

Sydney Society Newsletter

Issued by the Sydney Society of the New Church

Established in 1875

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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.



“ Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46 verse 10

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Buy and bring a tin, packet or bag for Exodus Foundation
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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 RESTFULNESS OF EQUINOXES

Several people over the last two weeks have each told me about this present time of the year being particularly enjoyable, easier and so good to be in, after the heat and humidity of summer. One or two of them have added that this time of the year – March to April – is one of the two equinoxes in the year. The other one is after winter and is during September and October.

It's all due to the earth's relative position to the sun, something which is always on the move. But at a certain point, and for quite a while for us, the positioning is in the middle, bringing the equinox and the pleasant weather. Note how 'equinox' is very similar to 'equal'.

It made me think about times in our lives where we feel alright, or restful, or well-balanced about things. A good word is 'okay' and we might find ourselves saying, "It's okay to stop and sit and do nothing for ten minutes" or "It's okay that my plan to join an exercise class never happened" or "It's okay that other people are like they are and not what I expect them to be like".

Thoughts like these make us calm and still. Calmness and stillness are really important for us, for our blood pressure!, for our well-being and very importantly, for our opportunity to be open to God and to feel that we are always being loved and led by God. Calmness and stillness can also be a time when we understand ourselves a bit more, and see that certain traits we have need watching or even turning away from.

You don't get such realisations when you are in a bad mood or angry (heat) and you don't get them when you are in worry and anxiety (cold). We get these moments far more when we're calm and still.

The regularity of the year's two equinoxes, six months apart, seems (to me) to suggest that the Lord provides us with regular times to be in our 'equinox' and get some R&R (rest and recuperation) and after a while, do a bit of thinking and exploration.

In the Bible, Jesus undergoes the temptations in the wilderness at the end of which, when 'the devil had left him' the angels came and ministered to him. In the Bible, the storm on the sea terrifies the disciples while Jesus is asleep with his head on a pillow! And Jesus, woken, rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace, be **still**!" And there was a great **calm**.

Equinoxes are relatively short before they move on to the heat or the cold. When we get a period of being calm and still we might think that this is the way to always be – calm and still. But it doesn't work out like that. We can't keep it there from now on. We also have to live our life! So it is important to have it while it is there, and benefit from it.

I came across some excellent quotes to do with 'Be still, and know that I am God' (see page 1) and I have selected a few of them. "Wherever you are, be there." "Stillness is the only thing in this world which has no form. But then, it is not really a thing, and it is not of this world." "That stillness and vastness that enables the universe to be what it is, is also there, in you." "Learn to find stillness in your life, for it is then that God's ever still voice can be best heard."

Yes, it takes effort and trial and practice to learn how to be still, and we may sometimes wonder if it is possible. It is, if we take on the words of the psalm, "Be still and know that I am God." 'I am God' is God telling us gently but firmly that He is there, He knows and understands, and He is handling everything including you and me, for the best outcome. Maybe start that way round, with God. ***Julian***

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SOCIETY NEWS

There is quite a lot of news this issue so I have brought it a bit further forward.

We were very sad to hear that Elizabeth Kemmis had an accident out walking in Tasmania, involving her with a passing car. It had led to Elizabeth being taken to hospital in West Hobart where it was confirmed that she has a broken foot and a cracked pelvis. Graham Hanna has sent several emails to me to say that Elizabeth will be transferred to Sydney at the end of March and will probably be able to be at home.

We all send Elizabeth our love and prayers and it is good to hear Graham saying that she is often in good spirits. It is also good that this accident came towards the latter part of their time in Tasmania which they have both been enjoying so much.



The Harvest Thanksgiving went very well on March 13th and a lot of work went into going to the markets, arranging the church display, the running of the service, the preparation for the harvest lunch, and then transporting the boxes of fruit and vegetables to Mission Australia. Thank you Everybody!

I was in hospital through all of this and I found myself relaxing,

knowing that this extra busy service was all going to run through very well, which it did.

On Palm Sunday, the service was taken by Dave Probert and the church was decorated with palm branches and some lovely accompanying ferns.

