

Sydney Society Newsletter

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

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On Facebook – Sydney Society of the New Church - Roseville

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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.



*“Therefore with joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.”*

Isaiah 12 verse 3

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Each service topic is advertised on Facebook – see top of this page
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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

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT . . .

It's the saying of perhaps a previous generation than ours, of people who went through wars, financial depression, general hardship. Make the most of the things that you have; don't throw things away because you may need them one day. Waste not, want not. Today, we generally don't follow that principle, partly because of recycling, partly because of strong advertising and also because we live in a world of greater availability. And within reason, that's okay.

I knew a lady, much older than me, who used to pass notes at church on a piece of paper the size of a postage stamp! I never said anything because I think I understood.

These days we have other problems that come from having excess. The classic example is plastic bags. Bangladesh led the banning, followed by Rwanda, China, Taiwan and Macedonia. But we don't. We nearly did about ten years ago, but it didn't take off and supermarket plastic bags are biodegradable, so of course, that's alright!

I knew a lady, much younger than me, who cuts her plastic bags and makes yarn and knits them into strong bags to go shopping with or to give away. Good on her.

Well, enough of this. There is of course a deeper idea in "waste not, want not" as there always is in everything. We can waste the opportunity to make the most of something we realised about ourselves; we can

waste the impact of a church service or class, or what a self-help book suggests would be good for us. Two days later than any of these, we have moved on and got back into the general run of things.

But the time may come when we feel we are in want, or find we are without any real sense of purpose. And when it is like that, we wonder “Why am I feeling miserable or at a loose end?” We think we need to turn to something but there may not be anything there. So, what are we going to do? That is one huge question, and each of us has to find our way of working through it.

Psalm 23 is still by far the most well-known psalm and of course it begins with a kind of comment on all this. “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

One thing for us to appreciate is that we are not unique in being without a source of help. It’s the commonest human experience to now feel great and now feel wretched. The set-up of life asks for it to be like that, but our problem is that we misread what’s going on. We think that “feeling great” is the ideal and that “feeling wretched” is a disaster that shouldn’t have happened.

I would challenge that. When things are just fine, we tend to coast and take things for granted. Feeling not right forces us to do something and makes us more alert. It’s the time when we are much more likely to progress.

In the church we have a teaching about this, that in order to regenerate (become more spiritual, grow towards heaven) we are going to have to go through temptations or spiritual crises during which the things we believe come up for re-evaluation and re-owning. Notice how different this route is to the simplistic idea of us getting better and better.

So, let’s be careful with our abundant disposable items that fill our recycling box and garbage, but be even more careful about us not wasting what we believe and make use of these when we are in want.

Julian

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ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT REV. HOWARD THOMPSON

We are very pleased to announce that Rev. Howard Thompson accepted the invitation to become our next Minister following the retirement of our present Minister in 2018.

This acceptance came after Howard checked a considerable number of things with his home church organisation in America.

We will all be delighted about this and we look forward to it coming to pass next year. In the meantime, there are quite a few things for us to deal with, such as the long process of acquiring the necessary visas for the Thompson family, dealing with organisational things which are always required in any change of employment, and more practically, looking at what will need to be done at the manse which will be their future home.

Howard, Debra and Lance visited us in April and many of us got to know them quite well. Now that Howard has accepted the position, we look forward to his future ministry which will introduce new approaches and continue on with others. It is also very good that Debra has accepted the position of church officer, which Ruth has been doing for a good number of years. It is good because there can be continuity in the community part of our church's life and in the maintenance of our buildings – church and manse.

Graham Hall, our church secretary, has circulated Howard's acceptance to church members, the Board of The New Church in Australia, and all the Ministers, most of whom have still to meet the Thompsens. In his email, he said, "Sydney is an ever-growing city which has an ever-growing need of the teachings of the New Church, and offers great opportunities to the organised church to play its part in answering that need. We are thankful that Howard and Debra will be continuing Julian and Ruth's service here."

We wish it all well, and we thank the Lord for leading it to where it is.

STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR JULY

Sunday	Steward	Flowers
2 nd (Sacr.)	Rhonda Hall	Ruth Duckworth
9 th	Wayne Kasmar	Christine Gospodarczyk
16 th	Dave Probert	Rhonda Hall
23 rd	John Wilson	Ruth Duckworth
30 th	David Curry	Glen Hart

SOCIETY NEWS

Our service for New Church Day was on Sunday June 18th and we looked at good and helpful ways for us to talk to other people about our church's teachings and beliefs. The church was decorated with red and white flowers.

We enjoyed the fare brought by quite a few for what was a very enjoyable special morning tea. Thank you!

We sent cards for New Church Day to societies and also an "Enjoy your new home" card to the Brisbane Society.

Our love, prayers and best wishes to David Curry and Dave Probert, both of whom have been involved in surgery in hospital recently.

The Winter Solstice social dinner and warming fire all went very well with 23 people with us. People brought all the food to share and we also had a wall game of 20 winter-related trivia questions.

