*"The Gift of Inspiration"*
LaPorte New Church Swedenborgian

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November 1, 2015

#### **Scripture Readings**

Ezekiel 36:26-27

John 6:63

**Insight for Worship**

*Divine Providence 154* by Emanuel Swedenborg

"It is a law of Divine Providence that we should be led and taught by the Lord, from Heaven, by means of the Word, and teaching and preaching from the Word, and that this should happen while to all appearances we are acting independently."

**Ezekiel 36:26-27**

*26I will also give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. 27I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my ordinances, and do them.*

**John 6:63**

*[And the Lord said further to His disciples] "It is the spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."*

**Introduction**

 This morning on the Lord's Sabbath Day, we come together for several reasons:

1. We gather to honor the Lord's wisdom of Sabbath-making, which involves putting our worldly concerns and agendas aside, to come together in a spirit of humbleness and love for the Lord and one another, opening our whole being before God in worship. We gather in worship in part to remind ourselves of a deep and sacred truth: that we are recipients of life, that all we are and all that gives us life is inflowing into us from the Divine!

 We gather on the Lord's Sabbath to open ourselves to what is most important in life--living life in the Lord as He also lives and moves and dwells within us--for the Lord our God is pure, infinite Love and Wisdom itself! This is one of God's great goals in life, that while totally honoring our inner freedom, the Lord wills to gradually conjoin our hearts and minds with Himself--that we may experience life in ever-deepening love, goodness, wisdom and peace.

 This happens when we slowly choose through life to turn our hearts and minds and ways of living over to the Lord and His Divine Truth, which lives/shines in His Word. For salvation to be lasting and real, it means that gradually as we partner with the Lord in daily life His goodness and His truth actually flow more and more inside of us! **And the simple truth is, which we find revealed in the 3rd Commandment** given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, in order to help the Lord to accomplish His gradual, life-long work of reforming and regenerating our hearts/wills, minds and ways of living, weekly worship is a great benefit to these deep, spiritual processes, which the Lord manages and empowers within us.

 This also opens our hearts and minds to the Lord's ***inspiration.***

2. We also gather this morning to experience and honor our annual ***REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY.*** On Nov. 1st of each year, we are blessed to take time together in a spirit of love, gratitude and prayerfulness as we consciously remember and celebrate the lives of our loved ones who have died and gone on ahead of us into God's Kingdom of Heaven. These could be people who have died within the past twelve months, or those who passed away years beyond that time-frame.

 After my sermon you will be invited to come forward and light a candle for one or more people who are on your heart this morning, those who have already or who are becoming angels of Heaven. I would also truly like to encourage you to lift up any pets who have died---yes, your furry family members, whose earthly lives have ended, whom you are grieving now as well. I realize this is a departure or addition to our typical way of observing **Remembrance Sunday**, but it is something I feel inspired to do this year. For truly, our furry friends and companions can mean so very much to us as well--simply because they too embody God's Spirit of grace, kindness, mercy and love.

3. And lastly, we gather together this morning to lift up and celebrate the 5th gift from God within our seven-week journey within our theme of *Living Gratefully*---which is, the Lord's ***GIFT OF INSPIRATION.***

**What Is Inspiration from God?**

1. When have you had moments of feeling that God was working in your life?
2. What are some examples for you when you felt inspired? When a fresh insight or truth touched your mind, giving you real enlightenment that helped you in a big way?

**INSPIRATION**--the powerful and

life-impacting ways that the Lord pours and inflows His Spirit and life-force

inside our hearts and minds,

warming our hearts,

enlightening our minds!,

and leading us **deeply and personally**

in the ***NOW.***

***BREATHING = inspiration.***

***Lungs - spiritual truth***

***Heart - celestial love***

 For me, an example is when I turn to the Lord intentionally in His Holy Word, seeking for Him to help me to be closer to Him in my life, to be inspired in my love for Him and for others, to live more and more in the love and light of His Spirit.

 Also, being in **NATURE** often inspires me. Enjoying the amazing orange and red and golden colors of Fall, meditating on the **fire bushes!**

 And, choosing to make time in life to more deeply listen and connect with others.

 Consider these words from our New Church teachings. First, from DP 154:

"It is a law of Divine Providence that we should be led and taught by the Lord, from Heaven, by means of the Word, and teaching and preaching from the Word, and that this should happen while to all appearances we are acting independently."

And then, these doctrinal insights from Swedenborg's same book, from n. 165:

"The Lord leads us by inflowing, and teaches us by **ENLIGHTENMENT**."

 What this means is that inspiration from the Divine *comes from* ***the inside*** of people and not from some external force. In other words, the Lord flows inwardly into our souls with love and enlightenment, which comes from the spiritual Light-from-Love pouring out from God, who is Infinite Love-Wisdom-Life itself!

 This internal inflowing gift from the Lord's Spirit, His gift of inspiration, is expressed in many passages in God's Word, such as in *Psalm 51:10,12*:

"Create a clean heart in us, O God, and renew *a firm spirit* within me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and let ***a willing spirit***sustain me."

This same spiritual truth is reflected in similar words through the prophet Ezekiel, whose words we heard already today. This inward or internal, spiritual inflowing life-force from the Lord, which touches our hearts and enlightens our minds, filling us with God's Love and enabling us to see and understand vital truths each day indeed comes into us like a well filling up with fresh, life-giving water! So no wonder the Lord said, "The Kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here! or 'See there!' For indeed, the Kingdom of God is within you." (*Luke 17:20-21*)

**What Is Our Part In Helping the Lord to Fill Us With His Inspiration?**

* Continue developing your own understanding of and belief in the Lord, and to believe in the Divine essence of the literal words of the Bible.

 Jesus said, "It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63)

 There is an inner meaning, depth and power from Heaven from God that lives and moves and gives life to the literal degree of Scripture.
 "Inspiration implies that in every particular of the Word (as well in the historicals as in the other parts) there are celestial things which are of love or good, and spiritual things which are of faith or truth, thus Divine things." (*Heavenly Secrets* n. 1887)

 And it is up to you to feel it, to believe in it, and to humbly be open to God enlightening your mind with Divine Truth pouring down from Heaven. And thus we read today: "It is a law of Divine Providence that we should be led and taught by the Lord, from Heaven, by means of the Word, and teaching and preaching from the Word, and that this should happen while to all appearances we are acting independently."

* The reason or intent with which we approach God's Word is to love the Lord more deeply, and to love others as ourselves. This intention to simply want to love others better opens our minds to God's Divine Light, and then the words and stories and meaning of God's Word comes alive! It dances, vibrates and hums with ever-deepening love and truth, which impacts and empowers us to live life filled with gratitude and peace.
* As Swedenborg wrote, "Enlightenment comes from the Lord alone and affects people who love truths because they are true and who make them useful in their daily living." (*True Christianity* n. 231)

 And in addition to the Lord flowing directly inside of us as we meditate on His Holy Word, or when we focus on it during worship, or during a spiritual reflection or sermon, sometimes God's Light-from-Love flows into us through the life, the eyes, the face or the words from loved ones. Everything good and true about us is constantly flowing into us from God from eternity. And this morning, we are now blessed to remember and celebrate the lives of those who have gone on ahead of us into Heaven.

 Please come forward and light a candle in memory of your loved one, or your furry friend. And if you are now grieving the loss of these special ones in your life, I pray that you will be touched and blessed by the Lord's own hands as you light their candle from this flame taken from our altar.

***[...Candle Lighting Ritual...in honor of our loved ones.]***

 Amen.

Anthem *“Oh When The Saints Go Marching In”* with the Crafts