On Good Friday we were 11 at the front of church looking at Psalm 22 and how it is descriptive in many ways of the events of the crucifixion. We had some good interaction all through the service and some very helpful insights were shared.

Easter Sunday brought a good number of people to church, including many children, and the visitors included Kevin, Erlinda and Denise Attwater. Kevin and Erlinda are down in Sydney due to the birth for Krystal and Fred of their fourth child, a daughter, Raffaele Ossana.

Also visiting was Margaret Teed, daughter of Rev John Teed and Mary Teed. It was lovely for several of us to meet and chat with Margaret who is known to some.

I needed to be in a wheelchair to take the service, which didn't make for any problems, and we also sang three hymns or songs, written about Easter for the service and sung to tunes we know. The sermon and children's talk was about ways of rolling back some of our stones blocking the ways in.

My own health situation, which most people are aware of, is that I have an auto-immune condition affecting both my feet. It is still waiting for confirmation after a nerve biopsy, but looks to be Vasculitis which is inflammation of the blood vessels. This then affects nerves and leads to severe pain at times. My hope is to return to normal as much as that can be achieved. Hence the current wheelchair!

STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR APRIL

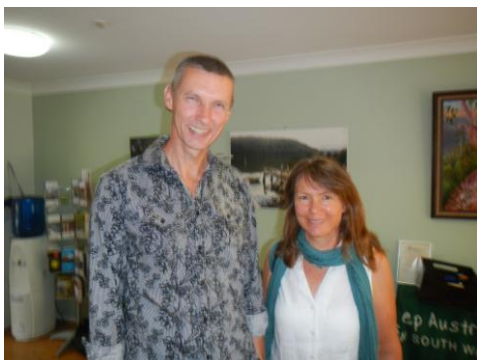
Sunday	Steward(s)	Flowers
3rd (Not Sacrament)	Rhonda Hall	Lizzie St Quintin
10th	Michael Chester	Glen Hart
17th	John Wilson	Christine Gospodarczyk
24th ANZAC	Graham Hanna	Elizabeth Kemmis


AND...

Five of us who are Angel Service goers had the rare opportunity on Good Friday to see and even hold an Oscar trophy, 4kgs and layered in gold, the real thing. This was awarded to the Sound Recording team who did Mad Max and the top person – a friend of the host of the party gathering – came along with it. How good is that!

Toning & Sound Healing Event

date: Thursday, 14th April, 2016
time: 7:30pm-8:30pm,
light refreshments after
place: The New Church, 4 Shirley Rd,
Roseville
contact: Joe 0402 202 456
or Ellie 02 9456 7576
suggested donation: \$10



Join us to experience this hour-long toning session and experience the healing, calming sounds of our Tibetan bowls and the remarkable overtones of the

natural human voice. Part of the session may be spent showing some techniques of the practices if that is desirable to the participants (no musical skill is required for this). Past participants have reported that these toning sessions have soothed their mind and even touched the soul. Invite a friend. Bring a cushion if you wish to sit or lie on the floor and bring a water bottle to stay hydrated. Wear loose relaxing clothing as if for a yoga class and we suggest contributing \$10 as a donation towards costs (more if you wish). The presenters will be Joe Vandermeer and Ellie Frances who have been conducting sound healing sessions for over two decades as well as having experience in many other complementary music and therapy activities.

SNIPPET FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

Great things are done when men and mountains meet; these are not done by jostling in the street.
– William Blake

Don't confuse fame with success. Madonna is one, Helen Keller is the other.
- Erma Bombeck

Evil triumphs when good men do nothing. - Edmund Burke

You will not be punished for your anger, you will be punished by your anger.
- Buddha

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.
- Marcel Proust

Give thanks for unknown blessings already on their way.
- Native American saying

Stella Green

ANZAC DAY



While 2015 was the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign, 2016 is the centenary of the formal creation of ANZAC Day and the first commemorations. In 1916 parades were held in London, with Australian and New Zealand and other Commonwealth territories sending

survivors and wounded soldiers to take part. In Australia, towns who had lost men at Gallipoli began to mark April 25th and the Dawn Service developed as the most appropriate way to commemorate the nation's remembrance.

