

Sydney Society Newsletter

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

4 Shirley Road, Roseville, N.S.W. 2069

Church Office phone: (02) 9416 7026

Minister's e-mail : julian@duckworth.me

On Facebook – Sydney Society of the New Church - Roseville

October 2017

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.



“Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.”

Mark 9.50

.....
Our vestibule Book Exchange – take, borrow, bring, swap, spiritual-based books
.....

page 2

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

EXCITEMENT

You won't find the word excitement, or any of its variants – excite, exciting, excited, excitable – in the Bible. It just isn't there. Which is a bit surprising because it is part of people's lives to be excited. We look forward to something coming up, even the next TV episode of something we can hardly wait to see. We are going out somewhere for a pleasant meal with friends. All that kind of thing is exciting.

Our family have had a run of recent excitements, with things happening to several of us. One of the very interesting things about life is that things are often not spaced out evenly, like pearls on a necklace. There can be a period of nothing much going on, and then suddenly, a bunch of new and special things. Sometimes it feels a bit too much excitement.

I think it is helpful for us to go and find something that we can be excited about, especially if we're currently feeling a bit flat. It does something to us which lifts our spirit and spurs us on, and our world changes. We become enthusiastic (which is a wonderful word which literally means 'In God').

Now that we've mentioned God, let's look at the excitement about spiritual things. Do we get excited? is a good question! Well, some people do. Here are three examples. A lady from the New Church in America spoke at a Swedenborg Centre many years go and she told us that she chatted to a number of people about them coming across the New Church and its teachings and how they felt. One man apparently

told her it felt like “Boy oh boy oh boy oh boy!” When we were in Mauritius, we met a delightful Indian family who had started coming along to the church. The husband told me that finding the New Church – after being in Hinduism, then the Anglican Church – was like finding the diamond!

The third is a bit the other way round. A man who had been born and brought up in the New Church told me that he envied people who found the New Church later in life because it would mean so much to them. “My problem is to keep up my excitement about it.” he said.

Perhaps spiritual excitement is like the difference between ‘happiness’ and ‘joy’. Happiness is more to do with outward things and feelings and we show happiness openly. Joy isn’t really like that; it is the inner feeling of the heart and the soul. It’s a deep strong emotion but it might not be shown openly. It’s more something between us and God.

Joy of course is very Biblical. Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” One of the prophets, Habbakuk, said, “Though the fig tree doesn’t blossom or no fruit be on the vines, and the fields yield no food, and there be no herd in the stalls – yet will I rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

But back to excitement. One possible reason that we don’t find it in the Bible is that it can sometimes have a pretty bad meaning. People can excite trouble and stir things up. Even more, we are affected by good and bad spirits, and bad spirits can inject thoughts that sweep through us about who knows what. Not from us, from them.

So I was thrilled – excited in fact – to come across this passage, and here it is: “Evil which only comes into our thoughts does not harm us, because evil is infused by bad spirits and repelled by angels. But when evil comes into our will, it does harm us, because it then goes forth if it isn’t restrained. Evil like that develops by being left idling in our thinking, or by consent, and by the enjoyment we get from it.”

Julian

page 4

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

For all kinds of good reasons we will not be having our Friendship Group meeting in October.

Please make a note that our Christmas Friendship Group Lunch meeting is going to be on Wednesday November 29th and not on our usual December date.

Glen Hart

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE

from the Council of Ministers of the Australian New Church

Same-Sex Marriage

This statement was received from the Council of Ministers on August 11th 2017 for the consideration of the church :

“The Council of Ministers re-affirms the ideal, as set forth in the Word and in the Writings that, “the conjugal union of one man with one wife is the precious jewel of human life and the repository of the Christian religion.” (Conjugal Love 531. See Genesis 2.14 and Matthew 19.4-6)

“As we, the members of the Council of Ministers, understand the teaching given, the loving marriage of one man with one wife beautifully expresses the union, and interaction, of the Divine Love and Wisdom. Whilst these are one in the Lord they manifest separately in creation in forms that complement each other and are able to be conjoined into one. In the case of human beings this oneness comes about through the conjugal marriage of a man and wife. Moreover, within such unions human beings are able to enter upon the most important use we can serve in this world which is the creation of potential new members for heaven. (See “Conjugal Love” 68:2)”

This is intended to be guidance, not to direct or sway views. However you may view such a statement, it is important from time to time that the church provide such statements to help us think the issues through.

STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR OCTOBER

Sunday	Steward	Flowers
1 st (Sac.)	Wayne Kasmar	Rhonda Hall
8 th	Volunteer	Jan Primrose
15 th	Graham Hanna	Elizabeth Kemmis
22 nd	Wayne Kasmar	Philip Brodsky
29 th	Michael Chester	Glen Hart

SOCIETY NEWS

Thank you very much indeed to quite a few people who regularly bring tins and packets for the Exodus Foundation, small change and the odd note for our sponsored girl, and used stamps. This is all appreciated.

Ruth and Julian will be away on vacation from Sunday October 8th after church until Saturday October 14th, no services affected.

