

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, while believing that they are from the Lord working in him and through him.



*Then Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness
being tempted for forty days. And in those days he
ate nothing.... Luke 4.1-2*

.....
Our Harvest Thanksgiving service is on Sunday March 12th
.....

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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

JESUS – AND US – IN THE WILDERNESS

The 40-day period of Lent begins on Wednesday March 1st. It's about two related things. First, it commemorates the time when Jesus was in the wilderness being tempted – stoned to bread, the pinnacle of the temple, all the kingdoms of the world, and he resisted these with emphatic verses from the Bible. Second, it is a time for us, in the weeks before Easter, of some heart-searching and self-denial. So, during Lent people sometimes take the challenge of giving up something they particularly like. In today's world where we have many things "too easy" that kind of challenge is important and probably good for us.

One of the important New Church teachings is that the Lord's life on earth and our lives run in parallel. They are distinct of course, but they are also similar, especially those to do with our inner states of what we think, how we feel and what we choose and determine.

A very good example of this comes when Jesus washes the feet of his disciples in John 13. You know how it goes with Peter's protest. When Jesus had done the washing, he said this: "If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an **example**, that you should do as I have done to you."

When we read about Jesus being tempted in the wilderness we help ourselves by trying to identify with what Jesus must have gone through. He being God, would have had those temptations sweep through him many times more strongly than we ever will, but when we understand

spiritual temptations (thoughts, feeling, decisions...) we will have them as well.

“Turning stones into bread” for Jesus would be the temptation to do just that and prove to everyone that he, Jesus a man, was Jesus the God. People would come running! But Jesus had to overcome that easy road and prove nothing but live as a man.

For us, the temptation would be to make any truth (“stone”) we have learned simply sit in our mind and satisfy us by knowing it, and do good the way we want to do it, without thinking about the Lord and what he asks of us.

“The pinnacle of the temple” for Jesus would be the temptation that since he was God then no harm would come to him should he throw himself off from the temple tower.

For us, the temptation would be to do things in our lives that we know are wrong and even dangerous to our soul – like harbouring resentment – and then expect the Lord to save us in spite of our foolishness, for after all, I do believe in God and I go to church to show that.

“To be given all the kingdoms of the world” for Jesus would have been the wish and power to have all people as his own. In a good way, that is wonderful, but the “devil” added something: “I will give you all this if you will fall down and worship me.” Jesus could have chosen this, but he refused.

For us, that temptation is about giving up our attempt (never easy!) to learn and do the Lord’s will and to manage our intentions carefully and instead go after a life that revolves around ourselves.

We’re told that these three temptations cover all the temptations that Jesus ever had, and they also do that for us. Be aware of this during Lent.

Julian

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FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Our meeting in February was also our AGM. Glen and Ruth were proposed to continue as Secretary and President and thanked warmly for their work.

We also decided on our text for the year which is – Psalm 103 verse 1

We send our love and best wishes to Stella Green and Anne Stephen who are both in Mount Wilga rehab hospital receiving treatment, and our thanks to those who have visited them there.

Our Harvest on Sunday March 12th will involve us in displaying the produce on the day before, Saturday 11th, from around 2 p.m. If you are able to come to help with this, that would be magnificent. Thanks.
Glen Hart

Myriam Albert - Change of Address in Mauritius

Since mid-January, Myriam has been settling into her unit with the help of friends there. She would really enjoy hearing from anyone who would like to contact her –

A 01 LeMaire Complex, Rue Henri LeMaire, Beau Bassin, Mauritius,
Indian Ocean

NEW CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA CAMP 2018

We are glad to report that the camp will be at Alexandra Headlands on the Sunshine Coast from Monday January 1st until Sunday January 7th 2018. Bookings and deposits can be now organised online at <http://newchurch.net.au/alexandra-park-family-camp-2018> or you can use the printed booking form and leaflet which will soon be available. Copies of these will be in the church and hall bookstands. The campsite, which we have used once before, is very close to the beach and shops. The nearest airport is Sunshine Coast airport which is not too far away at Maroochydore.

The usual request for bookings or definite expressions of interest by September 1st are needed again this year for our minimum numbers.

VISIT TO SYDNEY OF REV HOWARD THOMPSON

Some of you will already know that Howard Thompson who is currently serving as minister to the Colchester (UK) General Church Society expressed interest in coming to Sydney after Julian's retirement in May 2018.

Howard, his wife Debra and their youngest son Lance (12) will be in Sydney from Monday April 3rd until Saturday April 15th. It will be a very good opportunity for them to meet many of us and for us to meet them.

Howard will be taking the service on Sunday April 9th and we very much hope that you will be able to be there that day. We will have lunch together after the service and stay on into the afternoon.

There will be other opportunities to meet up with them which we will let you know about when the program of the visit is finalised. The Committee has been organising the interest shown and also the visit for several months.

There are quite a number of church activities during the period when the Thompsons are here and to these we should add some sightseeing and school interviews, as well as some time over at Hurstville. Todd and Jenn Beiswenger know Howard and Debra very well.