After the end of the Vietnam War, ANZAC Day became neglected, but grew to what it is today when families and young people in large numbers seek to honour previous generations and their tragic losses.



We will include ANZAC Day in our service on Sunday April 24th.

Swedenborg Centre News

Meeting Room change

The Dr Moore room which is next to the Book Shop and Library is being rented out. This will help reduce the costs of running the Swedenborg Centre. Graham St Quintin and Charlie Zarb have been involved in making these arrangements. A lovely lady Donna whose business is next door is requiring more space. She will be moving from Suite 5 to Suite 2 (The Dr Moore Room) in mid-April. The Swedenborg Association meetings/workshops that are usually held in this room will need to be held in a new venue. Walter's April Workshop 'Keeping a Spiritual Journal' will be held in the Church Hall. Ruth has been kept informed of these changes and it's much appreciated that she has said the church premises are available for future SAA meetings.

Splendors of the Spirit.

Many of you have seen the excellent film '*Splendors of the Spirit*' which is about the life and legacy of Emanuel Swedenborg. It was released in 2006. By interweaving nature photography, expert interviews, computer animation, and rare, archival stills with dramatic re-enactments and contemporary documentary footage, this program conveys the essential and ever-relevant insights brought back by Swedenborg from his unprecedented explorations of the spiritual worlds. It goes for 60 minutes and there is a lot of wonderful information packed into this film.

I only recently discovered it is now freely available on the internet. For those who haven't seen the film, it's highly recommended. If watching it from the internet is not for you, you can always borrow or buy the DVD from the Swedenborg Centre. And if the opportunity arises for you to recommend the film, sharing the link is an easy way to do it. The link is - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdzeFKh9_D4

With best wishes, Michael Chester

THE MONTH OF APRIL

April was the second month for the Romans since Mars, the god of war of which the Romans did much, began their year with the month of March.



April is more peaceful and it comes from the timing in the year when most flowers are opening. Since Romans actually spoke Latin – which is itself a remarkable thing to contemplate in terms of asking a friend what he’s been up to recently or inviting a young lady to go with you to the forum – they used their word for ‘to open’ or ‘aperire’ and this got turned into ‘aprilis’ and eventually, for us, April.

I often give a prayer inviting us to be willing to be more open. It tends to go something like this ~

Lord, as we live our lives and take part in so many things, help us to be willing to be more open and more receptive. First of all, to be open to You, Lord, so that we are guided and led by You. Then let us be open to your Word which tells us what is true and warns us against what is wrong. Then open our hearts to be more loving and feel the needs in others’ cares. Open our minds to think sensibly and fairly about the issues of life. Then open our eyes and ears so that we see and hear what we should. Open our hands to be people who take part and offer help. Then open our lives to be glad to be alive and to be who we are. And we end by acknowledging You as the Father of us all, who is the source of all the good that is done. Amen

Let’s then be more open during this coming month of April. Find your way to.

Our church teachings say that the Garden of Eden is the state of someone who is open. All his thoughts, all he pictures in his mind, and everything he says and does lies open, and it lies open from the Lord who flows in with no resistance with love and faith and the person realises that it is so.



Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.

North Ryde Group - Telephone: (02) 9888 1066

website: www.swedenborg.com.au



Keeping a Spiritual Journal workshop

Presented by Walter Mason

SATURDAY 23RD APRIL 2016 at 9:30am

4 Shirley Rd, Roseville

Cost: \$15; concession \$12

(including refreshments)

Tap in to true creative thinking and become aware of the vast reserves of wisdom within. Come on a creative journey with writer, blogger and speaker Walter Mason as we combine the insights of meditation and mindfulness with the joy of keeping a regular journal. Journal keeping can be approached from a place of profound stillness and great wisdom. Go deep within to unleash the amazing insights of your spiritual journey. In this workshop we will:

- Set intentions and learn to sit with our creative wisdom
- Acknowledge the power of ritual to build our strength and determination to truly lead the spiritual life
- Think about writing as personal expression and spiritual transformation
- learn to open our minds, gain wisdom and communicate our ideas through writing
- Discover the journal as companion and start writing daily with passion and conviction
- Find out how we can believe in our own talents and gifts

Walter Mason is a writer, spiritual tourist and spreader of joy. Walter is associated with the University of Western Sydney's prestigious Writing and Society Research Group, where he has completed a PhD on the history of self-help literature in Australia. You can find out more about him at www.waltermason.com.

THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



Continuing a series about our beliefs in plain English.

This time we're looking at **TIME IN HEAVEN**

Time, in this world, is a division of periods into manageable chunks called years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes and seconds. You know where you are with it if you use a calendar or wear a watch.

But we also have a sense of time passing which doesn't work the same as a watch. An afternoon can drag on and seem an eternity if we're waiting ages to be served in every shop. But that same afternoon can go by so quickly if we're socializing with friends. Goodness, 5 o'clock already. It can't be!

Let's call that personal time. It is much closer to the way in which time passes in heaven. Nobody in heaven would ever say 'It's half past two.' But those who are in heaven know that when they are carrying out some use which is heavenly work that the Lord asks them to do, this has a sequence which will be as long as it needs to be, with a beginning, a middle and an end to it.

The beginning is the feeling good about it and looking forward to helping it happen. The middle is the doing it, so involved that any sense of ourselves gets lost. The end is the completion of it and, in heaven, the joy and acknowledgement that this was the Lord's doing because all good is the Lord's.

"How long did it take?" The angels can't answer because 'long' isn't something they know anything about. It simply was. Every moment during it was taken up with it and was intently done without any disturbance to it.

"What do you do afterwards?" Again, angels don't get 'afterwards'. They might well worship God or they may phase into another joyful use which followed on from what they've just been doing. This is time in heaven.

SOME NEW EASTER HYMNS AND SONGS

I felt the need to write several bright hymns for Easter because most others are very heavy-going. I'm putting them here for anyone to use if they want to. Check how the words scan with the tune.

4. **For little children**, to Twinkle Twinkle – put in actions maybe
Jesus rises, Easter's here! He is with us, He is here.
Loving, helping, being there, asking us our love to share.
Jesus rises, Easter's here! Jesus with us, God so dear. (Repeat)

2. **Lord Jesus, Victory!** (to tune of 'Fairest Lord Jesus')

1. Lord Jesus, Victory! Risen now to set us free,
Free now to love and serve You alone.
Guide and correct us, guard and protect us,
Lord Jesus, our victorious King.
2. Lord Jesus, Conqueror! Risen now, You we adore,
Living your life in such constancy.
No cross could hold you fast, all death is downward cast,
Lord Jesus, conquering King and God.
3. Lord Jesus, Glorified! Risen now, with us abide,
Give us the will to walk in Your way.
Be then our sword and shield, so that we never yield,
Glorified Lord, our Strength, our Friend.

3. **We celebrate** (sung to 'Richmond' – Praise to the Holiest)

1. We celebrate our risen Lord, and bring ourselves to Him with praise;
He gives us renewal and shows us we're free to be with Him all our days.
2. He died that death will be no more, and life is there for us all;
His love broke the dark of a stone-covered tomb, outside the city wall.
3. There in His Word the story is told, the passion, the victory.

That, hearing His steadfast resolve through it all, He did this for you and for me.

4. Then celebrate our risen Lord, and bring ourselves to Him with praise;

And live our lives knowing He's there with His power, to help us, to help us always.

FINAL FABLE

There was a man who wanted to find the meaning of life and he realised he needed to go and find out for himself. He came to the edge of a great dark forest and met a man who told him to go deep into the forest. After several hours he met another man and asked him where he should go. 'Go deeper into the forest,' he said. After more hours passed he met another man and asked him where he should go. "Go deeper into the forest," was the answer. So he kept on going, and eventually came out of the forest into bright sunlight and a very similar scenery to where he had first gone in.