

The Lighthouse



December / January 2015 / 16

CHURCH CONTACT DETAILS

Church Office: 9888 2850

While generally unattended, messages can be left which are regularly checked and responded to.

Joint Worship Neville Jarvis 8555 9116
Service Organisers: Karl Robinson 9725 1891

Secretary: Sophy Athan 9756 6117

Treasurer: Karl Robinson 9725 1891

Ballarat and District Len and Judy 5331 5638
Circle Leaders: Robinson

Books by Emanuel Swedenborg and about the spiritual teachings he wrote, together with associated CDs & DVDs, are available for purchase and free borrowing at the Church at Mt. Waverley and in Ballarat. Please contact Neville Jarvis or Judy Robinson for details.

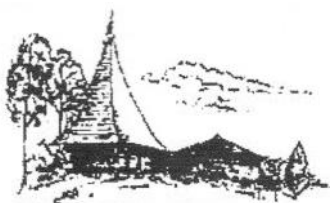
If you are in need of pastoral assistance or hear of anyone who is, please contact Marika Sivak by phone on (03) 9806 0059

You are welcome to submit items for this Newsletter. They should be sent to Neville & Alexis Jarvis, 15A Parkside St., Beaumaris, 3193 or emailed to anjarvis72@optusnet.com.au by the 15th of the month prior to the next bi-monthly issue.

**Websites: www.newchurch.net.au/locations/melbourne
 www.newchurch.net.au/locations/ballarat**

THE NEW CHURCH IN VICTORIA

426 - 434 High Street Road, Mount Waverley, Victoria 3149



Newsletter

December / January 2015 / 16

The New Church is a Christian-based approach to spiritual growth, personal responsibility and choice, focusing on the Lord Jesus Christ as God, on the spiritual understanding of the Bible, on human immortality and free will, and on the life of true religion being one of mutual love and useful living.



Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1: 30-33)

In order that hell might be cleared away, and this impending damnation be thereby removed, the Lord came into the world, and dislodged hell, subjugated it, and thus opened heaven; so that he could henceforth be present with men on earth, and save those who live according to his commandments.

(True Christian Religion 579)

A Christmas Message ~ The Messiah

Adapted from an address by Rev. Dr David Fekete, USA New Church Minister

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. (Isaiah 9:2).

So the prophet Isaiah speaks of the time of Jesus. Jesus came in the night, in the darkness. In the northern hemisphere, He came in the darkest season of the year. And he came at a time in human history that was equally dark. So the apostle John says, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5). That one birth - in the darkness of night, in the darkest season of the year, in a dark time in human history - shone so brightly that now, two thousand years later, his light still enlightens those who receive him.



Jesus is called “The Messiah”. ‘Messiah’ is a Hebrew word, the Greek translation for which is “Christ.” So Jesus Christ isn’t just a first and last name. It means that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ. We immediately think of Jesus when we hear the name ‘Messiah’. We may think of Handel’s wonderful composition, “The Messiah,” which contains many of Isaiah’s prophecies about the coming of the Lord. But to fully understand who the Messiah is, we need to go back into Jewish history. Then we will better appreciate the hopes of the Israelites for the Messiah to come, and we will understand how dark the world appeared to them at the time of the incarnation.

In Hebrew, the word “Messiah” means “anointed.” In the Word, a ‘messiah’ is a king in Israel, who is anointed with oil by a prophet when he is chosen by God. Each time a new king was chosen by God, a prophet would anoint the new king with oil. But there was one special Messiah, one special king, whom we mean when we talk about the “Messiah” in capital letters. That king is David and God made a special promise - the “Messianic promise” to him that there would always be one of his descendants on the throne in Judah, forever (see 2 Samuel chapters 11, 12, 15, 16). Despite interruptions to this kingship through various conquests of Judah and Israel by the Babylonians, the Greeks and finally the Romans when it appeared that God had broken his promise to the Israelites, hope persisted that one day, a descendant of King David would return and assume the throne in Jerusalem.

From our Swedenborgian perspective, like the latter prophets, we too see the time of Jesus as a time of great darkness. Indeed, we see it as the darkest time the world had ever known. It was a time desperately in need of Jesus' redeeming light. It was a time in need of God's Incarnation. Our Church teachings clearly show that the forces of darkness threatened to overwhelm heaven and earth before the Incarnation. We believe that without God's Incarnation, humanity would have been lost, but that with the advent of Jesus, God's power came to humans - and through the divine humanity of Jesus Christ, God could come to humanity in a new way.

Jesus is that divine Messiah who calls God his father. With the incarnation, God became present to humanity in a way that had not been possible before. Throughout his life on earth, Jesus grew progressively closer to God, and God grew progressively closer to Jesus, until ultimately God and man became one. So Jesus says in John 10:30, "I and the Father are one."