Please note this period they are here, especially the April 9th service.

STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR MARCH

Sunday	Steward(s)	Flowers
5th (Sac.)	David Curry	Lynne Twemlow
12 th (Harvest)	Rhonda Hall	Friendship Group
19 th	Michael Chester	Jan Primrose
26 th	Dave Probert	Glen Hart

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SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

(As Stella is still unavailable to bring us her contribution, I have again chosen some good quotes which I hope you will enjoy.)

The purpose of art is in washing the dust of daily life from off our souls. Pablo Picasso

When you focus on being a blessing, God makes sure that you are always blessed in abundance. Joel Osteen

When I admire the wonders of the sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in worship of the Creator. Mahatma Gandhi

You do not choose your family. They are God's gifts to you, as you are to them. Desmond Tutu

Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while deeply loving someone gives you courage. Lao Tzu

I have not failed. I have just found 10,000 ways that don't work. Thomas Edison

HARVEST SERVICE



Our Harvest is on Sunday March 12th and we shall have a bread, cheese and pickles lunch afterwards with a cost to cover expenses.

We shall be decorating on Saturday from 2 p.m. and invite you to help with the display.

The produce will, as usual, go to Mission Australia who are always very grateful as this lets them give money to other purposes.

Thank you very much to those who have contributed some money towards the Harvest

and to Joel Duckworth who set up an online DropBox which has brought in an excellent amount.

SOCIETY NEWS

This Newsletter is coming out just before our Annual Meeting so anything from that will be in the next Newsletter. It has been a particularly busy year for the committee as their report shows.

We have enjoyed seeing Ben Tranter with us at church, Angel Service and Swedenborg Association events. Ben comes all the way from Parramatta and is very enthusiastic about the New Church and Swedenborg. He wrote an excellent personal article in the newly-published SAA magazine "Candela".

Our love and prayers go to Stella Green and Anne Stephen who are concurrently in Mount Wilga rehab hospital being restored and well looked after there. We do wish them a good improvement.

Our midweek Bible Studies have restarted and at the moment we are looking closely at the stories about Elijah and soon, Elisha.

We are having a 'pulpit swap' on March 26th when I will be taking the service at Hurstville and Todd Beiswenger will be here.

Here are the dates for our **Easter** period services

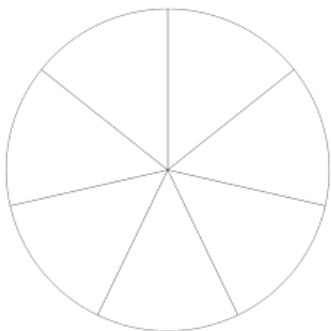
Palm Sunday is April 9th – Good Friday is April 14th – Easter Sunday is April 16th.

We will be having our evening Good Friday devotion at 5.30 p.m. like last year, not 6.30 p.m. This helps people who travel a distance and it also does not take up much of the evening.

Further afield, we are very pleased to say that the Brisbane Society have bought very suitable new premises for their church and other uses. This is in Dutton Park which is on the south side of Brisbane. We extend our best wishes to them and to their minister, Darren Brunne.

There will be a New Church in Australia face to face meeting here on Friday and Saturday April 28th and 29th.

AN INVITATION



I have recently created a design to help people take part for about 10 minutes a day in some spiritual focusing. We certainly need this in today's demanding world.

It is a circle like the one on the left, with 7 different parts. The 7 parts are:

Being still – Renewing – Reading –
Thinking Through – Making a Task –
Being Useful – Giving Gratitude.

Each one has a short instruction and encouragement about it. The idea is that you take part over a week for about 10 minutes and then begin all over again. Of course you can adapt it for the best way that it works for you.

On the back are some general comments about it and then 3 very good passages from Swedenborg about the meaning of a circle and how life and the way we should live it follows the pattern of a circle.

If you would like a copy of this, just ask me, and I do hope that you will find it is helpful. When we take some time each day to focus ourselves spiritually, and think about the Lord and his presence with us, we begin to experience some interesting changes and benefits inside us.

Just to whet your appetite, here is one of the three Swedenborg passages –

“The circle of life is to know, to understand, to will and to do because this sequence is our spiritual life. Knowledge is only in the entrance to life while it is in the memory and it is not fully present until it is in what we do. The more fully it is in what we do, the more fully it is in our understanding and our will.” (Apocalypse Explained 242)



Swedenborg Association of Australia

WHEN: FRIDAY, 24th MARCH 2017 at 7.45pm

(after the Reading Group which starts at 6.30pm)

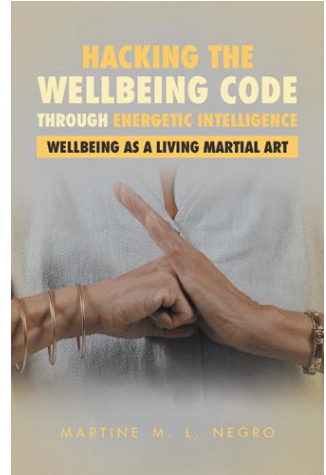
WHERE: NEW CHURCH, 4 SHIRLEY ROAD, ROSEVILLE

COST: FREE

HACKING THE WELLBEING CODE **through energetic Intelligence** **Wellbeing as a Living Martial Art**

presented by Martine Negro

We know how important it is to make time to assess and understand what's going on in our body! Martine will present her new book **Hacking the Well-Being Code**. She believes a true 'Health Care System' is about regaining and preserving health. Therefore we need to be aware of challenges to our well-being and of the qualities that enhance well-being. Martine will be exploring the 'eight challenges' of well-being.



