

# Sydney Society Newsletter

Issued by the Sydney Society of the New Church

Established in 1875

4 Shirley Road, Roseville, N.S.W. 2069

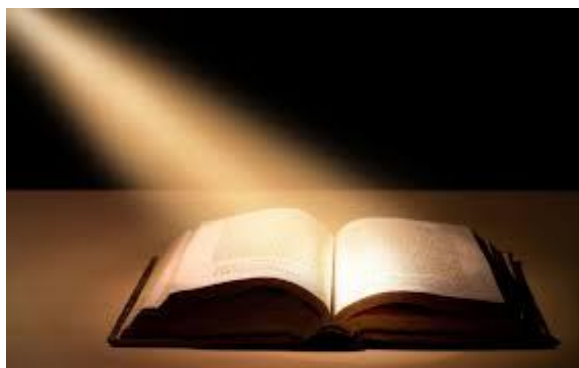
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## *June 2015*

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.



*The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.*

*John 6.63*

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*Our New Church Day service is on Sunday June 21st*  
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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**

### **THE MAGNA CARTA AND NEW CHURCH DAY**

Sometimes it's good to take two things and put them together and see what comes up. I was fascinated to catch the news that during June this year it will be 900 years since the signing of the Magna Carta by King John at Runnymede on the River Thames on June 15<sup>th</sup> 1215. I've seen the original in the British Museum. It was basically a charter guarding the rights of ordinary people against the divine rights – often, the impositions – of the monarch.

New Church Day, on June 19<sup>th</sup>, which we celebrate each year in some way, is about several things. It's about a clearing-up in heaven of untrue beliefs about God, it's about bringing people back to a true belief that the Lord Jesus Christ is God, it's about opening up the Bible to be able to understand it spiritually rather than only literally, and it is about our need to live conscientiously by what we know is true. What New Church Day is not is a command for us to believe and live by everything the church might tell us we must do in order to be saved and go to heaven!

So, when you put the Magna Carta and New Church Day together and look to see if there is something similar in both of them or something you get from comparing them, the answer is a definite “yes”. They are both about the rights and the responsibilities of individual people and they are both about curtailing the power of a higher authority.

I like the fact that they are both dated as the middle of June – June 15<sup>th</sup>

and June 19<sup>th</sup> and when I do the ‘put them together’ thing, what I get is that they are both happening just before the longest day of the year (in the northern hemisphere of course) on June 21<sup>st</sup>, when the sun (which is such a good picture of the Lord’s light and life over us) is at its highest and longest in the sky. It feels ‘right’ to be dated like they are.

I can take the comparison even further. The Magna Carta was signed on the banks of a river, so it gives us the idea of something flowing rather than being held back. Runnymede means ‘water-meadow’ and that’s what it is (wear your wellies if you ever go there) and it is 200m from the Thames. But New Church Day is just as wet and watery because it’s about us having the truth or ‘water’ and about the flow of this truth from the Lord into our own minds, hearts and lives.

Let’s keep going, with the idea of a stream. We’re told that the angels know that there is one fountain of life, which is the Lord himself, and that our life is a stream which flows from it. I hope that in some way you feel that yours is and that knowing this helps you. We’re told that when we trust the Lord’s careful management of the way in which our life proceeds we are then in the stream of divine Providence and we know that all things that pass are leading to our spiritual well-being.

That is like an invitation to us: rather than just wonder what life is about or whether God is doing anything, ‘go with the flow’ and trust the course of your life as much as you can. A stream or river has the wonderful ability to carry a boat along which will keep following the underlying currents. It’s such a good description!

When we celebrate New Church Day – and we’re doing that on Sunday June 21<sup>st</sup> – keep it clear, keep it simple, keep it personal. What we are celebrating is that people can rightly (and responsibly) have their own relationship with the Lord, and be able to understand the truths of life and be led to live by what they believe is true.

New Church Day becomes our Magna Carta.  
Happy New Church Day!

