

# Sydney Society Newsletter

Issued by the Sydney Society of the New Church  
Established in 1875

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On Facebook – Sydney Society of the New Church - Roseville

## *March 2015*

The Faith of the New Church is summarized as follows:

There is one God in whom is the Divine Trinity. He is the Lord God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Saving faith is to believe in Him. Evil actions are not to be done because they are from hell and of hell. Good actions are to be done because they are from God and of God. These are to be done by a person as though they are done by himself, yet believing that they are from the Lord working in him and through him.



*"A land of wheat and barley and vines"*  
Deuteronomy 8.8

.....  
*Our Harvest Thanksgiving is on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March*  
.....

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The Minister of the Sydney Society is Rev. Julian Duckworth and he can be contacted at any time either by telephone (02) 9416 7026/7032 or by a personal visit to 4 Shirley Road, Roseville, for any pastoral help or guidance. Let the Minister know in good time about pastoral concerns with people - including yourself too - so that he can give help where and when it is needed.

## **FROM THE MINISTER**

### **BY THEIR FRUITS YOU WILL KNOW THEM**

One of the troubles with a great analogy is that it often takes over from the actual message. I first realised this many years ago when I watched a Bible Study TV program from Atlanta, Georgia where a dozen ladies were using a passage from Luke's gospel where it says, "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered" and within seconds these ladies were comparing notes on hairstyles, hair dryers, which hairdressers to go to, and how important it was for their husbands to have wives to accompany them looking their best.

The actual Bible message never came into it. It got lost in the swaps. So beware these Biblical analogies and correspondences that can very quickly take us right away from the truth we're being urged to see. Which brings me to 'fruits' and to the Harvest which we are celebrating this month.

Fruit obviously conjures up pictures of fruit bowls and those shops with impeccably placed piles of shining apples, red side facing outwards. Yes, such things are Biblical, at times. The Lord's bounty is abundant and the fruit – vines, figs, olives and so on – is the crowning of the year. So, yes, we give our thanks as we should.

But there are times in the Bible when fruit should not make us think about fruit! A good example is right back in the garden of Eden where God told Adam and Eve they could eat of every tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You know what happened. The

serpent told Eve it was not only okay to but they'd be like God! And Eve saw and took and ate and gave some to Adam. And their eyes were opened.

It wasn't a crunchy apple! The fruit was simply the result of what they did. It made them into different people. So in the same way we say 'the fruits of our labours' and in the Bible it talks about 'the fruits of repentance' and the analogy is telling us that keeping going with something usually ends up with success, and a changed heart always ends up with you being a better person. Notice the connection between 'ends up with' and 'fruit'. And the message is loud and clear.

When Jesus said 'By their fruits you will know them' he was giving a warning about false prophets. He said that they come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravenous wolves, and finished by saying you will know them by their fruits. Who on earth are they, these false prophets with fruits?

Put aside for the moment any thought of actual people, people who seem real nice (that's the sheep's clothing of course) but you wonder if they're after something. We're not meant to sum other people up, just be a bit careful at times. So, instead of false prophets, think about false notions instead. Coming your way, and in sheep's clothing, oh yes.

Here's a false notion. We think, "If I didn't make sure, things just wouldn't get done." But (we protest), that's so true! So there's our first layer of sheep's clothing – it's nice to be needed. It probably isn't even true. If you stopped, things would have to change somehow. But the fruit of it all is that you start feeling misgivings, and Jesus regularly tells us we shouldn't hold onto misgivings.

So when you get your notions – many of which will be true and beautiful ones – check them out by where they leave you and what you end up with in your heart. There's the giveaway, the tell-tale sign, and that is what Jesus is warning us about by mentioning fruits.

And yes, by all means, enjoy the fruits of the harvest.

*Julian*

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## **OUR ANNUAL MEETING**

With several apologies, we still had a reasonable number for the meeting and some good points from the floor as we went through the reports. Our church officers and committee stay the same as last year. One outcome was a show of hands to the preference for me to wear robes or shirt and tie. It went 7 to 10. I will probably wear robes for the first and sacrament Sundays. The meeting ended with expressions of thanks to everybody.

## **FRIENDSHIP GROUP**

At our February meeting Ruth was elected as President and Glen as Secretary/Treasurer. Julian gave a talk on the “5 Smooth Stones” in the David and Goliath story.