One of the six church lights glass cases cracked and fell on a Sunday afternoon. It landed neatly between two rows of chairs and we are thankful it did not descend during the morning service.

The Friendship Group met in early June with six of us gathering. It was very enjoyable and our next meeting is in early August.

CONCERT IN THE CHURCH

Sunday July 9th at 2 p.m.

RILEY LEE & CLIONA MOLINS

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour*
WILLIAM BLAKE

Riley Lee (shakuhachi) and Cliona Molins (harp) perform music inspired by this poem. Both artists are interstate specialities for these two instruments. Riley and Cliona's music creates a meditative atmosphere of introspection and contemplation.

When: Sun 2nd July, 2PM
Where: 1/37 Fairlight St, Fairlight
Bookings: trybooking.com/QATY

When: Sun 9th July, 2PM
Where: New Church, 4 Shalby Rd, Roseville
Bookings: trybooking.com/QATY

Cost: Adults \$30
Con: \$25

www.rileylee.net www.clionaharpist.com.au

Riley Lee (shakuhachi) and Cliona Molins (harp) play music inspired by William Blake's poem

*“To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower;
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.”*

Riley and Cliona's music create a meditative atmosphere of introspection and contemplation.

Bookings:trybooking.com/QATY

Cost: Adults \$30 Concession \$25

VISIT TO ERYLDENE HOUSE AND RAVENSWOOD SCHOOL

Eryldene is a historic homestead in McIntosh Street, Gordon which is



having an Open Day on Saturday July 8th. It has the most lovely gardens and walkways.

On the same day and weekend, Ravenswood School, again in Gordon, is having its annual Camellia Show in the school hall.

Hundreds of different camellias are presented, and plants can be bought.

Several people are keen to go and you would be welcome to be included.

The plan is to go to Eryldene in the morning at about 10 a.m. and then to Ravenswood in the afternoon at about 2 p.m. and either bringing lunch or going for it somewhere in Gordon.

More details can be got either from Jan (ph 0433 174 178) or from Ruth and Julian (ph 9416 7032 or 0408 101 250)

SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

The two most powerful warriors are patience and time.

- Leo Tolstoy

Don't limit a child to your own learning, for he was born in another time.

- Rabinadrath Tagore

Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.

- Aristotle

All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once you have grown up.

- Pablo Picasso

Birds are known from their feathers; people are known from their friends.

Hungarian Proverb

We don't change God's message – His message changes us.

- Church noticeboard

SWEDENBORG CENTRE

Our monthly, second Tuesdays at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. discussion sessions are giving people the great opportunity to chat, ask things, find out things and pursue the various threads of good conversation. The great thing is that we are all there as equals.

Julian gave us the Swedenborg Association talk on Friday June 23rd and he ranged around the fascinating and important theme of Variety. His opener was a quote from Heaven and Hell that “heaven is made increasingly perfect by its variety” which could refer to more and more people going there and adding to it, or perhaps to what goes on in heaven where everybody there acknowledges the Lord but does that in various ways.

All kinds of examples of variety were shown and suggested we all began to realise that repetition is very limiting and even off-putting. Yet there is the need for some constants in life, for example, all the various plants

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grow because the sun constantly rises and sets. At the end we looked at how putting two colours side by side led into subtle changes in both. Was this for real or a kind of illusion? But whatever, it brought variety.

I have given two talks recently to other groups of people who, like us, are interested in spiritual things. Both of them were well-received and provided us with the opportunity to bring Swedenborg's teachings into contact with others, always worthwhile.

We have two events this July. One is the concert in the church at 2 p.m. on Sunday July 9th, given by two excellent musicians, Riley Lee playing the shakuhachi, a Japanese flute, and Cliona Molins playing the harp. It looks to be a great time for some music-listening.

Several people, some members of the Swedenborg Association, are going to Gordon's Eryldene House and Ravenswood School on Saturday July 8th just to enjoy beautiful things like old buildings and gardens, and camellias. You are welcome to join us and I can give you more details of times and movements. Phone 9888 1066

We will have our monthly Reading Group and then Presentation on Friday July 28th at 6.30 p.m. and 7.45 p.m. We are still working on the topic for the evening but flyers will be sent out during July.

Joe Vandermeer

THE NEW AGE

The New Age is the national magazine of the Australian and New Zealand New Church and it comes out every three months. The Winter/June 2017 issue is out and copies are in our bookstands. It's a good read with an excellent sermon, an article on Playing the Victim, Society Reports, a great message from Rev David Moffat, President, and a Swedenborg-based chapter from some Victorian fiction writing.

You can also get it online and in excellent colour, with easy navigability, by going to www.thenewage.net.au

STRANGE BUT TRUE



You will either find this fairly boring or feel some kind of excitement. Ivan Panin, a Russian, came across a remarkable pattern running throughout the Bible which he saw showing the evidence of divine inspiration.

He devoted much of his life to this research which eventually cost him his health and gained him criticism. He lived from 1855 to 1942.