*Julian*

## FRIENDSHIP GROUP NOTES

Our next meeting is on Wednesday June 3<sup>rd</sup>, starting with coffee and cake at 10.45 a.m. Julian will talk to us about 'Seize the Day!' (Carpe Diem) which, although not Biblical in origin, is a fine and meaningful activity for us. Afterwards we will enjoy our shared lunch together.

A big welcome to Hannah and Daniel and their family who have moved from Brisbane to live in Sydney.

We do miss Cynthia at church and thank her for always sending out the birthday cards from church. And our best wishes to Myriam Albert who recently had a knee operation.

Glen Hart

## MAKE A NOTE



Lillian King has kindly offered to do another piano recital for us, after the church service and morning tea on Sunday July 19<sup>th</sup>. Thank you very much, Lillian.

This will start at 11.30 a.m. and after the Concert you are welcome to stay on for a shared lunch (so bring something) which we will have in the hall. Diarise the date!

## PLAY A BIBLE QUOTE FALL

Drop letters from the top to put in the bottom to find the KJV quote. Each letter is used, and only once. # is a blank space between words. (Clue: 1<sup>st</sup> word is AND. It also helps to find the little words first.)

D	N	N	Y	E	S	A	U	S	D	W	D	O	L	T	H	E	M	A	U
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## SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

*Anything you lose comes round in another form. - Rumi*

Sadness is but a wall between two gardens. - Khalil Gibran

*We need never be afraid of our tears. - Charles Dickens*

Saying nothing sometimes says the most - Emily Dickinson

Look wide, then look wider still. - Lord Baden-Powell

*Every now and then go away, have a little relaxation, for when you come back to your work, your judgment will be surer; since to remain constantly at work will cause you to lose power of judgment.*

- Leonardo da Vinci

Stella Green

### STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR JUNE

Sunday	Steward(s)	Flowers
7 <sup>th</sup> (Sacr.)	Graham Hanna	Elizabeth Kemmis
14 <sup>th</sup>	John Wilson	Lydia Chua
21 <sup>st</sup> (NC Day)	Michael Chester	Lynne Twemlow
28 <sup>th</sup>	John Wilson	Ruth Duckworth

### A CHANGE OF ORGANIST

On May 24<sup>th</sup> we said our thankyou to Lynette Southern who has played the organ for us several times each month for several years. From June 14<sup>th</sup> we will have a new organist – Katrina Papallo – who is a friend of Lynette – and she will play for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays. Katrina is an accomplished violin player and piano player and she has recently been having organ lessons and now she has a real organ at home to practise on.

We look forward to having her play for us and enjoying the music that she provides for our services of worship.

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## **THE GREAT SHE BIBLE**

I came across this news item recently and found it quite fascinating and interesting to share...

A rare 400-year old Bible worth at least \$100,000 has been discovered at a parish church in Lancashire, in England. It is one of the earliest known copies of the King James Version of the Bible. But its rarity lies in the fact that when it was printed around 1611, for some reason an 'S' got added to a reference to Boaz who married Ruth. In the book of Ruth chapter 3.15 this Bible says of Boaz "She went into the city."



Only a handful of She Bibles exist, mostly at universities like Oxford and Cambridge and cathedrals like Salisbury and Exeter. It's thought that He and She Bibles were printed at the same time but on different printing presses.

## **SWEDENBORG CENTRE NEWS**

### **Sydney New Church College Seminar (13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> June).**

We are delighted to be hosting the Sydney Seminar this month. The last one in Sydney was in 2013 and the participants enjoyed it very much. The focus for this seminar is strengthening and developing one's personal practice. The presenters are David Millar, Julian Duckworth and Todd Beiswenger.

One of the presentations by David Millar is titled **"Know Thyself": Why Cultivate an Intentional Spiritual Practice?** It will be an exploration of the theological underpinnings found in Swedenborg's writings that demonstrate the importance of intention in cultivating a spiritual practice.

If you have not seen the program and booking details yet you can go to <http://swedenborg.com.au/meetings> and read the details. Printed copies are available from Julian.

A charge of \$100 is made for each day which includes morning and afternoon teas, lunch, and general snack items during the day.

