

# The Gnu's Letter

November 13, 2022



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Good grief, it's snowing out there and the roofs I can see from here are all white. You know, snow has this effect on me of thinking it is time to prepare for hibernation. And speaking of thinking I haven't really started thinking about the upcoming Christmas shopping season, but it does pop into my consciousness every once in a while. There are Christmas carols at Starbucks, but since carols are getting earlier and earlier, they just seem to blend in with the oldies. Shopping in our family starts officially when the first person asks me if we have names for the gift drawing yet, so they won't miss all the deals that are starting as stores start out to attract the Black Friday bargain shoppers.

Meanwhile the Christmas religious season also starts to unfold and in quiet times we are reminded, or remind ourselves, what the celebration of Jesus' birth is all about. One thing is to remember that the birth of Jesus is not just a 2000 year old birthday, but that it happens all the time, all year long, but not usually in ways we recognize. I'm sure there will more to say about Christmas as it draws closer, but now think about your *today's* Christmas celebration ... a day to be thankful that Love and Wisdom stirs in us, coaxes us and coaches us each next step in our spiritual journey.

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## UPDATES TO ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Swedenborgian Road Angels** We have a little Swedenborgian Road Angel angles in the Cincinnati area as well as in Florida. Larry of Batavia is still cooped up in The Glen over in Withamsville rehabilitating from his fall last month, and recovering from a bout of Covid. Anyone who is in driving distance can visit most anytime and stand outside his room doorway and keep him company. If you hurry you can see him with the beard he's grown while convalescing. He has appreciated the visits and calls he has received.

**Swedenborg Study Group** (except they're on a break right now) is now meeting regularly on Wednesday evenings, and **Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00-8:30 pm** is the next session. For the groupies, we are now up to page 80 of *When Tragedy Strikes*, and we will be moving to new material soon after.

**Annual Meeting** being moved from **November 6<sup>th</sup> to December 11<sup>th</sup>** gives us a bit more time to get ready, you already know that. Calling all members – look to make sure you already have it on your calendar! Don't forget to show up – though you don't have to be there to be elected or appointed by the congregation to office.

**Christmas Adopt-A-Family.** We now have our family from Bethany House, and have a team assembled to do the actual shopping and wrapping. Send a check to the Church at [P.O. Box 42466, Montgomery, OH, 45242](mailto:POBox42466@montgomeryoh.com) or to Gloria marked "Adopt-A-Family", that's what we'll have to make our family happier at Christmas. The family we are supporting is a family of three: a mom, a teenager, and a pre-teen.

When thinking about church's community service programs, consider this Swedenborg quote:  
"The life which leads to heaven is not a life of retirement from the world,  
but a life of useful service in the world."

**THE CALENDAR** Here is a list of events scheduled between now and the end of the year. All times listed are eastern time zone. Cincinnati hosted services are identified by the **worship leaders of the golden font**, and are at 11am. You'll see that the Annual Meeting is in its rightful place on the December 11<sup>th</sup>. The usual 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> worship schedule will end at the end of November. As usual, though, we will pick up the open Advent Sunday November 27<sup>th</sup>. December is a mixed up month since during Advent we break schedule to fill any Sundays Glendale is not using, so in December GNC takes over 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays, and we hold the last two Advent services on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays. No service on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday which is Christmas Day which we have traditionally skipped so families could celebrate with out of towners or travel to visit with them. In January we will begin our regular 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> schedule on a routine basis.

2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday	Nov. 13	Glendale Sunday
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	Nov. 20	Sue Ditmire / Harvest Feast
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	Nov. 27	Rev. Dr. Sherrie Connelly ( <i>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent - Hope</i> )
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	Dec. 4	Rev. Clark Echols - Glendale New Church Worship ( <i>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent - Peace</i> )
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday	Dec. 11	Rev. Ron Brugler ( <i>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent - Joy</i> ) / Annual Corporation Meeting
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	Dec. 18	Rev. Catherine Lauber ( <i>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent - Love</i> )

**BIBLE JUMBLE** Provided for Jumble Gymnasts of the Swedenborgian persuasion. The usual rules apply. Unjumble the letters to make 4 key words and then arrange the circled letters to solve the Bible question.

VOILE      \_ ○ \_ \_ ○  
 WOWILL    \_ ○ \_ \_ ○ \_  
 TREMLY    \_ \_ ○ ○ \_ ○  
 E FFOCE    \_ \_ ○ ○ \_ ○



I have heard that it is found in Eden and the Holy City.  
 It is \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

Last issue's Bible Jumble solution: (The picture clue hinted that the key words were related to Egypt.) Key words were: Karnak, Sphinx, Jackal, Desert, and Aswan. Did you spot the jackal in the picture? Gnu-man asked, "A complete copy of the Gospel of Thomas is in the Nag Hamadi Library. Where was this "library" found? The answer was "in an Earthen jar."

