



E-News



The General Conference of the New Church

About Us

To find out more about The General Conference of the New Church, including the locations of our Churches, visit our web site at:
www.generalconference.org.uk/

Send Us Your News

If you have any news that you would like to share in a future issue of E-News, please send it via email to:
paul.crone@generalconference.org.uk

Share E-News

Feel free to print and share this publication.

Sign up

Sign up for E-News and E-Read email notifications at:
www.generalconference.org.uk/signup/

Local News

View local Church newsletters at:
www.generalconference.org.uk/resources/newsletters/

Home Worship

To download the latest Home Worship material please visit:
www.generalconference.org.uk/resources/home-worship/

To subscribe via email, please sign up:
www.generalconference.org.uk/hwsignup

Donations

E-News and E-Read are provided completely free of charge.

If you would like to donate to support this ongoing resource, please do so here:

www.generalconference.org.uk/resources/donations

Rise and Shine Radio Show

Rev'd 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:
www.mixcloud.com/RevJack/



Second Statement about Same Sex Marriage

Following on from the previous statement from the ministry on the subject of same sex marriage, the Committee of Ministers has had a further period of facilitation on the subject. We have been exploring how our individual thoughts and feelings fit with our doctrinal concepts on this issue, and have been working together closely to ensure all voices are heard. While some of us have changed as a result of prayerful thought, the range of opinions continues to

be wide and varied, and we acknowledge that this is likely to be the same for the people of the church.

Having the time to work through our concerns with each other has deepened the bonds of love and respect, and we would like to offer around fifty words from each of the Ministers who attended the second facilitation summarising where that person stands at the moment. We are doing this to offer the church the range of diverse views we have in order to aid each individual to reach a reasoned view on the subject. We have agreed for a number of reasons that these paragraphs will be anonymous. These include the potential consequences of some readers following the train of thought of Ministers they are drawn to, when any of us may move significantly in either direction as a result of further facilitation, prayer and reflection.

We prayerfully offer up our thoughts to you, and ask you to spend time considering this subject, based on your own knowledge and experience, and your own understanding of our Church's teachings.

There is intention to have further exploration, initially within the Ministry, on this subject. We will communicate further when we have more news.

Whilst wishing to support the life journeys and the special relationships of those who identify as LGBT+, conscience prevents my conduct of same sex marriage ceremonies which I consider contrary to our church's teaching on marriage. To do so would I believe be hypocritical and dishonest.

I have appreciated the facilitation sessions because it has helped me understand where my responsibility lies.

Previously I could not have married homosexuals because I was concerned about how it might impact on their eternal happiness. I am not yet in a position to marry them myself, but now feel that they may become closer to God through marriage, rather than moving further away.

Reflecting on homosexual marriage, I'm torn between tradition and empathy. Biblical passages suggest it's unlawful, yet I acknowledge love and commitment. Wrestling with reconciling directives with evolving understanding, it's a personal journey of introspection and growth.

What is the Church's purpose? To lead people through the Word to the good of life, always with eternal life in mind. If true marriage love is God's precious gift to humanity, won't the hells seek to destroy it? With whom am I to cooperate - the Lord or the hells?

I have major concerns around redefining marriage within the church away from a Biblical and Writings base of this being one man and one woman, with the Writings assuring us a

true married state is found in the heavens as conjugal love. In all conscience I could not affirm a same sex relationship as marriage.

These days it has become increasingly acceptable to be promiscuous, temporarily cohabit, engage in wife-swapping, etc., and so dispense with the desire for chaste marriage altogether.

Especially in view of this, if approached by a same-sex couple seeking a chaste marriage blessed by God, I would be willing to conduct a marriage ceremony for them.

Clearly, our doctrines are not explicit on the subject, it would seem wrong then to impose our own view on others.

Where I stand on that spectrum has softened considerably over the years, based on experience and education.

I respect the right of others to be elsewhere on that spectrum.

I am ready to seek enlightenment from the Word and the Writings regarding the nature of gender, sexuality and marriage, and to share with and learn from colleagues and others to gain a broader understanding, in order to make a considered and wise decision regarding same sex marriage.