### Promoting Swedenborg via emails

A lovely way to promote Swedenborg's insights is to include a favourite sentence in your email signature. One person's current quote is, "...a person must be concerned about his soul not for its own sake but for the services it must perform in both this world and the next. (Emanuel Swedenborg)."

### Customer Feedback

In connection with reading "*The Lives of Angels*" a recent customer said, 'Reading some books elevates my consciousness.' This is delightful feedback and supports our own appreciation of the importance of Swedenborg's writings and promoting them. It also reminds us of the personal benefit we get from reading them. She is very happy with her big purchase of books from the Swedenborg Centre.

Michael Chester

## **SOCIETY NEWS**

We had an enjoyable Mothers Day in May with a special morning tea. It was also special to have our daughter Hannah and their four children with us for the service and Sunday School. They have recently moved in to their new home in Killara, much closer than Brisbane!

It's good to be able to tell you that Julie Smith has offered to take over sending out the birthday cards from Church now that Cynthia Marcroft is unable to do this. Our thanks to both of them for this lovely way of showing the care of the church.

Our best wishes to Myriam Albert who has recently had a knee-replacement operation. Myriam told me that she had intended to come to the service the Sunday before her op (and also the Tuesday group) but decided against doing so. We would completely agree!

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We have had some good Angel Services recently. One was to be our own version of Vivid (the light show currently on in the city and in Chatswood). We shone torch light over each person present, against a whiteboard, and drew round their profile and then wrote positive words over this. Quite angelic!

We had the Joint Meeting here at Roseville at the end of April and there were eleven of us, plus two others for the Annual Meeting. It has been discussed and decided that the New Church in Australia will hold an Assembly in early 2016 which will be a forum for discussion on the future directions for the national church, which will be open to anyone to be part of, followed by a General Meeting later in 2016 to set in motion more formally the decisions that need to be made. The venues for these are being looked into.

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Vision Valley Camp leaflets (bright yellow), booking forms, expression of interest forms and even a return s.a.e (to me) of an expression of interest – are now available at Church. Take a ‘pack’ and have a read.

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Answers to last month’s page 12 Quiz – which Bible book was it in?

1. Psalms. 2. Isaiah. 3. John. 4. Genesis. 5. 1 Samuel. 6. Jonah.
7. Matthew. 8. Exodus. 9. Luke. 10. Ezekiel. 11. Joshua.
12. Revelation.



Thank you to people who helped me celebrate my birthday after church, and sorry you are not in this picture.

Here I am cutting the cake on which there are no candles – not because so many would be a fire risk, simply due to me removing the two of them to blow out off-cake.

Thanks to Tracey for capturing this moment and to Charlie for providing the cake!





Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.

North Ryde Group – Telephone: (02) 9888 1066

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

***How to think smarter  
and act more wisely***



**Facilitated by Joe Vandermeer**

**FRIDAY 26TH JUNE 2015 at 7.45pm**

**Swedenborg Centre,**

**1 Avon Road, North Ryde**

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

What are intelligence and wisdom? How can we grow wise? Surrounded by so much information, how can we know what is true? Can we recognise wisdom in others? How do we learn? How do humour and a willingness to take risks relate to learning? How do we make sense of things?

If exploring such questions appeals to you, you'll be in the right place when you come along. We will look at what wisdom is, how to grow in it, how we learn, dealing with doubt and certainty, and how to obtain insights.

As we grow older it is important to be more focused and efficient at getting the gist and recognising what things are of value to know. So come along with your open mind, your skeptical mind, and your humorous mind. The presentation will include a 20 minute film clip which draws on Swedenborg's accounts of his spiritual experiences and what he learned through these experiences (featuring Curtis Childs of the Swedenborg Foundation and Dr. Dan Synnестvedt of the Swedenborg Academy).

**Joe Vandermeer** has been studying Swedenborg's teachings for a quarter of a century. He is greatly interested in the subtle and profound influence which Swedenborg's spiritual ideas have had on various streams of thought and movements. With a keen interest in those ideas which have renewed and inspired people through all times, Joe hopes to share those ideas which remain relevant, powerful and suitable for us in our modern life. Joe formerly served as president of the Swedenborg Association of Australia for five years.

