



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.

A message from the Bishop:

The Tabernacle was the center of worship for the children of Israel. It led them in the wilderness and contained the Ten Commandments. It was a fundamental connection between the people and their God.

A prominent feature of the Tabernacle, and the first thing seen upon entering the courtyard, was the altar of burnt offerings. About five feet square, it was where the people brought their offerings so that they could be raised up to the Lord. It was commanded that, "A perpetual fire shall burn on the altar; it shall never go out" (Leviticus 6:13).

This fire was to be forever burning for it was a symbol of "the Lord's love, that is, His mercy, which is constant and eternal" (AC 2177:3; 934:3). Always before the children of Israel, at the center of their lives, was the symbol of the Lord's love which was so great that it would be there for them eternally.

This same love is the center of our lives. The Lord's love is constant and burning for our salvation and happiness. There is nothing we can do that can ever make the Lord dislike us or turn away from us. Even in our deepest challenges and dysfunctions the Lord is there, gently caring for us, leading us away from our hells and toward the heaven of happiness that He has created for us.

As a reminder, you are all encouraged to give counsel to your pastor regarding any thoughts that should be considered in the selection of the next Executive Bishop. Your insights and perceptions are valuable and do influence the thinking of the ministers. The

selection process will occur at our Council of the Clergy meetings in the last week of June. The nominee will then meet with the General Church Board for consideration; after which we anticipate the nominee's name coming before the entire church to be affirmed.

Sincerely,

Rt. Rev. Brian W. Keith

brian.keith@newchurch.org



GENERAL CHURCH EDUCATION

FaithBuilder for Teens

GCED has developed a series of new easy-preparation video-based lessons for teens. FaithBuilder offers a total of 120 lessons for ages 12-16, suitable for Sunday schools, families and classrooms. Lessons include New Church background, warm-ups, video links, varied discussion questions and more. Lessons take 20-30 minutes. Years 1, 2, and 4 explore core New Church ideas such as the Lord, Divine providence, marriage and eternal life. Year 3 is an in-depth study of the Gospel of John. Festival lessons for Christmas, Easter, New Church Day and Swedenborg's birthday are included. Each lesson stands alone. All lessons are available for free download at www.newchurchvineyard.org.



Science Curriculum Meeting

A team of experienced teachers and administrators met for two days (January 11-12) in Bryn Athyn to continue working on the GC science curriculum. The team consisted of representatives from 5 society church schools plus the Academy Secondary Schools and Bryn Athyn College. These educators reviewed and updated the statement of purpose and broad goals with passages from the three-fold Word; discussed and learned more about the Next Generation Science Standards and the updated research on the teaching of science; and continued to analyze the current science curriculum with these standards and the goals of a New Church science curriculum in mind. Good progress was made, and the work will continue in meetings planned for the spring and summer.



Science curriculum attendees, left to right:
Judi Pafford, Beth Bochneak, and Sheila Daum

Sharing Stories and Spiritual Thoughts

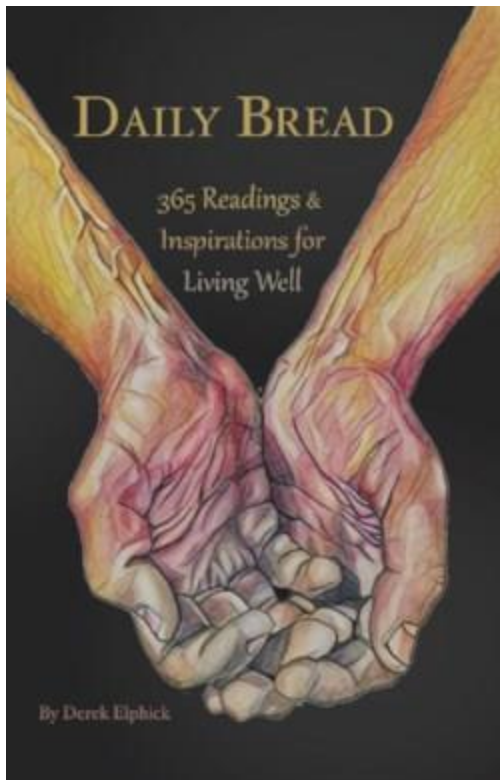
Stay connected with Journey Video by subscribing to the [New Church Journey YouTube channel](#) and liking the [New Church Journey Facebook](#) page. The YouTube channel has more than a dozen videos available covering topics such as forgiveness, grief, gratitude and more. Click on the video below which explores humor and faith.



