

# Sydney Society Newsletter

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

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## *November 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.



*Behold, I saw the Lord standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. Then the Lord said, "I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel." (Amos 7.7-8)*

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*Hurstville and Roseville swap Ministers on Sunday Nov. 22nd*  
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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**

### **I COMPLETELY DENY IT... !**

I guess all of us well understand one idea about denying something. You actually learn this one in childhood when mum or dad or the teacher asks you why you did something or said something that caused an upset. And you know it wasn't you, it was ... them! So you deny it. And sometimes it was you, and yet you still deny it, and butter wouldn't melt in your mouth.

So we grow up with all this and carry it through into being grown up. The 'hot denial' that it certainly wasn't me, or that I couldn't possibly have been there at the time, or done that, or said whatever you are saying I said. And hopefully we are being truthful about that, which of course adds vehemence to our hot denial... 'I completely deny it!'

This is the meaning we all understand, and courts of law have their work cut out getting to the truth of the matter. And then we turn to the Bible and find that Sarah denied she laughed to hear she would have a child (yet she did laugh!) and that even Peter, with all his promise to not let Jesus be taken and killed, still he denied he knew the Lord three times. Yet Peter did know the Lord, so he was lying, and the Lord foresaw that he would. The Bible is accurate about our human nature.

And Jesus said, "He who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God." And in an epistle it puts it even more plainly, "If we deny Him, He will deny us." Would God do that? What would he deny us from? Heaven? But doesn't God accept us as we are? Indeed

he does but this isn't tit for tat. If we deny God, God can only let us suffer the consequences, which are that we feel God denies us access to him and the feeling of his love for us. He didn't move, we did.

This comes closer to the other meaning of denying. Let's start by using a situation in our life. There you are, walking round a beautiful building that is open to the public. And on one door it says, 'Access Denied' which is clearly telling you that you are not allowed to go in there. Nobody has accused you of anything, you are just definitely not allowed in. You might also find the same words coming up on your computer screen when you want to find out about something you aren't entitled to see.

So, denial also means prevention. Now let's get personal. What should we be preventing? Obviously it's those bad feelings, wrong thoughts, spitefulness, blame, labelling people and every kind of negativity you can come up with. The trouble is they keep on coming (never think otherwise!) and you can't actually stop that but you can deny them access, to you. "Access Denied" notice – keep it handy. The Chinese have an ancient saying, 'You can't stop the birds of paradise flying over your head but you can prevent them roosting in your hair.'

Just say, 'Sorry, but no. Not me this time. Go away and annoy somebody else. I'm not having it.' This is the positive denying we should be ready to use fifty three times every day. And it helps us understand why so much of the Bible is put as a 'Thou shalt not' which can sound restrictive (another childhood memory perhaps) when in fact it's amazingly liberating. Deny Access and get on with living a wonderful life. Simple, huh? But yes, it actually is.

Here's a short helpful passage from *Apocalypse Explained* to end on: "For someone to deny himself means to shun and be averse to evils because they are sins. When he turns away from them, he is led by the Lord, because he then does what the Lord commands, not from himself, but now from the Lord." (864) *Julian*

### **WHAT WILL BE HAPPENING FOR CHRISTMAS?**

Here, I'm simply putting list of the dates for Christmas services and activities. Later in the newsletter, on page 9, Ruth is talking about other practical things to do with our Christmas period. Please look at that too.

Tuesday December 1 <sup>st</sup>	Ashley House Christmas Party
Sunday December 6 <sup>th</sup>	Nativity and Gifts Service with a lunch
Wednesday December 9 <sup>th</sup>	Friendship Group Christmas Party/ Lunch
Sunday December 13 <sup>th</sup>	Morning Service Carols Outside in the evening
Wednesday December 16 <sup>th</sup>	Ashley House Carols and Giving Gifts
Sunday December 20 <sup>th</sup>	Service of Lessons and Carols
Friday December 25 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Day Service
Sunday December 27 <sup>th</sup>	Morning Service

### **NOTE –**

On Sunday January 3<sup>rd</sup> there will be the christening for Joel and Eva's son Linus during the church service.

Camp starts on Monday January 4<sup>th</sup>

There won't be services at Roseville on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> but there will be one on Sunday January 31<sup>st</sup> and thereafter.

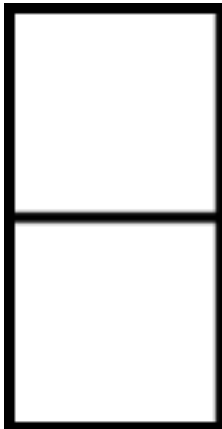
### **PULPIT SWAP ON SUNDAY NOVEMBER 22<sup>nd</sup>**

About twice a year Todd and Julian swap churches and this will be the case on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday this month. It's a change of voice, change of style, change of ... well, we're equal but different. It's all worked very well before and sure, it will be a great thing again this time, so do make a note of it coming up and come along.

## STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR NOVEMBER

Sunday	Steward(s)	Flowers
Nov 1 <sup>st</sup>	Wayne Kasmar	Ruth Duckworth
8 <sup>th</sup>	David Curry	Philip Brodsky
15 <sup>th</sup>	Michael Chester	Jan Primrose
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Dave Probert	Julie Smith
29 <sup>th</sup>	John Wilson	Christine Gospodarczyk

## A SHAPE TO PONDER



I once gave a talk using a white board, but the only thing I drew was a line across the middle. I noticed that as I was talking, people's glances kept going across to the whiteboard and the line, as if this was helping them picture what I was saying in words.

It's a great way to show a lot of spiritual teachings – I was using it to look at how life seems random (bottom) but actually is connected (top), which we call Providence. The two are in the one whole shape – like a blank domino! – but we need to distinguish between them.

There's a host of ways to use this. 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' God (top) came into the world as a man (bottom). Bible text (bottom) – Bible meaning (top). Live what you love. Spirit and Body. Inner-Outer. Correspondences, as above so below.

If you turn it sideways, it's different. Here it's about marriage, good and truth, race relations, teamwork, tension, balance. Upright and then sideways, for me, illustrates true parenting beautifully. It's really all you need. It's the diagram to end all diagrams!

And try seeing the numbers 0 through to 9 in the lines. And lots of the alphabet. Wow! But now find your own meanings in it.

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## SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

I am a part of all that I have met;

Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'

Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades

For ever and for ever when I move. - from "Ulysses" by Tennyson

*A rose can say "I love you",*

*Orchids can enthrall,*

*But a weed bouquet in a chubby fist,*

*Oh my, that says it all.*

- Barbara Johnson

A thing of beauty is a joy forever; its loveliness increases; it will

never pass into nothingness.

- John Keats

*Life is nothing without friendship*

- Cicero

One word frees us of all the weight and pain of life; that word is love.

- Sophocles

*Action is the antidote to despair.*

- Joan Baez

Stella Green



## SOCIETY NEWS

Ruth and I called in to see Gerda Meyer a couple of weeks back, in the German St Hedwig's Centre in Blacktown where she is now in the Garden Wing (full care). She immediately got up and greeted us and thanked us for coming. It was lovely to see her and she chatted to us happily about not bothering people too much and doing what you can do to help yourself. It was lovely hearing her philosophise.

Our very best wishes to Graham Hanna who recently had a mild heart attack and is currently in hospital to have it dealt with. If you are

reading this – or Elizabeth passes it on to you – we are all thinking of you, and sending prayers.

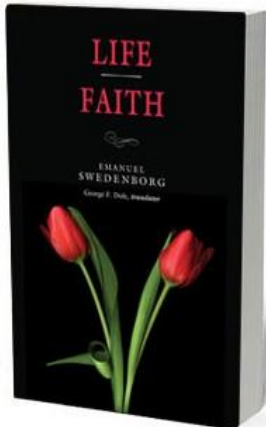
Congratulations to Josephine Gibbs (William's mum) on getting her Masters Degree recently. It will have involved a huge amount of work and Josephine totally deserves this achievement.

It's been lovely to have Leiane and Henry with us in church in recent weeks, and Leiane says she often went to see Cynthia while she was ill, and also just before she passed on.

At a recent Angel Service we thought about explaining things about God, heaven, angels and life to a five-year old child. What would you say that they could understand? What questions do they have? How do you get things across to such young minds? It all went really well and some good ideas came up and we tried them on each other.

## SWEDENBORG CENTRE NEWS

**New Book: *Life / Faith* 104 pages, pb.**



What does it mean to do good? What does it mean to be good? In the two short works *Life and Faith*, Swedenborg explores these questions and how they can shape our spiritual lives.

*Life* refers not to the vital force that sustains us but to the way we conduct our lives. This piece focuses on the concept of regeneration, or spiritual rebirth, as a process of consciously rejecting our own destructive impulses and internalizing divine love and goodness. Swedenborg includes an overview of the inner sense of the Ten Commandments as a way to understand the choice between good and evil.

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In 'Faith', Swedenborg argues that faith is not a choice to believe things that make no rational sense. Instead, he defines faith as an inner recognition of truth, and emphasizes that real faith can occur only in people who love others and treat them well.

Life / Faith is part of the New Century Edition of the Works of Emanuel Swedenborg (NCE). Traditionally titled *The Doctrine of Life* and *The Doctrine of Faith*, these short works are often published together with two others—*The Lord* and *Sacred Scripture*—under the title *The Four Doctrines*.

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 '*Life / Faith*' and \$4 postage and handling.

Michael Chester

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## SWEDENBORG ASSOCIATION CHRISTMAS PARTY



Join us to share in the joy of Christmas from 6 p.m. on Saturday December 12<sup>th</sup> in the Church hall.