Our text for the year is Ps.27 v14 *“Wait for the Lord. Be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!”*

Please note that Harvest Thanksgiving and Ploughman’s Lunch is on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March and we will be decorating the Church on Sat. 7<sup>th</sup> at 2pm if you would like to help or donate towards produce.

We look forward to the return of Ruth from the UK in early March.

Glen Hart

## **HARVEST LUNCH**

If you are coming to the Harvest Lunch after the service, please will you let Ruth know by Wednesday March 4<sup>th</sup>. There is a clip board notice in church which several people have signed, so do that, or tell Ruth (or Julian) or phone, email, text... Thanks for that.

## **TWO MARCH WEDDINGS**

It’s lovely to have 2 weddings in one month! Corrine Manyweathers (Paul’s daughter) and Alireza Asli (Ali) are getting married at an old church-cum-reception in St Albans NSW (a place I have wanted to go to) on Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup>.

Katie Keyworth (Dick and Gill Keyworth’s daughter) is marrying Andrew Gracie here in Roseville on Sunday March 29<sup>th</sup> which is Palm Sunday. An extra pleasure will be to welcome the Keyworth family over from New Zealand, and staying for a week in Sydney.

## **REMEMBERING HELEN TAYLER (NELLIE)**



Only longer-standing church people will remember Nellie because, along with her husband George, she moved from Sydney to Auckland in the late 90s. They had lived in Bexley North for many years and were active members of our church for all that time. Nellie was 101 when she

passed on.

They came originally from London, where I knew them well, and decided quite quickly, in the mid 60s, to come and live in Australia. Both George and Nellie were practical, and one of Nellie's legacies is the lovely knitted Christmas Nativity set we continue to use.

We think of them now, together in heaven, and our love and condolences are given to their family, especially Allan, Peter and Gill their children, and the grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## **PULPIT SWAP, SUNDAY MARCH 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Todd Beiswenger and I have arranged to travel further than we usually do on Sunday, he here, and me there. It's been quite a while since we did so and both of these churches can look forward to a fresh voice and a different take on this particular Sunday. We hope that you will be there to appreciate this.

## **PASTORAL**

We sent a card to Judy and Dave Probert from the Annual Meeting. It seems clear that Judy is now declining but nothing certain about that can be fully known. Our love just goes out to them at this time. It is Dave's wish to be with Judy as much as he possibly can. I and some others are in very regular contact with Dave and have been visiting Judy. The number of visitors overall has been astounding and at times a bit overwhelming. In my latest chat with Dave, he is thinking about restricting visitors, and everyone would readily understand that need.

## STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR MARCH

Sunday	Steward(s)	Flowers
1 <sup>st</sup> (Sacr.)	Michael Chester	Glen Hart
8 <sup>th</sup> (Harvest)	Graham Hanna	No flowers
15 <sup>th</sup>	John Wilson	Lydia Chua
22 <sup>nd</sup> (Todd B.)	David Curry	Ruth Duckworth
29 <sup>th</sup>	Tracey Glendenning	Lizzie St Quintin

## CHURCH STEPS CHAIRLIFT



This is now installed. It was first used on the Sunday of the AGM but had us (or me) perplexed. With most people gone, it became operational and as you see, got used.

It runs slowly and safely. It requires switching on and a number of actions before moving. It doesn't need to be brought up or down again after use as a 'remote' will do that. We will happily get people used to its use in the near future, and we thank the committee and most of all Graham Hall for seeing the project through to completion.

## SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

Most people consider life a battle, but it is not a battle, it is a game.  
Christ taught that it is a great game of giving and receiving.

- from "The Wisdom of Florence Scovel Shinn"

*Thank God I'm alive in the light of the sun!  
It's a quarter to five; Thank God I'm alive!  
Now the hum of the hive of the world has begun,  
Thank God I'm alive in the light of the sun!*

- Maurice Baring

When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.

- Dr Wayne Dyer

*Half the confusion in the world comes from not knowing how little we need.*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

The best place to be is here, and the best time to be here is now.