Martine has thirty years practice in Oriental Mind Body Health, and trained thousands of students into understanding Energetic dynamics of the human system. She is the co-founder of the Diploma of Energetic Healing at Nature Care College in 1998, the co-initiator and life member of The International Energetic Healing Association and the NSW Dowser Society's current President. She has been committed to raise the level of energetic intelligence in our society, helping thousands of people manage their energy so they can maintain their well-being, speaking and training at Nature Care College, writing articles and recently becoming an author.

www.martinenegro.com

you can contact Martine on +61 414 878 214

Yir'ah fear ~ awe ~ reverence

The "fear" of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments.

(Psalm 111 verse 10)

Understanding the broader meanings of Hebrew words often explains things in the Bible that may not seem to make sense. Sometimes it can even change our attitude toward God!

This is what happens when we grasp the broader meaning of the word "fear" (yir'ah, pronounced "YEER-ah"), and especially in the context of the "*fear of the Lord*", a common expression all through the Bible.

This phrase has caused many people to feel that God just wants us to be afraid of him. But this isn't so. "Fear" in Biblical times was a rich expression that could be very positive. We hear it, for example, in the following verse: "*And he will **delight** in the fear of the Lord.*" (Isaiah 11:2-3)



The key is that, like many Hebrew words, "fear" has a broader meaning, encompassing very positive feelings such as honour, respect, reverence, and worshipful awe. The "fear of the Lord" is a reverence for God that allows us to grow in personal knowledge of him. It reassures us of his providence over the world. And it gives us a respect for his law that keeps us from harming our relationships and lives.

To "fear the Lord" is the ultimate expression of knowing that we stand in the presence of a holy God. If having an awe of the Lord causes us to live with integrity and obedience to him, it will ultimately transform us.

from "Listening to the Language of the Bible"

THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



Continuing a series about our beliefs in plain English.

This time we are going to think about **FAILURE**

I guess we've all had experiences of what we thought was failure. We fail to lose weight; we fail our driving test or something we really needed to pass. Sometimes we just let someone else down.

But there are other less conspicuous ways of failing – we fail to understand what someone says or is driving at. We fail to understand how there can be a loving God with so much innocent suffering in the world. It doesn't add up!

The word fail is linked with “fall” and with the word “fallacy”. When we fail we think we have fallen down or fallen in people's estimation. Dwelling on us apparently ‘failing’ starts of a fallacy in us, that “I am no good”. A fallacy is something which simply isn't true.

We are going to fail at times come what may! Because we're only human and not some super hero. In the Bible the word fail is not used about people but always about crops failing because there's no rain. And it says that the people began to be in **want**.

And that's a good clue. “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” That doesn't mean we don't want the Lord; it means that when we work along with the Lord and follow his commands, we are shepherded and we feel – and know – we have the help we need.

Our sense of failure should be the opportunity for us to discover that we can ... try again, do things differently, take a good honest look at what happened, and most of all, listen to the Lord and begin to work along with Him.

Yes, we might fail in some way some time, but no, nobody is a failure. The whole idea is an illusion which comes up straight out of hell.

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FROM THE SWEDENBORG CENTRE

NEW!! The Swedenborg Centre will be starting a brand-new event on the second Tuesday of each month, commencing 14th March 2017. We are hosting a **monthly open public Swedenborg discussion group**, held at the Centre in North Ryde, one group starting at 2pm (until 4pm) and another one on the same day in the evening from 6pm (until 8pm). It is open to all, free of charge (so no need to book), and we expect no prior knowledge or attendance. The intention behind the group(s) is to freely explore Swedenborg's works and the ideas expressed in them and especially to explore questions and thoughts based on that. Feel free to bring a friend or your lunch or your dinner. For more info contact the Centre on (02) 9888 1066 or check the website for event details.

Also, on 24th of March there will be a **Swedenborg Association event** in Roseville on healing, presented by practitioner and author Martine Negro. For more event info please keep an eye on the website at www.swedenborg.com.au. This will be preceded by the Swedenborg Reading Group at 6.30 p.m. where we are using a chapter in True Christianity on "Good Will and Good Actions".

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Joe Vandermeer
director



Swedenborg Centre
Swedenborg Association of Australia

FINAL FABLE

A student approached the teacher and told him that he was keen to develop his mind and find out about other beliefs and traditions as well as follow the one that the teacher took him through. This seemed a good idea to the student who stood there expectantly for the teacher's comment.

"Ah, my friend," said the teacher, "be aware that he who hunts after two rabbits catches neither."