank you: Oak Arbor Church, for hosting the Treasurers & Human Resources Meeting.

Donor Participation.....

Gifts directly support the programs and resources mentioned in this report. Thank you to all donors who support the work of the General Church.



Membership:

Membership July 1, 2018	5513
New members	41
Resignations	7
Deceased members	35
Membership June 30, 2019	5512

Current as of June 30, 2019. Totals are subject to change. A complete membership report can be found in the November/December 2019 edition of New Church Life.

Ordinations:

1ST DEGREE

- Rev. Patrick Mbale—South Africa
- Rev. Martin Cokou Ahotosse—Benin
- Rev. Kuroakegha Ebute-Mette—Nigeria
- Rev. Gabriel Amari Sie—Ivory Coast



2ND DEGREE

- Rev. Elmo Acton—United States
- Rev. Thomas Floyd—Sweden
- Rev. Etienne Mongue Beugre—Ivory Coast



3RD DEGREE

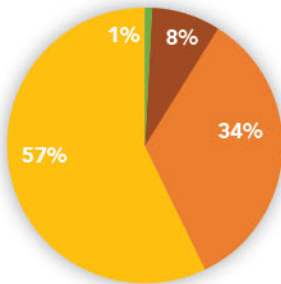
- Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs—Caryndale
- Rt. Rev. David H. Lindrooth—Bryn Athyn

Current List Board of Directors:

Kay Alden	Cheryl Cooper	Ethan King
Stephen Ball	Axel Coulibaly	Stephanie Klippenstein
Darren Bau-Madsen	Charles Ebert	Patrick Mayer
Allen Bedford	Gustav Fornander	Jennifer Pronesti
Beth Brock	Charlotte Gyllenhaal	David Radcliffe
Jake Brown	Darryl Hasen	James Uber
Amy Buick	Kirk Hasen	Ned Uber
Wade Buick	Brent Hyatt	Wayne Wadsworth
Ian Carswell	Rene Johnson	John Walko
Jesse Cole	Mary Jane Junge	

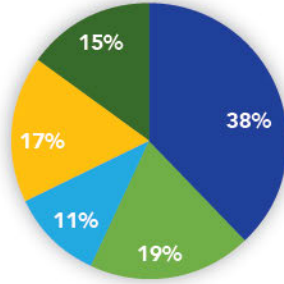
FINANCE

INCOME 6.9M



■ Sales & Other (1%) ■ Contributions (34%)
■ Transfers In (8%) ■ Investment Income (57%)

EXPENSES 4.9M



■ General Admin (38%) ■ Ministry (17%)
■ Congregations (19%) ■ Outreach (15%)
■ Education (11%)

With sincere gratitude for your support of the General Church mission, and an optimistic outlook for our future, we are pleased to provide the following highlights from our financial results for the year ending June 30, 2019 (unaudited):

- ▶ We closed FY19 with an operating surplus of just under \$2 million. Highlights in both revenue and expense categories include several large, nonrecurring planned gifts to the Annual Fund, and less expense in Education and Outreach as compared to FY18; offset by an increase of total compensation costs (inflation) and some expenses related to the transition in the Episcopal Office and legal costs associated with various employment and defense matters.
- ▶ Our current surplus, primarily driven by the impactful planned gifts, will be applied largely toward strategic projects to grow, additional investment income, and support of the pension plan.
- ▶ FY19 was the final year of the Healthy Church Match program, with only a handful of planned gifts remaining open for match when received after 6/30/19. In total, 12 participating congregations raised 93% of their project goals, generating over \$10m in new income for those societies (\$20m when combined with match).
- ▶ The General Church accomplished exciting work in FY19 including program content development, teacher training, publications, foreign language translation; as well as some less glamorous (but essential) work such as clergy support and professional development of employees. These efforts are funded from your gifts to the Annual Fund and to special earmarked uses, and from endowment income. None of these uses could be fulfilled without the generous support of our members and friends, past and present. Thank you!

Wendy Cooper, Contoller
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David Frazier, Executive Director
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