

THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE HOLY CITY

By “the tree of life” is meant the Lord as to the Divine love.
(*Apocalypse Revealed* 951:2)

In Genesis the Tree of Life is pictured in the midst of the Garden of Eden where life was idyllic until Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the other tree—the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Now in the book of Revelation, John sees the Tree of Life within the Holy City—the city of gold—that he saw descending from heaven. This city pictures the beautiful teachings of the New Church that the Lord is establishing in heaven and on earth. And in the middle of the city stands the Tree of Life, picturing the Lord’s love which gives us life and is the source of all happiness. To the extent that we open our hearts and minds to the Lord’s love, we may approach the spiritual peace and happiness pictured by the Garden of Eden and the Holy City.

READ: “The Tree of Life” a family talk by the Rt. Rev. George de Charms

LISTEN TO AND SING: “First and the Last” by Karen Childs Elder (MP3 audio file)
A song with words from Revelation 22:12-14. **Lyrics and Chords (PDF)**

READ: “The Meaning of the Tree of Life” a sermon by the Rev. Kurt Horigan Asplundh

The Tree of Life pictures the Lord as to His Divine love. Like a tree that takes root and grows, and brings forth fruit, the Lord’s love must grow in our life and give us the inner strength to bring forth uses. To eat of the Tree of Life is to strengthen our life from God and receive life eternal rather than eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil which means believing that we ourselves are gods.

FAMILY WORSHIP: The Tree of Life

Read about the Tree of Life in three different parts of the Word:

Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8-12)

- Garden of Eden was like heaven on earth.
- The Tree of Life was in the middle of the garden.
- The Lord told Adam and Eve that they couldn’t eat fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
- A river went out from Eden.

Tree of Life in the Holy City (Revelation 22:1-5)

- John saw the Tree of Life in the Holy City.
- There were 12 different kinds of fruits on the tree.
- The leaves were used for healing people.
- The Tree of Life is on either side of the river of water of life.

Tree of Life in Heaven (see *Conjugal Love* 13)

- There is a Tree of Life in heaven.
- It is in the middle of a beautiful garden.
- The Tree of Life has golden fruit and silver leaves with emeralds along the edges.

Thinking About the Tree of Life

- The Tree of Life is a symbol of the Lord and His love for us.
- In heaven, this tree may be seen in the center of a community garden as a spiritual picture of the truth that is the source of all life.
- If we look to the Lord and obey His commandments, the Lord can give us eternal happiness. When the time comes, we will make our eternal home in heaven and see this Tree of Life.

PROJECT: A Banner of the Tree of Life (ages 8-14)

Use various colors of felt to make this banner. Note that the illustration shows one Tree of Life spanning the river of the water so that it is one tree *on both sides* of the river.

PROJECT: Tree of Life Collage (ages 5-12)

Use special papers to make a beautiful picture of the Tree of Life in the Holy City.

PROJECT: The Holy City (ages 10 and up)

Make a diorama of the Holy City New Jerusalem, adding the Tree of Life and the River of Water.

SING: “The Tree of Life” by John Odhner

BEARING TWELVE FRUITS

“Fruits” symbolize the goods which a person does from love or charity.
(*Apocalypse Revealed* 934)

The Tree of Life bore twelve fruits and yielded its fruit every month. This is a spiritual tree that represents the Lord as to His Divine love. The fruit pictures all the good that we can do when we are inspired by the Lord and guided by the truths of the New Church.

ACTIVITY: Sampling Twelve Fruits (all ages)

Use twelve different fruits to make a fruit salad or a fruit tray for sampling.

PROJECT: Make the Tree of Life with Clay (ages 4-10)

Use play dough or another modeling compound to make a picture of the Tree of Life on a piece of cover stock paper or other stiff paper. Then add colored beads for the twelve different kinds of fruit.

COLORING PAGE: The Tree of Life by Ruth Gyllenhaal

FOR REFLECTION: To Him Who Overcomes... (teens and up)

In Revelation 2:7 we read, “To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” What is meant by overcoming? Eating of the Tree of Life means to strengthen our life from God. What are some of the things that we can do to strengthen our life from Him?

LEAVES FOR HEALING

And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
(*Revelation* 22:2)

The leaves of the Tree of Life mean rational truths that can facilitate spiritual healing. These leaves of healing have something to offer everyone, because we all have areas in our life that call out for spiritual healing.

ACTIVITY: Tree of Life Reading Chart

Color the leaves of the Tree of Life to chart your progress in reading the Lord’s Word.

FOR REFLECTION: Sharing the Leaves of Healing

The Lord allows people to help Him share the leaves of healing—the truths of the New Church. This may involve talking to people about the New Church, using the Internet to make these truths widely accessible, or publishing beautiful books. But there are other ways as well. In a sermon on “The Descent of the Holy City”, the Rev. Eric Carswell suggests that we can help the Lord present a living picture of what it means to live a good life when we live according to His commandments. This living picture can set an example for our children as well as our friends and coworkers. Another way is to share beautiful truths from the Heavenly Doctrine about the life after death or sharing the New Church perspective on why the Lord permits tragedies.