Our midweek Bible study is currently looking at Mark's gospel which until about 1950 was seen as the Cinderella of the gospels, being much the shortest! Far from it; it is a highly-charged theology of Jesus in direct conflict with evil. Intrigued? Well, come along. See Calendar.

Rev Todd Beiswenger and I will do a 'pulpit swap' on Sunday November 12th. Make a note of it.

Congratulations to Joel Duckworth and his Crewmojo team who are currently progressing in an entrepreneurial event called Pitch@Palace, which is sponsored and attended by Prince Andrew. He tweeted them!

A word about my health, which seems to be developing in my hands to some extent. The medical team are on the ball with it.

And things are moving in relation to preparing for the Thompsons next year in terms of visas and manse. This is never fast!

page 6

SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

The past always looks better than it was. It's only pleasant because it isn't here.
- Finlay Dunne

Music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual levels of life.
- Ludwig van Beethoven

No man ever steps in the same river twice, because it's not the same river and he is not the same man.
- Heraclitus

What I am looking for is a blessing that's not in disguise.
- Jerome K. Jerome

Never lose an opportunity to see something beautiful, because beauty is God's handwriting.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

FROM THE SWEDENBORG CENTRE



On Friday 22nd September, the Swedenborg Association staged a successful AGM after hearing the fascinating story of film-maker Michael Edols who recorded aspects of the spiritual life of some indigenous people of the Kimberley region in the 1970s and 1980s. These films have become iconic reference documentaries of Australian culture before these traditions were severely challenged by changes of lifestyle and modern preoccupations.

The future activities of The Swedenborg Association and Swedenborg Centre are: -

Tuesday 10th October: drop in at the Swedenborg Centre in North Ryde between 2pm - 4pm or 6pm - 8pm for open discussion (free).

Friday 27th October - 2 consecutive events: 6:30pm is a chance to read and reflect on Swedenborg's writings at Roseville (free), then at 7:45pm

FROM THE SWEDENBORG CENTRE

"Swedenborg in the Marketplace of Ideas" presented by David Moffat (\$5 concession and SAA members, \$7 non-members).

Tuesday 14th November: drop in at the Swedenborg Centre for more discussion between 2pm - 4pm or 6pm - 8pm (free).

Friday 24th November - 2 consecutive events: 6:30pm read and reflect on Swedenborg's writings at Roseville (free), then at 7:45pm "Mind the Gap" (new ways of seeing creation) presented by David Millar (\$5 concession and SAA members, \$7 non-members). Melbourne SAA event starts at 7:30 at Mt Waverley (\$5).

Tuesday 12th December: last chance of the year to participate in open group discussion at the Swedenborg Centre between 2pm - 4pm or 6pm - 8pm (free).

The Swedenborg Centre have received new stocks of books from the USA and the UK, so if you're looking for a book to keep your mind and spirit engaged, give us a call or visit our online bookshop at www.swedenborg.com.au



This year's free gift to Swedenborg Association members is "Finding Purpose, lessons from Emanuel Swedenborg." A lovely short well-set out publication from the Swedenborg Foundation. Its focus is on the idea of us being useful.

"The Tuesday night discussion group has gone viral !!"

It is now being held weekly EVERY Tuesday night at 6pm (in addition to the usual MONTHLY sessions at 2pm and 6pm on the second Tuesday of every month).

Best wishes from Joe Vandermeer

RIPPLES



Ripples are particularly beautiful patterns on the surface of the water. They have a centre, caused by something going into the water. They have a perfect series of concentric circles which move outwards very gracefully and serenely. They are relaxing to watch, almost mesmerizing.

Everything gives us ideas about life and about ourselves. So do ripples. The centre is like God touching us with some new impulse and immediately an effect comes up on the surface of our life where we become aware of it.

Everything ripples outwards. This could mean many things. It might mean we feel we're growing in some way, or that we want to live more for others than for ourselves. It might mean we see more connections going on in our life, or that one thing very often leads on to another. Or that in some way we've been disturbed and taken out of our normal pattern. Like the Pool of Bethesda where the angel stirred up the water.



How more beautiful when ripples overlap and blend one with another. The picture left shows how it creates a interesting "twist" at that point. This seems to suggest interaction with other people, an important part of anyone's life, but often having a twist to it.

Then there's the big question – Given an unlimited expanse of water, does this keep going on for ever or do ripples eventually subside to be like millponds? I must google that one day.

Calgary Ministries write: I am sure that the Lord designed physical laws to be like his spiritual laws because they do behave in a similar manner.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE AUSTRALIAN NEW CHURCH



The national quarterly magazine, “The New Age” has recently gone out. It is available if you ask Julian. One of its regular features is news from Societies. In any one of our societies, we may not hear much about others, so I am including their reports. Not all societies are included. I didn’t include Sydney’s report. (On pages 9, 10 and 12)

ADELAIDE

We have been at a disadvantage in holding services since an out of control vehicle driven by an unlicensed driver crashed into the side of the Church building causing a wall to collapse and causing considerable damage. The Church is out of bounds for health and safety reasons and we have been holding a reduced number of services in the adjoining hall. Hopefully repairs will be completed before the end of the year.

