

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.



*“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness
and all these things shall be added to you.” Matthew 6.33*

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Our New Church Day service is on Sunday June 19th
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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 TREE OF LIFE

I really enjoy looking at trees. They are so complete in themselves. They cover suburban areas with a bold presence and a relieving greenery which softens the otherwise straight lines and squareness of new units. Yesterday we saw a huge tree standing between the road and a seven-level multi storey car park and I saw that every level of the car park got an equal share of its branches and leaves. May it never get a council order to be taken out!

The Bible begins and ends with the same images. In the garden of Eden were the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil from which Eve and then Adam ate, beguiled by the serpent. Four rivers flowed out of Eden. In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, at the end there's again mention of the tree of life and the river of the waters of life. It is like 'bookends'.

If we are mindful of Eden and how it got lost, the ending of the Bible – where once again the tree and river are included – seems to tell us that Eden can be regained. Not as it was, but now different. And the difference is that our experience of living and growing and trying hard and sometimes struggling and overcoming has turned us into different people with more maturity and a sense of God.

The book of Revelation version of the tree and the river is curious to say the least. Here's what it says, "*In the middle of its street, and on*

either side of the river, was the tree of life.” This looks as if the river is flowing right through the middle of the tree of life! But I don’t think rivers actually do that. But I think I am missing the whole point. Here’s why.

We are celebrating New Church Day later in June. We often use the book of Revelation. We often make use of the vision of the Holy City, and if you closely examine everything about the Holy City, called the New Jerusalem, you see that everything is being brought together and coalesced. This is because, spiritually, the vision is about the ideal where everything has become perfected. The city is a perfect cube is one example. No need of the sun or the moon because God illuminates it and the Lamb is its light, is another.

So the tree and the river which are separate in Eden are now united in Revelation, like one thing. The tree of life means love and faith, the river of the waters of life means spiritual truths which are to do with love and faith and which help us understand them. They each mean what they do because a tree grows and fruits and a river flows with its water and flows into our mind from God. I hope this quick explanation makes sense.

Brought together, what we have is the ideal picture of our life, and for us now, here, something for us to work towards. We are to become integrated. Our beliefs are to be the prompt for the way we live our lives and not be something kept separate from that. What we think is to be the same as what we do or say. What we love is to be the same as the way we are.

Think about what that would be like, being like that. No pretence, no simulation, but genuine honesty and transparency. Perhaps this is why the vision of the Holy City talks about its light being clear as crystal and its streets being pure gold, like transparent glass. Nothing is to be hidden in the ideal. This is something for us to work towards, still with care in this world, but aiming for an authentic life which has been brought about by God with us, and with our co-operation.

Julian

AFTER THE ASSEMBLY



Back Row: Philip Richards, Ken Barns, Julian Duckworth, Cor Visser-Marchant, Trevor Moffat, Carolyn Heldon, Darren Brunne, Randall Rabone, David Millar.

Next Row: Kevin Attwater, Lesley Longstaff, Tammy Rush, Graham Hanna, Lyn Rocke.

Next Row: Richard Keyworth, David Moffat, Graham Hall, Wayne Kasmar.

Front Row: Ruth Duckworth, Bev Shepherd, Judy Robinson, Pauline Merrit, June Johnson, Ros Taylor, Gaye Heldon. **Photo,** Len Robinson
Ian Arnold was also present at times over the two days.

The Assembly in Canberra was successful in being time for representatives from around Australia and New Zealand to meet up, to speak out, express feelings, suggest plans for the future and hear quite a number of varied presentations. The various motions and decisions that were made will be taken to a General Meeting later this year, for

action. I believe everyone who was there was very pleased to have been part of it. Everybody contributed.

I felt that the Assembly gradually picked up its own momentum and it became closer together over the two days. I also felt that the relationship between the Board and local Societies will have been very much helped by having the Assembly.

It was said and agreed that we should hold an Assembly every few years, to keep the process going and to bring people physically together.

Here is not really the place to list what was covered or what motions were put forward but this information is available. See me, or contact Kevin Attwater (NCIA Secretary) or talk to someone who was there.

Our two Sydney Representatives, Graham Hall and Wayne Kasmar, reported to our Committee with enthusiasm and some details at its May meeting.

I had the enormous pleasure to step down from my national Presidency and to induct Rev. David Moffat into the Presidency early on the first morning. It was very moving. David did an excellent job of chairing the Assembly for virtually the whole of the two days.



The induction included a well-worded service and the laying on of hands, and the presentation of a President's copy of the Word which includes inscriptions of three previous Presidents.

After the service everyone came in a circle around David and gave him their blessing, a hug, and some encouraging words. This was a significant moment for the New Church in Australia and New

Zealand. We all wish David well in his new position for the church.