***Daily Bread* by Derek Elphick**

General Church Outreach has published a new book entitled *Daily Bread: 365 Readings & Inspirations for Living Well* written and compiled by Derek Elphick, senior pastor at the Oak Arbor New Church in Michigan.

For each day of the calendar year, this book offers a brief reading from Scripture accompanied by commentary of how to bring these verses into our lives. Just one page to read for each day allows individuals a chance to practice integrating the Word into their lives however it best fits.



As Derek writes; “My prayer is that you will find something to help you experience the daily care, comfort, hope and insight that the Lord provides in His Word. Whether you are in between errands, on a lunch break, waiting at a doctor’s office, finishing your day or having a morning quiet time, I warmly invite you to engage the ideas here with an openness for how the Lord will lead you today.”

Available to purchase at
newchristianresources.org.

[Buy Now](#)

Meet a Minister | Rev. Elmo Acton

At the age of 41, I entered the Academy of the New Church Theological school. I have always had a love for the New Church. It wasn’t until after I married my wonderful wife, Abbie, that I started to feel strongly that I could help the church by becoming a minister.

Now, in 2018, I am an ordained minister working as the Assistant to the Pastor in Oak Arbor. Dropping the security of a good job and taking on the workload of a Masters in Divinity was extremely challenging, but the blessings along the way reminded our family we were heading in the right direction. Oak Arbor is a community filled with kind, hardworking, and welcoming people. We are blessed to be here.

I believe the Lord guides us all to better our natural and spiritual habits. I love people. It is through positive change that the Lord’s goodness spreads in each person, and from that, spreads to the world. There is no greater and more profound way to affect this change than from the teachings of the Heavenly Doctrines and the Sacred Scriptures.

Our greatest happiness comes from the Lord with us. May we cherish all of the blessings the Lord has given us.



From left to right: son Morel, the Rev. Elmo K. Acton, oldest daughter McKenna, little daughter Ellouise and his wife, Abbie.

New Church Spotlight | The General Church in Canada

Let me introduce you to the General Church in Canada, referred to as the GCIC. This organization coordinates the activities of the societies and groups throughout the Great White North. The three larger societies in Canada are the Olivet New Church (Toronto), the Carmel New Church (Kitchener, Ontario), and the Dawson Creek Society (British Columbia). The GCIC also visits Vancouver, Grande Prairie, Parry Sound, Kingston, Ottawa, Montreal and London. We also provide pastoral services and support to a small but enthusiastic New Church group in Havana, Cuba.

Our organization's passion is to do our own small part in helping to make sure that the Lord's Second Coming in the Heavenly Doctrines is available around the world. We have been active supporters of French, Korean and Spanish translations of the Heavenly

Doctrines. These languages represent one billion people who have never had the opportunity to find the Heavenly Doctrines in their native tongue!

GCIC is developing apps for the New Christian Bible Study, the Kempton Project, and New Search. The bottom line is that the GCIC would love to see the Heavenly Doctrines sweep across the world bringing the message of genuine Christianity to every ear that is willing to hear!

Feel free to reach out to me for more information,

Rev. Brad Heinrichs, Exec.Vice President , GCIC pastor@carmelnewchurch.org



Learn more about the [General Church in Canada](#).

Strategic Plan Highlight | Communication

The purpose of the communication strand is to develop a communications plan to promote the purposes and values of the GC and invite counsel. The goal is to create interactive forums between central administrative offices and the church as a whole, to provide greater information flow, increase opportunity for feedback, and offer appropriate inclusion in discourse on issues facing the church. Here are a few of the newest efforts in the past year:

- maintained publication of Annual Report ([Online version available](#))
- launched the e-newsletter in February of 2017 ([read past issues](#))

- introduced holiday e-cards

These items are in addition to existing publications/efforts such as:

- New Church Life publication ([also available online](#))
- GCED is producing content for [Facebook](#) and [Youtube](#).
- Journey (Outreach) is staying connect via [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)

Do you know anyone who would like to receive the e-newsletter? They can subscribe [here](#).