## AKH “BROTHER”

The Bible word for ‘brother’ is ‘akh’, with a raspy sound like ‘Loch Lomond’. In the New Testament it’s ‘adelphos’ which gives us Philadelphia which means love of brothers. When the Jews used the word ‘akh’ they weren’t limiting it to family members but more widely, to other people, whether men or women. So in this sense, ‘brother’ is thinking about all others.

One of the famous Biblical uses of ‘brother’ is very early, in the sad story of Cain and Abel, actual brothers. Cain was jealous that Abel’s offering pleased God more than his own, and he killed him. God then asked Cain “Where is your brother?” and Cain said, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” God said, “Your brother’s blood cries out to me.”



The Jews believed that repeating the same word several times gave it much more emphasis. So, the Bible is really saying as a take-home message that, yes, we are all indeed our brothers’ keepers. The moment we forget that we lose out.

Quite likely, most people wouldn’t think that we need reminding about something so obvious, but modern culture emphasizes our individuality and independence so much, sometimes to the point of amazing self-centredness.

This is perhaps why the story of Cain killing his brother Abel is the first story after the Garden of Eden (where self-awareness came into being), pointing out that the first and most serious loss we can have is to lose our sense of loving others.

*Behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity.* Psalm 133.1

## THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



Continuing a series about our beliefs in plain English.  
This time we'll think about living a MORAL LIFE.

Let's start off with the main teaching of the New Church about this – that living morally actually begins to open us up towards living spiritually. The one helps the other.

If we are living morally – doing our best, thinking before we act, holding back on making bad choices and so on, we set the scene for us to be able to see the spiritual things about life – such as love being essential, that we will live for ever and that there is God who loves us and leads us.

It's like a child learning to read, recognising the sound of each letter to begin with. He struggles, forgets, wants to play on his computer instead yet he can get to the point where reading takes him over. He loves it! That wouldn't happen without the first part.

This teaching also brings things the other way round. When we are spiritual, with our belief in God there, we live a moral life (like we did before) but now we do it because we understand it's what God wants us to do. It becomes our intention, our evidence, as we carry out what we believe in.

This teaching is the reason why we aren't a church which advocates particular kinds of prohibitions. We're not against smoking or drinking; you don't have to give up eating meat, nor will we frown at you if you buy a scratchie. But we're not exactly in favour of some of them either! It's really up to you, with what you believe, to set your personal standards.

The Ten Commandments make a good start, especially in their expanded version where stealing is not only about embezzling but can happen when we shatter someone else's belief that helps them to live. So a moral life is also a way of living that thinks about other people.

## HYMNS AND SONGS



Recently, I have sometimes put new words to a tune and we've used it in a church service. So

far, it's mostly been hymn tunes that I have changed and put new words to. I haven't had any complaints yet!

But we could use all kinds of tunes and do the same thing. I don't find it difficult to come up with new words, and you are welcome to have a go too. One of the benefits is that we can have words that fit well with a particular theme, or with a celebration of something like Easter, Mothers Day, or New Church Day.

So, here is my invitation. If you have a tune that you really like, let me know, and I will see what I can do with it. The only condition is that a congregation would need to be able to sing it properly and easily. Heavy metal would be out, obviously, but a good folk song or a nice ballad could work very well. With that in mind, pass anything on and let's give it a go. We all have favourites.

### FINAL FABLE

A young and rather arrogant archer was known for his accuracy. He fired his arrow which hit the bullseye and his second arrow split the first arrow in two. An old archer spoke up, "Let us go and see who shoots the best. Follow me." The young man went. They came to a deep ravine across which a shaky log had been put. The old archer walked to the middle, fired at a tree and hit its trunk. He came back and told the young archer it was now his turn. The young archer looked into the ravine and could hardly put his foot upon the log.

"You have much skill with your bow," the old archer said, "but you lack the skill to control the mind that shoots the arrow."