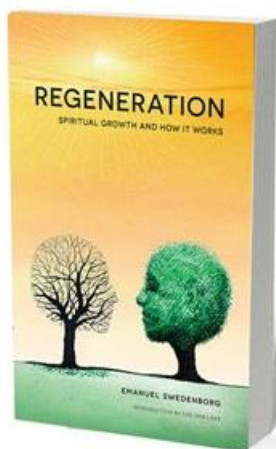
- Paddy Pallin

*Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to the men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all.*

- Ecclesiastes 9.11

## SWEDENBORG CENTRE NEWS

### **New Book: Regeneration: Spiritual Growth and How It Works.** 164 pages, pb.



Centuries before popular Western culture embraced meditation, positive thinking, and the quest for enlightenment, Emanuel Swedenborg developed a simple formula for achieving personal spiritual growth. He called this process regeneration.

Swedenborg discusses regeneration in many places throughout his prolific theological writings. This book brings his key teachings on this topic together in one volume, illustrating the process of becoming a spiritual being and

discussing how and why that process works.

Learn more about the process of regeneration by going to <http://www.swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/explore/regeneration/>

If you wish to purchase this book please contact the Swedenborg Centre on (02) 9888 1066 or by [order@swedenborg.com.au](mailto:order@swedenborg.com.au) with 'Book Order' in the Subject. Price is \$15 for 'Regeneration' and \$4 postage.

Michael Chester

## **SWEDENBORG READING GROUP**

This is linked with the previous item. We are starting two Swedenborg Reading Groups (initially using the advertised book on p7). This will be a 'circle of people' and we will simply each read the text aloud (it's a great translation) and at the end of each circuit, stop to comment and share things for 5 minutes, and then carry on a few more circuits.

We had an introduction evening in January which went very well. I have a one-side outline of benefits in doing this which I'd be glad to give you. (One benefit is that nobody needs to prepare!)

The 2 occasions are: 6.30-7.30 pm before the SAA meeting (7.45) each month, and on the Tuesday morning at 11 a.m. alternating with the normal Bible Study, lasting for about one hour too.

Everybody, anybody, is welcome at either group. No previous knowledge required! And you can come whenever you wish to.

## **SOCIETY NEWS**

Most things I would normally include have been mentioned elsewhere, but it has been nice to have several children with us recently and the prospect of some more coming. Thank you very much to Julie Smith and Elizabeth Kemmis for taking Sunday School on the 4 Sundays while Ruth has been away.

I had an email from Margaret Skinner thanking us for sending a whole bundle of used stamps from everyone. Please do keep going with this.

Easter: Palm Sunday is on March 29<sup>th</sup> and we will decorate the church with local palm branches. Good Friday is April 3<sup>rd</sup> and at 6.30 p.m. we will have a gathering in the church and mark the events of Good Friday in a helpful way. Easter is on April 5<sup>th</sup> and this will include communion offered during the service itself, not afterwards.

You will be glad to know that the combined offertories of two December services came to \$550.00 which we agreed would be given to Hope House (NZ) and this will be able to be personally given when the Keyworths are here for the wedding on Palm Sunday afternoon.





**Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.**

**North Ryde Group - Telephone: (02) 9888 1066**

**website: [www.swedenborg.com.au](http://www.swedenborg.com.au)**

## ***Jesus' suffering and our suffering***



**Presented by Julian Duckworth**

**FRIDAY 27TH MARCH 2015 at 7.45pm**

**Swedenborg Centre,  
1 Avon Road, North Ryde**

**Cost: \$7; concession \$5**  
(including refreshments)

One of the people attending our meetings believes that if we understand Jesus' suffering to a certain degree, we will also understand human suffering better. She has been reflecting on this matter for some time and this talk is the outcome of her wishing to know more.

### **Areas that Julian is intending to include in the talk are:**

Suffering, and what do we mean by this?

The fact of suffering.

Different kinds of suffering.

Different degrees of suffering.

Suffering we cannot do anything about and suffering we can do something about.

Jesus' suffering and our ability to know and understand this.

The Divine itself cannot experience suffering.

The extent of Jesus' suffering and its degrees.

The uniqueness of Jesus' suffering and its special nature.

The relationship between Jesus' suffering and our suffering.

Does (Did) Jesus' suffering in any way affect, lessen, alleviate, heal, take away our suffering?