JOURNAL PAGE: Leaves for the Healing of the Nations

Write about a spiritual illness that you would like to heal in your life and search in the Word for some leaves from the Tree of Life (truths), perhaps searching in www.heavenlydoctrines.org. Or reflect on ways that you can help the Lord share these truths with others to facilitate spiritual healing in the world.

SING: New Hope of Every Nation

THE WATER OF LIFE

*The water of life symbolizes truths from the Lord through the Word.
(see *Apocalypse Revealed* 932)*

The Lord gives the water of life to all who “thirst” and come. To thirst for truth means to seek truth with a love for it and the intent to use it in serving others. The truths become living as we apply them in our lives.

READ: “The True Water of Life” a sermon by the Rev. Grant Odhner

What is this “water of life” that is the promise and reality of the New Jerusalem? It is truth flowing from the Lord. These truths help us learn about the Lord and respond to Him as never before. The promise is that these truths can become living with us.

READ: “The River of the Water of Life” a family talk by the Rt. Rev. George de Charms

ACTIVITY: Inspiring Quote Cards Relating to the Tree of Life and Water of Life

Read, reflect on and discuss these quotes from the book of Revelation and the Heavenly Doctrine.

PROJECT: Water of Life Mural (*all ages*)

Hang blue ribbons or streamers from a gold throne and then attach truths from the Word to the water of life. Use as a decoration in your home or classroom.

COLORING PAGE: The Water of Life by Leon Rhodes

PROJECT: Felt-tip Painting of the Water of Life

PROJECT: Living Water

Two projects related to the theme of living water, one involving quotes from the Word in a well and the other making a picture of a fountain with quotes written along the streams of water.

SING: “Living Fountains” by Karen Childs Elder (MP3 audio)

Also see the [lyrics with guitar chords](#).

COLORING PAGE: The River from the Throne of God by Mary Cooper

SING: “The Water of Life” by John and Lori Odhner

COMING WITH LIGHT

He who desires truths should pray that the Lord may come with light,
and he who loves truths will then receive them from the Lord....

(Apocalypse Revealed 932)

The Lord’s second coming is not in person as before but in a new revelation—a third part of the Word (see *True Christian Religion* 776). As people learn the truths of this Word and use them in their lives, the Lord is able to establish His New Church on earth. These truths are like the river of the water of life pictured in the book of Revelation. Making the truths of the Word the authority in our lives means looking to the Lord as our King, seeing Him on the throne from which the waters of life flow. And acknowledging the Lord as the source of our life—and of all the good that we accomplish in life—is to look to the Tree of Life. As we celebrate the birth of the New Church, let us pray that its healing truths will bring spiritual healing to more and more people.

READ: “The Lord’s Second Coming” by the Rev. Michael Gladish

The Lord came to us the first time by being present with people to their natural eyes, and also by making sure that the story of His life was written down for all future people to read with their natural eyes. But He comes to us the second time by giving us a true understanding of all that He did. It is with love and wisdom that we will see Him again.

ACTIVITY: Pray for the Growth of the New Church

We should pray that the Lord’s kingdom—the Lord’s Church—will come on earth (see *Apocalypse Revealed* 932). The words of the Lord’s Prayer—Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven so upon the earth (Matthew 5) is echoed by the prayer that the New Church may grow. This prayer should encompass the hope that the many will find and accept the truths of the New Church. But the Church can also grow within each of us as we study the truths of the three-fold Word and apply them to our lives.

JOURNAL PAGE: Prayer for the New Church

Write your own prayer for the growth of the New Church in your life or in the world.

PROJECT: New Church Day Greeting Cards

Let children make special greeting cards to display in their homes or send to loved ones.

READ: “What Is New About the New Church?” by the Rev. Daniel Goodenough

The newness of the New Church is from the Lord because He has revealed new teachings about life in heaven, about how to understand the beautiful hidden truths in the Old and New Testaments, about how we can work for true married love, and many more things.

Celebrating New Church Day—June 19th

There are many ways to help our children develop affections for this religious festival. New Church congregations may hold an outdoor service, put on a pageant, give gifts to the children, and have a picnic. Many families start the day with a special breakfast or brunch.

Menu Suggestions: One idea is to serve red and white food to echo the colors of the New Church flag (strawberries and whipped cream, cherry Danish, cranberry juice, *etc.*). To echo the theme of the Tree of Life bearing twelve fruits, feature a variety of fruits in your celebration. Serve fruit salad as part of your New Church breakfast or picnic. Make a cheesecake and put slices of twelve different kinds of fruit on top. You could also serve fruit salad with angel food cake or pound cake. Serve a fruit punch made with various kinds of fruit juice and add strawberries and other fruit. If desired, make special ice cubes with fresh fruit (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and other berries) inside and then float these in the punch or in lemonade.

Decorating Your Home: This month's website offers several projects that can decorate your home for the birthday of the New Church. Among these are the **Tree of Life Banner**, the **New Church Day flag**, **The Water of Life Mural** and many art projects.

The reason for celebrating this day may be more obscure for children than why we celebrate Christmas and Easter, but we can help children sense its importance by differentiating this day from other days.

In this New Church there will be spiritual peace,
glory, and internal blessedness of life.
(*Arcana Coelestia 227*)