



E-News



The General Conference of the New Church

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Rise and Shine Radio Show

Revd Jack Dunion broadcasts his own online radio show every Sunday at 9am on Lomond Radio (formerly River Radio): <https://lomondradio.co.uk/shows/rise-and-shine>

The link below allows you to catchup Rise & Shine programs: <https://www.mixcloud.com/RevJack/>



What's Santa doing in our Church?

Revd Brian Talbot writes:

At the end of our Toy Service at Kearsley we had a visit from the man in the red suit to give the Sunday School children a present. I suppose that lying behind the question was what does the commercial or secular have to do with the spiritual and the religious.

Part of the answer is to remember that Santa Claus is a contraction for Saint Nicholas, a fourth century Greek Orthodox bishop, who lived in modern-day

Turkey. When he was alive, his town of Myra was part of the Eastern Roman Empire, centuries before the Turks arrived.

Saint Nicholas came from a wealthy family. He is remembered for helping a poor, devout, Christian widower with three daughters. If they did not have a dowry, then they would be sold into slavery or prostitution. Nicholas placed a bag of gold through the window on the first night secretly for the eldest daughter's dowry, so that she could get married. He did the same on the second night for the middle daughter. He did the same thing for the youngest daughter, but was caught in the act. It's amazing how the tradition of the secret gift-giver remains with us.

We might have a great deal of difficulty with the story of Nicholas raising dead children, who had been pickled by a butcher, back to life. I would find it a lot easier to believe that he took some grain off a grain ship headed for the Emperor, and promised the captain that whatever he took, it would be replaced, and it was. He calmed a storm and saved the life of three sailors. There are other stories.

Saint Nicholas' feast day is 6th December. The significance of Santa's red outfit is more obvious if we look at Saint Nicholas or Sinterklaas celebrations in the Netherlands. (Remember the Dutch took their traditions to New Amsterdam, which was renamed New York.) We have Bishop Nicholas with his red mitre, red stole and crozier, admittedly dressed as a Western Christian bishop not an Eastern Orthodox bishop, but there you go.

His major bones were stolen by Italian soldiers and taken to Bari in Italy, and put in a cathedral dedicated to his name.

Bishop Nicholas belongs in a church. Saint Nicholas belongs in a church. Santa Claus not so much, unless we peel back the layers and realise that Santa Claus is Saint Nicholas. Without his reindeer, his elves, his homes at the North Pole or Lapland and his cola adverts, Christians all over the world still admire Saint Nicholas.

Brian Talbot

Good News to Start New Year

Revd Bruce Jarvis writes:

Amongst his many other duties, our redoubtable Spiritual Leader, the Revd Jack Dunion, prepares and presents an hour-long radio show called RISE AND SHINE. He was given the opportunity to run this “show” when Lomond Radio was being set up in June 2020 during the first Covid lockdown. With the exception of one week’s absence because of a technical hitch, Rise and Shine has appeared every week since on Sunday mornings at 9.00am. That’s no mean achievement alongside all the many other roles Jack performs locally at Paisley New Church and nationally within the General Conference. You can see the certificate in the accompanying picture.

It’s worth mentioning that the entire programme is prepared and recorded on equipment in Jack’s own home, and sent on to the radio station to go on air. The station has around 35 presenters, all of them volunteers, along with technical and admin. volunteers, and there are a number of categories for each annual presentation. Jack’s was a SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD.

All Jack’s friends will be delighted to hear this news, not least his audience, but also those from a New Church background whose hearts thrill when we hear beautiful teachings expressed in ways that can appeal to and touch those to whom it is so very fresh and new. We know how much our troubled world needs the new light revealed to our world in Emanuel Swedenborg’s Writings. Perhaps it is not the high and mighty, not the powerful, not the intelligentsia but ordinary folk with humble hearts and open minds, to whom the new light speaks, and whose hearts can be changed by the presentation of “good news from heaven.” That is the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. [Revelation 21.2] As it does with each one of us when we open our hearts and minds to the Lord’s Love and Light. May each one of us find the joy of the Lord’s incarnation affecting us this Christmas.

Congratulations again to our dear Leader, Jack. May the Lord’s strength continue to bless you, and enable you to do His work.

Bruce Jarvis



Jack Dunion also presents a series of podcasts for home worship.
Visit www.generalconference.org.uk or click the link below to listen -

<https://www.generalconference.org.uk/resources/home-worship/>

The Young People's Committee (YPC)

Jack Ramsay writes:

The Young Peoples Committee (YPC) is a new group comprised of Jack Ramsay (Chairperson), Libby Jones (Secretary), Sharmaine Fitzgerald (Treasurer), and Lucy Friend (Social Media and Communications). Our main aims are to be a voice from the youth to the rest of the church, to increase intergenerational links between our age group and others, and to help gain and retain more young people in the church.

We're hoping to achieve all of this, and more, through a range of events and communication with other groups within the church. It's still very early days, and we've only just finalised our roles and had our very first committee meeting but keep your eyes peeled for lots of exciting developments in the future.



If you need to get in contact with us for any reason, please don't hesitate to email at YPC@generalconference.org.uk and a happy new year!



Mrs Nellie Thomas

Mrs Nellie Thomas, formerly of our Blackburn and Accrington congregations, and the North Lancashire Area Council, passed away on Christmas Day at the age of 102!

Her funeral is on 15th January at 10.20 at Accrington Crematorium and will be conducted by Revd Mary Duckworth.

11.15 Service of thanksgiving and celebration of Mum's life at Accrington New Church

12.15/12.30 Buffet lunch locally.