Please respond by December 4<sup>th</sup> (to let us know you may come) either to Michael (9888 1066) or email [info@swedenborg.com.au](mailto:info@swedenborg.com.au) or to Ruth (9416 7032 ) or email [ruth@duckworth.me](mailto:ruth@duckworth.me) . BYO drinks and bring a plate please. Note you're welcome even if you only drop in for a bit.

### VISION VALLEY BOOKING DEADLINE – A MUST-BY DATE

For all kind of good reasons, we can only take bookings for the January camp up to Monday November 30<sup>th</sup>. It's to help us be able to let the site management know numbers in mid-December and it means people still have one month to book, but you won't be able to book after this cut-off date.



## **GIVING THIS CHRISTMAS**

Now it's November please can you start collecting items for the charities we support.

## **TOYS FOR POOR FAMILIES**

During November and by December 6<sup>th</sup> please enjoy buying a few toys to give to the Salvation Army Appeal. After the Nativity we will take them (please, unwrapped) to the Appeal Centre where parents who can't afford much can choose children's presents. You can leave them with me at any time or bring them to the Nativity Service.

## **LOLLIES FOR ASHLEY HOUSE**

As before, we will be giving gifts of lollies to the residents. Please bring a bag or two of lollies or chocolates suitable for elderly people. Fun-sized bars, soft lollies, Christmas tree chocolates or gold coins, marshmallows or even German biscuits are all suitable. There are 30 residents so it would be good if you can bring 30 of what you buy, by December 9<sup>th</sup> please.

## **EXODUS FOUNDATION**

Please be generous to those who cannot afford to buy a special meal for Christmas. Non-perishable items are welcome but you might also bring a tin of ham, Christmas cake or pudding, mince pies, soda or long life juice. Aldi has great Christmas food at reasonable prices. If you bring things in November, Exodus can then have it in good time.

## **MONEY**

The Offertories from the Carol Service (Dec 21) and Christmas Day will be given to Hope House in New Zealand. This is the fund that supports the fostering of children by the Keyworth family. I hope you'll feel able to make a generous donation.

And please don't forget to leave some coins for Pinki our sponsored child in India whenever you can. Thank you for all your care and generosity during the year.

Please ask me if you have any questions.

Ruth



**Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.**  
**North Ryde Group - Telephone: (02) 9888 1066**  
**website: [www.swedenborg.com.au](http://www.swedenborg.com.au)**



## **Swedenborg Readings on Regeneration**

**Facilitated by  
Julian Duckworth**

**FRIDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 2015  
at 7.45pm Swedenborg Centre,  
1 Avon Road, North Ryde**

**Cost: \$10 - includes light supper.**

Tonight's meeting concludes our readings for this year. It will begin with a few people sharing some of the beneficial insights they've gained from these readings. Then we continue our reading and sharing as usual.

Participants are not expected to read ahead. So no preparation is needed. If you are drawn to what we are doing but haven't attended before, coming along is still fine as the whole approach is informal and friendly and allows for casual attendance. Arrival time is 7:30pm for 7:45pm start. Finishing time is around 8:45-9pm followed by a special supper.

We've enjoyed the benefits in coming together to read Swedenborg's Writings so it will continue in 2016. One example is that when we read aloud we get stronger impressions from doing so than from normal silent reading. We learn more, we understand it better and we remember it for longer. Doing this in a group provides an opportunity to share ideas and views on what we read.

Regeneration, or spiritual growth and rebirth, is a lifelong process of self-reflection and transforming our inner selves through acts of love and kindness. It's central to Christian teaching as Jesus Christ said: "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." (John 3:3) Swedenborg has a great deal to communicate about rebirth that has been gathered into the book, "*Regeneration: Spiritual Growth and how it works*".

To find out more about the book go to  
<http://www.swedenborg.com/archive/products/regeneration/>

## THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



Continuing a series about our beliefs in plain English.  
This time it's 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.

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## **SOME RELAXATION**

Here is an easy game just to play in your head. You actually don't need anything, nor anyone else to do it. I do it quite often when I am walking the dog.

It's about going from one 4 letter word to another 4 letter word, by changing only one letter at a time to make another proper word, but keep heading for the goal of the last word.

It doesn't matter how few goes it takes, but you can do that if you like. I enjoy wandering all over the alphabet. And some word pairs are really challenging, while others are easy.

Here's an example

WELL to SAID      WALL – PALL – PAIL – PAID – SAID

I once tried EVIL to GOOD, but it's almost impossible!

Make up your own pairs and it's good if they work together like HEAD to TOES, or COAT to RAIN. Or even COME to LORD.

It's just relaxing, and you can do it anywhere you like, in your head.

### **FINAL FABLE**

A man thought he could sing, so he began to sing for his friends' pleasure. However, realising he couldn't sing, not even in tune, his friends tactfully offered him twenty dollars to go and sing somewhere else since he was so good and at the start of a brand new career. The man went away overjoyed.

A month later he came back and spoke indignantly to his old friends. 'You did me a disservice. I went and sang in the next town and there they offered me a hundred dollars or more if I would go to the town beyond theirs and entertain the townspeople. I am becoming rich and famous.'