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SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

Our days are happier when we give people a bit of our heart rather than a piece of our mind. - Anon

Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family in another city. - George Burns, comedian

Some people are so special that once they enter your life, it becomes richer and fuller and more wonderful than you ever thought it could be. - Anon

I have just three things to teach : simplicity, patience, compassion. These three are your greatest treasures. - Lao-tzu

Instead of counting your days, make your days count. - Church sign

I thank God for my handicaps, for through them I have found myself, my work and my God. - Helen Keller

Stella Green

FRIENDSHIP GROUP NOTES

Our next get-together will be on Wednesday June 1st and we start with coffee and cake from 10.45 a.m. Julian will be giving us a talk about the places in the Bible where the word "Behold!" comes.

Afterwards we will enjoy our shared lunch together. We hope that you will think about joining us, if you hear about this before the day. Everyone is welcome.

Glen Hart

PULPIT SWAP – SUNDAY JUNE 26th

As several times before, Todd and Julian will exchange congregations to the mutual benefit of everyone on the above date. Make a note of it and do your level best to be there to enjoy it and give your support.

FROM OUR PLAN SPONSOR GIRL, PINKI

Dear Friend, Namaste!

I am fine here and hope that you are all doing well. We are glad to receive your letter and a birthday card. I go to my village's school for study every day. I like studying Hindi. In our school NIDAN, the partner with PLAN here, provided playing equipments from which me and my friend used to play. In our village many programs are organising. I participated in Girls Day and learnt that why we celebrate Girls Day. What do you like most? I extend my sincere thanks for your valuable support for communities and children's all round development.

From Pinki Kumari

STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR JUNE

Sunday	Steward	Flowers
5 th (Sacr.)	Graham Hanna	Elizabeth Kemmis
12 th	John Wilson	Lynne Twemlow
19 th (New Church Day)	Dave Probert	Ruth Duckworth
26 th	Michael Chester	Philip Brodsky

THE 2016 CENSUS AND OUR CHURCH

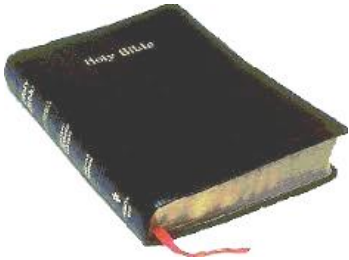
The census will be done during August which is still some time off. I had a notice from Kevin Attwater, the Secretary of the New Church in Australia about the official and recognised name of the New Church.

When we come to fill in the Census, we need to put in the 'religion' box the words 'The New Church in Australia' which is our only recognised and registered name. The government won't recognise 'New Church' or 'Sydney Society' or 'Roseville New Church' and it is important for statistics that we get it the way it should be. Thanks.

CAMP WANAWONG

Our friends in Hurstville are going ahead with the camp in Loftus on Friday June 17th to Sunday June 19th. There will be quite a good number going. Todd invited me to go too, and I will be there, actively so, on the Friday and Saturday, returning on Saturday evening so that I will be around for our New Church Day service on the Sunday.

NEVER PUT ANYTHING ON TOP OF A BIBLE !



Each week, getting ready for Sunday, I think about a young lady. There I am, with books and papers and Bibles all out on my desk top. The young lady who comes to mind once said to me that it is so very wrong to put ANYTHING on top of a Bible. It's disrespectful. It's unholy. You just don't do that!

And so I don't. If you could watch me, you would see my hand hover and move, ensuring that the Bible I have on my desk – closed or open – never gets covered. A comment that led to a lifetime's practice.

NEW CHURCH DAY SERVICE

This year, our celebration of New Church Day on June 19th happens to fall on a Sunday.

One of our teachings about this is that on June 19th the Lord sent out the disciples (now angels) throughout the spiritual world to proclaim the message that it is the Lord Jesus Christ who reigns and his kingdom will be for ages and ages.

That, of course, may well sound strange to our earthly ears, but I think it would be helpful to look at that broadcast message and think about what it is saying and even more, at the difference it makes to our lives.

I hope you will be able to join us for the service and our celebration.

ABOUT ELECTIONS

Australia is going to the polls on July 2nd. I've always found the following passage from Heaven and Hell 218 helpful.

"People who govern in heaven are those who enjoy love and wisdom and because of that wish well to everyone and from wisdom know how to make sure it happens. They don't control and command but minister and serve. They do not make themselves more important than people but less so, because they put the welfare of the community and their neighbour first and their own later. What is first is more important and what is later is less."

SOCIETY NEWS

Ruth and I were able to enjoy a short time away in the middle of May, up in Port Macquarie, where we stayed with Kevin and Erlinda Attwater. They were with us in church at Easter, along with their youngest daughter, Denise.

Many thanks to Dave Probert for taking the service while we were away.

On Mothers Day we enjoyed a special Morning Tea. Earlier in church we looked at the unusual relationship which Jesus had with his mother. While he would have loved her very much, in the gospels he only ever calls her 'Woman'. We also found ways of relating this to our own growing up and adult independence.

Our good friend and organist of past years, Roy Simmonds, is currently in hospital after a fall at home. Thank you to the considerable number of people who have been in to see him or sent him flowers. We all wish Roy a steady improvement.