Two brothers were looking for fertilizer at the base of cliffs in Egypt. As they searched the brother named Mohammad Ali struck a hard object underground. It was a huge earthen jar, and he was afraid to open it as a genie might be closed up in it. Mohammad finally broke it, hoping there might be gold. Not gold, but twelve books bound in gazelle leather and some pages of the thirteenth tumbled out.



These manuscripts, known as the Nag Hammadi Library, contained manuscript of the **Gospel of Thomas**. A fragment of written in Greek had been found earlier in Egypt, but this was a complete text written in Coptic, the language used in Egypt in imperial Roman times. The Gospel of Thomas contains no narrative, no stories about Jesus, but is a collection of 114 sayings. The author designated the collection as "the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke." Besides the Gospel of Thomas, the library contains 52 other texts, though many are fragments.

**GOSPEL OF THOMAS**

Speaking of the Gospel of Thomas, Here is a sample of what’s in it. Some of these you may familiar from other gospels, others do not appear anywhere else. I’ve selected some of each, and included some that are beyond me to understand how to fit them into a theological framework.

- “(5) Jesus said, ‘recognize what is in your sight, and that which is hidden from you shall be plan to you. For there is nothing hidden which shall not become manifest.’”
- “(25) Jesus said, ‘Love your brother like your soul, guard him like the pupil of your eye.’”
- “(26) Jesus said, ‘You see the mote in your brother’s eye, but you do not see the beam in your own eye. When you cast the beam out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to cast the mote from your brother’s eye.’”
- “(30) Jesus said, ‘Where there are three gods, they are gods, but where there two or one, I am with him.’”
- “(48) Jesus said, ‘If two make peace with each other in this one house, they will say to the mountain, “Move away,” and it will move away.’”
- “(72) [a man said] to him, ‘Tell my brothers to divide my father’s possessions with me.’ He said to him, ‘O man, who has made me a divider?’ He turned to his disciples and said to them, ‘I am not a divider, am I?’

**WHAT’S NEW IN RELIGION?**

Besides the Lord making all things new all the time, what in the world’s going on?



House of Worship, Wilmette, Illinois

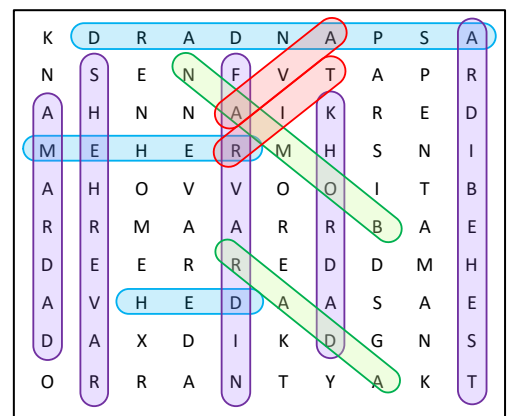
In the history of religion, the newest one, or one of the latest to see widespread acceptance, is the Bahá’í faith. Some of us have attended Bahá’í gatherings, but most of us, though we have heard of it, do not know very much about it. The teachings are pretty simple: It’s view of religion and humanity is entirely inclusive, and it espouses universal education, peace, science/religion harmony, and the individual search for truth. If that sounds a lot like what we believe, I would agree with you.

“Baha’is believe that the human spirit lives eternally, and so endeavor to illumine their souls with spiritual attributes—kindness, generosity, integrity, truthfulness, humility and selfless service to others.” Ref. [here](#).

Baha’is believe that works done in the spirit of service is a form of worship, which also agrees with our teachings. There are differences, too. In many ways their practices are quite minimal. They have no clergy or sacraments, and few rituals. There is daily prayer (as conversation with God within), and one obligatory prayer recited by one person on behalf of a congregation for a deceased. While the Baha’i community does not recognize same sex marriage, a particular gender identity or expression is not a membership requirement. Baha’is are forbidden to drink alcohol or unprescribed drugs. Devotional meetings are open, with participants from many faiths sharing inspirational texts from a wide variety of sources.

**SOLUTION TO LAST EDITION’S WORD FIND PUZZLE**

In last issue’s *What’s New in Religion* section we included a word find puzzle with the names of the 12 Parsi months. Since very few Swedenborgians keep track of time using Parsi nomenclature for the months, we’ll bring this to a swift solution, as seen on the right.



Farvardin, Ardibehest, Khordad, Tir, Amardad, Shehrevan, Meher, Ava, Adar, Deh, Boman, Aspandard.