Finally, how can we make personal use of Jesus' suffering to help our own suffering, the suffering of others and the general suffering that exists or goes on in this world.

## **BEHIND SOME WORDS**

I have chosen some words beginning with G: Gratitude, Guidance, Grace and Gain.

**Gratitude** seems to go much deeper than Thankful. It feels it is more from our heart and spirit. It comes from a word meaning ‘favourable’ and it often carries the idea of being glad to be like this and not like that. Because of this, it evokes both appreciation and hopefully compassion. It’s the best word we have to use for deeper things in us, such as peace of mind, a living faith and our own personal relationship with the Lord, for all of which we are knowingly grateful.

**Guidance** is something we all need at times, but it means being led well by what we know. That’s its origin; it comes from a very old word ‘to wit’, to be aware of, which we also get in ‘witness’. For us it’s about being willing to let our mind, with all that it has received, shape the course of any actions and even more override some of our feelings. And the Lord himself is guiding us all the time if we are willing to hear him.

**Grace**, interestingly, comes from the same word-origin as gratitude but it has a very different connotation. Gratitude is from us to God, grace is the other way round, from God to us. It’s the favour which God always feels towards every thing He has created; it’s the undeserved love that God has for us, and it is that brief moment when we are strangely caught up in the sensation of being in God and we call this, being in ‘a state of grace’. It is the word of the last verse of the Bible: ‘The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.’

**Gain** means to improve your situation in some way and it is used in the parable of the stewards, “Look, Lord, you gave me five talents and I have gained for you five more.” And Jesus spoke of the utmost folly of gaining the whole world while forfeiting one’s own soul. It comes from an old word meaning ‘a farm’ so it suggests spiritually the work that is involved in us working the farm of our own life and bringing it to productivity and higher yield.

## THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



Continuing a series on our beliefs in plain English. This time we'll think about the idea of **temptation**.

Temptation has become a bit of a vogue word covering what we might immediately enjoy but may well regret later. There are songs and movies with the title. You can see it involves an attraction or, a better word, enticement, to whatever that may be.

In the New Church we see temptation being a kind of war between evil spirits and angels, who are there with us. Each of them truly loves their divergent view of things and they would love us to get drawn into their delight about it. This might sound a bit like Star Wars but as far as we are concerned, it becomes the flavour of the thoughts, prompts and feelings that pop into our head at times. We certainly aren't dealing with a second chocolate biscuit!

Why doesn't God stop it and call up twelve legions of angels to win over our soul by sheer force of numbers? He won't because it would be outside of us, and God wants us to see, choose and work on it from inside ourselves because we know what we really want and we are prepared work for it.

It's as close to you as your eyelashes. We should learn to listen to our own chat: 'Why do I bother?' 'Come on, you know what matters.' 'That person has it in for me.' 'I've always felt happiest doing my best.' Or however these things come to you.

One of our temptations is to cover our ears so that we don't hear the din. Very tempting, just do what's required. Unfortunately that takes us into torpor and we're not even aware what suggestions come our way.

The Lord Prayer catches the need brilliantly: Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Meet the need ask for help.

## THE BACK OF A LEAF



I love looking at the backs of leaves where the stem and the veins are clearly seen. It shows how the plant provides food and life for every part of every leaf to keep it in full health. It's attractive because it makes an embossed pattern.

Then I look again and realise that the pattern I am looking at is in fact basically the pattern of the whole tree, in miniature. The stem is like the trunk, the branches are remarkably like the main branches of the tree as it rises up, and the veins are twig-like. I see the shape of the whole tree in each of its leaves.

It reminds me that God made man in his own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). And I really love the way that this gets shown only on the back of the leaf, a bit out of sight, tucked away for us to discover when we're ready to see it. But that's how God does most of his things.

### FINAL FABLE

(based on a personal experience)

I drew up behind a large bus at the traffic lights, in the left of two lanes. I was turning left. The bus sat equally over the two lanes in the middle of the road. I fumed. "If you're turning right, you should be in the right lane; if left, then the left lane. You'd fit! Now I am back here and you're so slow to go, I will miss this change of lights."

Then I realised the skill of the bus driver. As cars turned from the main road into our shared road, they needed considerable space to get round the waiting bus. The driver was giving them room and consideration and had thought ahead. I felt ashamed.