He called it Bible Numerics and wrote a number of books about this. The pattern is a repeating one, based on the number 7, and it works both with the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. It won't work in our English translations.

Here it is. In a Biblical chapter or even a verse, the number of words must be divisible by 7. The number of letters must also be evenly divisible by 7. The number of vowels and the number of consonants must both be exactly divisible by 7. Why 7? Because this is the number of holiness, and God finished creation and then rested on the 7th day.

Panin looks like he was a clever mathematician, but he developed this in all kinds of ways and directions, many of which are about the need for love, humble devotion to God, action and being useful in the world.

He offered some very good quotes in his writing. 'For every beauty there is an eye somewhere to see it. For every truth there is an ear somewhere to hear it. For every love there is a heart somewhere to receive it.'

In the New Church we have the teaching that Biblical numbers are important and have their meaning. We also believe the Biblical text is inspired, perhaps not mathematically, but in its way of revealing God to us and showing us how to live our lives. In that sense, yes it is perfect.

THE WAY

This is an aerial photo of what is called Spaghetti Junction in the midlands of England. Getting to where you want to go requires enormous forethought. It is a convergence of many ways all of which eventually take you somewhere.



The word ‘Way’ is short but rich in all kinds of meanings. Its main use is to describe a route or a path. But we also use it to mean our purpose, and our sense of getting a solution to a problem, our ways of life, getting our own way, and we say when we’re sick that we’re in a bad way.

Jesus said that he is ‘the way, the truth and the life.’ The last two of those are pretty clear, but what about him being the way? Hopefully we think of the example he showed and we are attracted to follow that and make it our way if we can do that. ‘Love one another as I have loved you.’

In the Old Testament there is a curious meaning to the word ‘way’. It is called a ‘derek’ and the point is that it only exists if you are walking in it. A bit like cutting your way through the jungle. It doesn’t otherwise exist, which to our minds, used to following a path in front of us, is a strange idea. So, it puts the onus on us to make our way.

The book of Proverbs says, “In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your steps.”

Rev Brian Kingslake wrote a parable about getting in the correct lane in good time. If you want to get to the airport, it’s useless being in the left lane which will only take you to the cemetery, whether you want to or not. Therefore all travellers are advised to get into the correct lane early enough. Leave it too late and you will be forced to go where you didn’t want. So get into your lane NOW!

THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



This time we're looking at the idea of **THE GOOD LIFE**.

It's a pity that the phrase "the good life" is often associated with having it easy and indulging ourselves. Lucky you! we might say, feeling a bit envious.

The spiritual idea of having a good life goes in a very different direction. It is much more about keeping a good eye on what we say and do, how we relate to people and behave. But because such things can be there on the outside and not there on the inside, even more important still is that we have got good intentions and that we are sincere.

Our teachings say that truth is to be applied to life, otherwise it is just knowledge. But it isn't telling us that we are to live a perfect life, doing all kinds of good actions. Those good actions are important and they can be the means of benefitting other people, but they've got to come from our intentions.

When we sort out our intentions and put away some of the things we're selfish about, then really, our outward actions – or words – can be left to take care of themselves. They will follow on as the result of our good intentions.

If we find we are always watching what we do or say, wondering how we're coming across, or if we're being good enough, then something is not right. Let's face it, we're not going to get everything right and neither is anyone else. But if we want to do what is good, we can let go of virtually all our concerns. Good brings on its own good.

Jesus talked about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees who kept the laws with every ounce in their bodies. He said that such doing of good is nothing unless it comes from inside, unless the inside of the cup and the platter have also been made clean. Then it is truly the good life.

SWEDENBORG'S INFLUENCE

Paul Gauguin was a French post-impressionist painter who experimented a lot with colour and whose art has been very influential on later artists like Picasso and Matisse. He only really began to be appreciated after his death. Gauguin was a member of the Symbolist school in art, which made choices of colours important and also the subject matter of the painting.



Gauguin went to the French Polynesian island of Tahiti on two occasions and painted many things he saw there. Some of his famous paintings are of topless Tahitian beauties using strong colours and lines, giving them even more sensuality. But he also did still life, landscapes and religious scenes.

In one of his journals he cited Swedenborg's view that harmonic principles are divinely ordained and artists are the transmitters of the religious wisdom about the nature of the cosmos. "There is in the firmament a book in which is written the law of harmony and beauty. Swedenborg says that those who know how to read this book are the favourites of God ... and Swedenborg is a wise man!"

FINAL FABLE

A man once bought a cow so that his family would have plenty of milk. He had to get it home from the market and the cow was unwilling and wanted to go back to his old owner. So he grabbed it by the horns and pulled hard, but the cow just dug in and refused to budge.

A man watching began laughing and the man with the cow shouted at him. The watcher told him to go and get a handful of grass, and walk in front of the cow but not let the cow get the grass. And the cow walked to the man's house and he gave her the handful of grass and she provided them with her milk.