With wonder, we can think back on those days when Jesus walked on earth - O happy day! With awe, we can think back on those who felt their hearts burn within them in Jesus' presence. But despite the appearance of a world in which there is much conflict and fear, Jesus is with us still in his divine humanity bringing light and goodwill to all who turn away from selfish and solely worldly approaches to life. For us, in reading and living His Word, The Messiah will be present with us not only at Christmas but for all time.

All members and friends of The New Church in Victoria, and people everywhere, are wished a most blessed celebration of our Lord's birth into the world. May 2016 bring personal happiness and worldly harmony.

. . . the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.



Reflections on the Word

From *Daily Reading from The Word* by Reg Lang

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." (Luke 2:16)

The shepherds were intensely interested in what the angel had told them. This caused them to hurry to Bethlehem. But spiritually, haste means ardent desire; not hurrying against the clock of the natural world. When, in our hearts, we are eager to be in the presence of Jesus, our love draws us near to Him. Then like the shepherds, we find Mary and Joseph, for they represent the place within our religious life where Jesus comes. The babe lying in the manger, represents the new Jesus principle arising in our understanding.

Prayer: *O come, let us sing to the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before your presence, O Lord, with thanksgiving.*

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We have been invited by the Mt. Waverley - Chadstone InterChurch Council, of which we are a member, to attend their annual

Community Carols in the Village.

If you are able to support this event by attending, that would be great. It is recommended to take your own chair.

**Friday 11 December 2015 from 6.30pm to 8.30pm
Hamilton Place, Mt Waverley (IGA Car Park)**

Local choirs and music groups, including local schools, will perform Christmas music along with community carols singing.

More details from Marika Sivak - ph. 9806 0059

A Special Sunday at Mt. Waverley - 15th November 2015

The morning service was conducted, perhaps for the first time at least in recent history, by a female leader. It was a joy to welcome Mrs Judy Robinson, who travelled from Ballarat with husband Len, to bring us into communion with the Lord with a focus on aspects of His providence and developing a devotional practice of reading the Word. Judy's personal approach was well appreciated by all present. Towards the service end came the formal introduction to membership of the Church with Karl Robinson and Neville Jarvis inviting Norma Whelan and John Cook to come before the congregation to express their belief in the Sacred Scriptures and the teachings of the New Church as the means for leading a spiritual life. It was lovely to have Norma's daughter Robyn with us for this occasion.

After the service and refreshments, those members and friends who wished to stay on for a special members' meeting assembled in the hall. After being elected to take the chair, Karl Robinson explained that after a number of years as Society Secretary, Kim Bentley had decided to step down and the Committee had been delighted that Sophy Athan had agreed to assume this important role. Kim was thanked for his contribution over the years. Being the first general meeting since his passing into the spiritual world, a minute's silence took place to remember our beloved former Minister, the Rev. Chris Skinner.

The first two items on the agenda were to formally appoint Norma Whelan and John Cook as members of The New Church in Victoria by their signing of the Members Roll. They were welcomed into membership with enthusiastic applause.



A completely new Constitution for the Society, which had been worked on by several members over a long period, was tabled. With changes in legislation, the current Constitution was well out of date and it was important that it be replaced by a modern one which met current legal requirements and the needs of the Society. The new Constitution was unanimously approved.

Over a buffet-style homemade lunch, kindly and generously provided by Judy Robinson, the meeting continued with the fourth item on the Agenda ~ consideration of establishing a path towards a viable long term future for the New Church in Victoria. Discussion involved activities and suitable leadership to offer more people our helpful life-related teachings and generating the means for achieving this. The Church Board will now proceed to fully examine the feasibility of all options in terms of enabling the Church to better fulfil its objectives, with relocation to more suitable premises being a possibility.

QUOTABLE QUOTES FROM STELLA GREEN

I know of only one duty and that is love. - Albert Camus

Only a life lived for others is worthwhile. - Albert Einstein

My books are friends that never fail me. - Thomas Carlyle

Letter writing is the only device for combining solitude and good company.
- Lord Byron

I cried because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet.
- old proverb

No-one can make you feel inferior without your consent.
- Eleanor Roosevelt



Birthdays and Anniversaries

To all members and friends of The New Church in Victoria having birthdays and anniversaries during December 2015 and January 2016, we wish you a very happy and memorable celebration.

Christmas Morning Service

The Church Board wishes to encourage as many members and friends as possible to come along to Mt. Waverley on Christmas morning when Rev. David Moffat from Canberra will be leading our worship on this very special day in the Christian calendar. David spent a good number of years living in the Manse when his father, Rev. Trevor Moffat, was our Minister. An accomplished musician, David played our organ for services while in Melbourne.

Please note: the service will commence at 9.30am.