A surprising drop-in visit to Adelaide on their way home to Canberra from Perth were Jeremy and Jasper Visser-Marchant. June and Ken Johnson met the lads and gave them a sight-seeing tour between flights.

Thanks to David Millar for his article regarding same sex marriage; it was good to contemplate our Church’s perspective at a time that we are being bombarded with the views of populist pressure groups. The silent majority are being ignored but one is consoled in the knowledge that our teachings will eventually take hold and fill the vacuum.

BRISBANE

June 18th the Brisbane Society began their New beginnings with the official opening of our new Church premises together with the celebration of New Church Day. Over sixty members and guests were in attendance and witnessed the installation of the WORD to its permanent place on the Altar by the Revs Brunne and Arnold.

Our special guests for our celebration and official opening was the Rev

page 10

David Moffat, President of the N.C.I.A. David was accompanied by his Wife Pam. His New Church Day Sermon on SERVANTHOOD was interesting and thought provoking. Following the service all enjoyed lunch including the cutting of special New Church Day cake.

On August 4th Neville Barrett, one of our oldest Members, passed into the Spiritual World after battling a long illness. He was 91 years young. In earlier days Neville, for many years, was Sunday School Superintendent as well as an active Committee Member. His funeral service was held on the Gold Coast where he lived with his wife Muriel with the Rev. Brunne officiating.

Two of our members have recently been hospitalized and we are happy to report both have recovered well. Bev Sheppard is currently in England visiting her daughter Jane after stopping in the United States to attend a wedding. On October 15th we will hold our annual general meeting.

PERTH

Our New Church Day celebration was a very happy time with a special service lead by Reverend Moffat. This was followed by a " long table luncheon ", the table being set with an all-white theme (tablecloths and crockery) and red poinsettias as floral decorations.

Our services on each third Sunday of the month are taking the form of an alternative style service and hopefully lead by a lay person. July's service focussed on 'Trees' being our understanding and the leaves corresponding to perceptions. Participants were asked to choose a verse from the Word, write it on a leaf, and then tie it onto a branch. We then shared how we felt we could use these words in our daily lives. The service was led by Joy Moffat. In August Sarah Walker facilitated the Service focusing on Psalm 1.

Four ladies met for a very happy monthly get together at our favourite cafe on the beach in Trigg. We are enjoying some sunshine in Perth after a very chilly and wet time, during which two of our members have been quite ill with flu type symptoms and a very debilitating cough.

David and Ros Walker are off on a car journey during September. They plan to visit places in South Australia and Northern Territory.

THE PILLARS OF NEW CHURCH BELIEFS



We're going to take a look at why we're not allowed to **KNOW ABOUT THE FUTURE.**

The quick answer is that the future hasn't happened yet so nobody can know about what is going to happen. Fair enough from our end of things, but we are told that the Lord already knows the future that will come about from the present because he has complete knowledge in him.

This idea might make us think that our free will no longer exists if God is already aware of everything that will come about in the future. But God is not pushing us to some foregone conclusion – he simply knows in a way you and I can never know. God isn't thinking about past, present and future at all – he is thinking about how to help us into heaven.

We certainly do have free will and we can make use of it at any time we so choose. Try it out! Whatever you go for will not confound God. He simply knows everything.

It is a very good thing that we do not know about the future – our future, the future of world events and so on. Imagine if we did... we would naturally try and steer it the way we would love it to be. Then our free will would be at real risk, driven by our wilful interference.

We can form conclusions about future things by using our reason, but we may get it wrong. Really, the future should be handed over to the Lord (who knows all things) and we start trusting the Lord that he is directing our path and its eventual outcomes.

We are created by God to live in every present moment, while God looks to eternal things with a continual intention that he may save us from anything which would distract us from the future he holds for us all.

page 12

Trevor and Joy Moffat are away for two months in the outback. They are spending August at Millstream National Park as camp hosts, followed by September on Koordarie, a cattle station north of Carnarvon.

VICTORIA

At the Annual Meeting it was agreed to go with the plan to sell the Melbourne church property and move ahead into new future directions.

Rev Glenn Alden and his wife Mary, well-known to many people in the New Church in Australia, have agreed to be here in Victoria for several months from November 2017 until after Easter in 2018. They are very experienced and taken in many kinds of church activity and programs.

Eva Teed, one of our beloved and devoted members, recently celebrated her 90th birthday and a good number of family and friends joined her for the occasion.

A Bible Study group has started meeting fortnightly from August and will run through September and October.

FINAL FABLE

A man was chopping up wood with an axe. He took his lunch break and when he came back the axe was nowhere to be seen. Nearby, with what looked like a smirk on his face was a young man, and the more the woodchopper watched him, the more he showed every sign of having taken the axe – the sauntering way he walked, the whistle he whistled, the look in his eye.

Furious, the man stormed off. Suddenly, there was his axe which had slipped flat between several timbers. The chopper went back and looked at the young man again, and for some reason, he could not see any clue why he had thought he had taken his axe. He seemed to be a perfectly pleasant kind of person in every way.