The 1890 Society

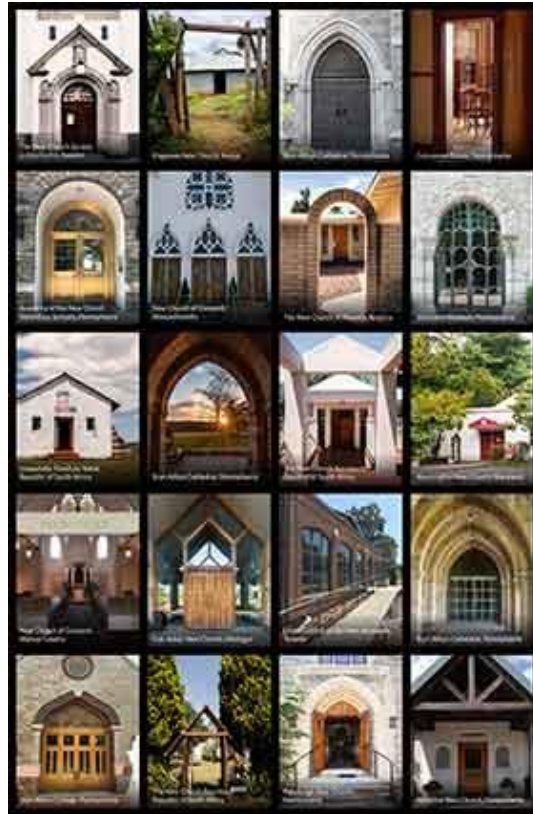
The 1890 Society reflects a tradition of individual support that dates back to the founding of the General Church when the first gifts were made to establish the church and its offerings.

The 1890 Society recognizes and honors the Church's most loyal contributors, those who give year after year. Membership is granted to donors who have made gifts, at any level, consecutively for three or more years. In order to continue membership in the society, donors renew their gifts to the Church each year.

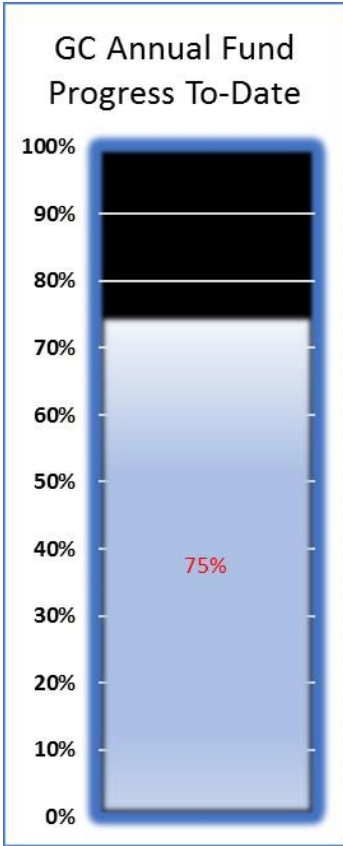
In fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017) we honored 497 donors in the 1890 Society. Over 200 of those donors have been giving to the General Church for 10 or more years.

Mid-year Fundraising Update

Thank you for supporting the General Church. Please click the image below to see the key for the doors from the fall appeal. The theme was "**Nunc Licet**": now it is permitted to enter into the mysteries of faith.



Give Today!



The General Church Office of Advancement is delighted to share a mid-year fundraising report. The chart to the left illustrates our fiscal year **target of \$588,800** for the Annual Fund. As of December 31, 2017, we have reached just over **\$443,000--that's 75% of our goal**. We are about 10% ahead compared to last year's income.

Your gift to the General Church Annual Fund supports a variety of New Church programs and resources such as Sunday school lessons, Journey Programs (small groups), publications, congregational support and so much more!

We are grateful for the dedicated donors and their partnership that enables the General Church to continue to share the teachings of the New Church.

Receive a spiritual inspiration each day

"Let it be known that no one can be regenerated without temptation."

Arcana Coelestia 8403:2

Subscribe

We'd love to hear from YOU!

It's been one year since we launched the General Church e-newsletter. We'd love to know your thoughts and suggestions. Please let us know what you've liked, disliked and topics you would like us to include in future issues. You may contact Mark Wyncoll at mark.wyncoll@newchurch.org or Tara Fehon at tara.fehon@newchurch.org. Thank you for your support!

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Not near a New Church congregation?

[Join a live-streamed worship service.](#)

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If our newsletter is worthy, please share with others.

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Thank you!

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