I recently conducted the thanksgiving service for Leonard Eldridge who is John Eldridge's father. It was a full chapel with quite a few people standing at the sides and back.

The Angel Service meets together most Saturdays and continues its more informal approach in offering an alternative kind of worship and devotion. We recently had one in which we came up with some personal views about life that we each felt we had sorted out and some others where 'the jury is still out'.

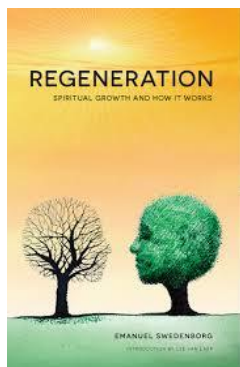
Each Tuesday morning during school term weeks, we have a meditation group on a Tuesday morning starting at 9.30 a.m. with some discussion and then being led in a guided meditation. If you would be interested in joining this please contact Kathryn Baker. Her mobile number is 0410 166 482

Winter is virtually here. Keep warm and stay well.

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SWEDENBORG ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

We have been holding a Swedenborg Reading Group for almost two years now and it is very much appreciated by those who take part.



We have been using the book called 'Regeneration' which is a compilation of five sections from Swedenborg which help us understand what regeneration or spiritual practice involves.

We have just finished the third section and are ready to move on to the fourth one which is about the different levels of our spiritual life. One way of describing these is to call these different levels Love, Wisdom and Usefulness. They are all important.

We sit in a circle and each of us reads one or two paragraphs in turn. After a full circle of reading we open it all up for any comments about what has come up in the reading, or any questions. Then we continue with the reading and go round once more, perhaps about three times in all.

It is simple, it doesn't need any preparation, and it is amazing what comes up in the discussion. I believe it is another form of personal worship and devotion. You may be interested in joining in, or trying it out, and you are welcome to do that.

We meet on the fourth Friday of the month, in the church, and it is at 6.30 p.m. if there is a talk afterwards, or we start at 7.45 p.m. if there is not a talk that evening. Just come along and join in. Handouts of the section we are using are available for everyone.

There is tea or coffee and biscuits afterwards. And there is no charge made for those who come to this activity.

If you would like more information about anything you are welcome to contact either Julian (9416 7026) or Michael (9888 1066)

THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



Continuing a series about our beliefs in plain English.
This time we're looking at **FUTURE EVENTS**.

This one isn't such a major teaching in the New Church but we do have some helpful insights about it. However, it is a major teaching in many churches, among those who think about the end of the world, the physical return of Jesus, and who see in the words of the Bible the actual prophecies about such things. You may have come across these at times.

Let's start with the idea of us knowing anything about the future. We do have some teaching about that, and it is that we are not allowed to see into the future because if we did, we would try and interfere with what we saw, for our own advantage. This would be right against the order of things.

Only the Lord knows the things about the future because he is not fixed in time like we are, but sees eternal things as being present. This gives the Lord full knowledge of all outcomes and especially the way we are heading. Because of this and because he cares about us so much, he not only keeps it from us but also manages it with infinite care.

The one thing the Lord wants is for us to choose the life which leads to heaven. He can't make us do that, nor would he, but he can do several things. He can steer things so that we are kept from knowing truths before we are ready for them. He can also make us forget harmful memories and quash them so that they no longer trouble us.

Another thing the Lord can do, especially if we are following a spiritual path in our life, is to let us become aware of our current trends. And then, seeing the way we are heading in some selfish direction, we stop, and choose the better way.

We should not be too concerned about the future but live in the present, and trust the Lord with all our futures.

THE CAMP IN JANUARY 2017



This will be at “**The Tops Conference Centre**” from Sunday January 1st to Saturday January 7th. Our area will be the Grevillea site.

“The Tops” Centre is at Stanwell Tops which is about one hour south of Sydney, on the far side of the Royal National Park. It is about a kilometre from the coast and beaches and set in quite stunning landscape. Nearby, for example, people go hang-gliding off the cliffs, and whether we can join them or not, it is amazing to watch them.

All dormitories include ensuite facilities and onsite activities can include abseiling, rock climbing, archery, high ropes course, giant swing and other exciting physical activities.

The Hurstville Society is taking on the organisation of the Camp and they really hope that you will seriously think about coming along.

You can book for the camp either online or by filling out the hard copy form and posting it off with your deposit. We have copies for you.

Much more information and booking forms are available on our national website – newchurch.net.au/camp-thetops-2017

Subsidies are available by application. Deposits and final numbers are needed by September 1st this year. Final payment by December 1st.

Please get your booking in as early as you can.

FINAL FABLE

The congregation was on an outing and they became lost in the forest they were in. They searched for hours to find their way to get out but to no avail. Exhausted, they ended up sitting where they were. Suddenly they saw their beloved Teacher coming towards them. “Oh Teacher,” they cried, “show us the way out of the forest.” He replied, “I was hoping that you would show me.”