News of People and Events

The weekend of Sunday 27th saw the visit of Rev. David Millar from Adelaide where he is Director of Spiritual Training for the Australian New Church College. David talked to the Swedenborg Group on ***Swedenborg's Inner Journey: A roadmap for all*** which generated much interesting questioning. On the following day, David ran a half-day seminar from 11am to 3pm with 10 people attending. The session before lunch was a Bible Study and afterwards followed a talk titled *Cultivating an Intentionally Spiritual Practice* with plenty of time for discussion. David's style in conducting the Sunday morning service, which included the administration of the Holy Supper, was also well appreciated by all present. We are very grateful that David gave of his time to be with us. Our best wishes are with Norma Whelan who is currently suffering from a form of vertigo, something which caused her to fall heavily recently and knock her head. Thankfully it is gradually improving and it has not kept her away from services.

Another one to have a heavy fall was our organist, Graeme Scoble, resulting in several days in hospital. After a series of tests, the cause was diagnosed as a pinched nerve in the spine which treatment is relieving. While on a walking frame, he is gradually getting back to normal activities. Recorded hymn music without words etc. has been used in services during the meantime.

Duty Roster - Mt. Waverley

Flowers

Greeters

December 2015

6th Mr & Mrs K Drevermann
13th Mrs J Wilkins
20th Mrs N Whelan
25th Mrs M Sivak

Mr & Mrs K Drevermann
Mr G Fox
Mr J Cook
Mrs M Sivak

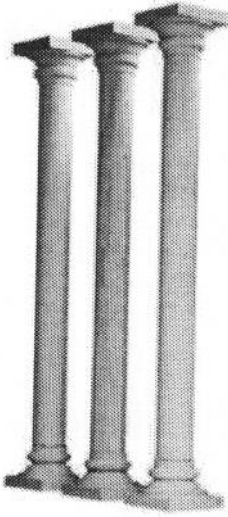
January 2016

3rd Mrs A Jarvis

Mr N Jarvis

Afterlife Explorers Conference - 29th to 31st January 2016 Shoppingtown Hotel, Doncaster

Afterlife science, spirituality, survival evidence and altered states of consciousness are subjects which will be explored in talks and workshops. The Swedenborg Centre, Sydney, will be selling books during the conference and if you would like to help on their stand, please contact Neville Jarvis. For more information about the conference - www.afterlifeexplorers.com.au



THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS

Continuing a series on our beliefs in plain English by
Rev. Julian Duckworth (Sydney).

This time we'll think about our **CONSCIENCE**.

The classic picture about conscience is the role of Jiminy cricket in the cartoon film 'Pinocchio' as the puppet goes from this wrong to that foolishness. Jiminy Cricket harangues him with what is the better thing he should do.

And many people see conscience to be just that - a mental 'tap on our shoulder'. Hey, you can do better than that! And while that can be useful, it's a bit sad to think of a person who keeps needing to be told not to do what they feel like doing. It doesn't seem to make any progress.

Real conscience according to our teachings is about making progress and making use of what you know is the better thing to do. In fact, the word 'conscience' simple means with Knowledge. So conscience gets into gear when you have sorted out a few things and you know that some things are right and that some things are plain wrong.

When you have got that far, it is then up to you to start living by your conscience - or knowledge - of such opposite choices, and to try and develop a clear conscience. Words like sincere, authentic, honest, upright, even fair, all seem part of such a life.

It doesn't make you a perfect person though. You'll still get drawn into tangles. But it equips you, and it gives you a good reference point. Unlike Pinocchio, you don't wish it would shut up and go away or carry on regardless.

And we're told that as we practise our love for God and love for each other, we build up a conscience which in fact is a wonderful gift from God. God wants us to make good choices and understand why, because when we do, we find we are more settled, surer, and kinder people.

Diary of Events for the Months of December 2015 and January 2016

Mt. Waverley (*All services commence at 10.30am unless advised*)

December

- 4th **Swedenborg Association Group** at 8pm. Screening of the Swedenborg Foundation video *How Angels Talk With Us* with discussion and a festive supper.
- 6th **Musical Service of Worship** led by Neville Jarvis with an emphasis on Advent
- 13th **Service of Worship** led by Brian Robinson ~ *Toy service*. Please bring a toy for a charity to distribute. If you are unable to be present that Sunday, you can bring a toy the previous week.
- 20th **Service of Lessons and Carols** with congregational participation. A special morning tea will follow.
- 25th **Christmas Day Service** led by **Rev. David Moffat commencing at 9.30am** (see separate notice on page 8)
- 27th **No service**

January

- 3rd **Service of Worship for New Year** led by Karl Robinson.
- 10th, 17th, 24th & 31st - No Services**

Advance Notices:

February 2016

- 7th **Musical Service of Worship** led by Neville Jarvis
- 28th **Service of Worship** led by **Rev. Ian Arnold** of Brisbane including the Sacrament of the Holy Supper

Ballarat and District Circle

A Worship Service/Discussion Group is held on the last Sunday in the month commencing 3.30pm at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Len & Judy Robinson, 318 Fussell Street, Ballarat.
Telephone 0353315638 for more information.