I hope that we could be more open to a diversity of people coming before the Lord to bless and cement their relationship. However, it means facing the challenges this brings, personally, and for the church. I need to examine prayerfully what the Writings provide concerning the principle of marriage.

The four days of facilitation have gently re-enforced my belief that charity or caring for other people is the only doctrine of the New Church, which does not affect “differences of opinion on the mysteries of faith”. Our journey together in love, respect, tolerance, honouring and valuing should continue.

Calling Busy People

The Trustees Write:

If you want to get something done, ask a busy person... so the saying goes ...

And it's probably not far from the truth; that means Members of Conference are likely to be thinking of busy people who might be willing to serve as a Trustee of the General Conference.

For all the light-hearted tone of the above introduction, it's actually a serious question. Our constitution provides for there to be a Chairperson and Vice-chair, along with six Trustees, who form Conference Council. The Council, of course, is assisted by non-voting officers: our Spiritual Leader, the Secretary of the Ministers' Committee, the Company Secretary, and the Company Accountant. The current President of New Church College attends by invitation, and other people attend from time to time.

Please will you give serious thought to whether you might be willing to serve the Conference as a Trustee? Or encourage potential candidates? For too many years our Conference Council has not had a full membership. At the moment, there are just four Trustees. One of these is likely to retire at the 2024 Annual Meeting. Another's term of office finishes this year, as does the Vicechair's. Fortunately, these two are likely to stand for re-election.

If you're willing but not quite sure, why not contact the Chairperson (Margaret Cowie) or the Company Secretary (Natalie Welch) and ask to come along to a Council meeting. Most of the meetings are held on Zoom, but there is a residential meeting at Purley Chase in May.

Alternatively, you might like to come along to a Meet the Trustees Zoom session at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 25th April to have a chat with some of us, and ask any questions you have in mind. Please contact Margaret Cowie (tel: 0141 328 0467, email: margaret.cowie@generalconference.org.uk), and she will send you a link.

Like all national bodies, there are duties that Trustees must carry out, but that is balanced by the other side of the work which is to care for our employed staff, and all our volunteers, all done with a sense that it is the Lord that we are serving. It is the good news of His Second Coming that we are endeavouring to place before people.

Yes, it's challenging, and requires dedication. But what better than to work with a group of people all of whom share that vision, and offer themselves to the Lord and His Church. Does it all sound rather serious? Well, we do take our work seriously. But there is plenty of fun and laughter, and we all greatly appreciate the friendship and fellowship we gain from working together for our beloved Church.

Please will you think seriously about this matter. The Lord is calling, the Church is calling. Will you see if you can help? Please!

In optimism from the current Trustees.

New Church Youth Association

Gwendolen Rowe invites you to ...

New Church Youth Association



AGM/Creative Afternoon

Saturday 15th June 2024

Keighley New Church

Braithwaite Road, Braithwaite Village, Keighley BD22 6PX

The afternoon will begin with the AGM. After this there will be activities for all ages based on the theme of, Daniel in the Lion's Den. We will be considering

Conference's theme of, Faithfulness and looking at how Daniel was faithful to the Lord. There will be a range of activities



for all ages to enjoy.

Everyone is welcome

There will be refreshments after the activity. Please let Gwendolen Rowe, NCYA Secretary, if you would like to attend.

Wellspring House

Melanie Bennett writes:



Contact us! New contact numbers



25 Radcliffe New Road, Radcliffe,
Manchester, M26 1LE



www.swedenborg-openlearning.org.uk



For any enquiries related to modules, studying with SOLCe, or anything pertaining to the educational side of things, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at 07508 267231. We're here to assist you every step of the way. Additionally, if you have general enquiries or questions about workshops or Wellspring House, please feel free to contact us on 07508 236617. You can call or text either number, and rest assured, we'll promptly get back to you.

BE PART OF THE FUTURE ...



23 - 26 July 24

**This year's AGM will be like no other!
You will have a chance to give us your vision
of the future for Conference.
Make sure you book your place, we want to
hear what you have to say!**

www.generalconference.org.uk/agm

This coming
Easter week,
we are releasing
a daily Easter
post, so look out
on Social Media
and our website!



Happy Easter

 General Conference of
the New Church
 @Purley_Chase
 purley.chase.centre
 Purley Chase Centre

www.generalconference.org.uk