

“All religion has relation to life and the life of religion is to do good”.

Swedenborg

The New Church In Victoria Newsletter

February 2018

Locations

Melbourne

426-434 High St Rd

Mount Waverley 3149

POSTAL ADDRESS

PO Box 2224 Mount
Waverley VIC 3149

Ballarat

318 Fussell St 3350

Website

newchurch.net.au

Contacts

Rev. Glenn Alden

Pastor in residence

0412 637 179

Karl Robinson

Chair of The Board

0417 514 960

Helmut Lopaczuk

Secretary

0409 184 643

A Pastoral Message from Rev. Glenn Alden

This Too Will Pass

We have just come through some days of 33 plus temperatures. Summer is definitely here. Sometimes I remember to use temperature extremes to reflect on the joys and sorrows associated with the changing of the seasons and changes of state.

A farmer friend talked about the way seasons are “all there is” in his life. The reality of his livelihood is so deeply connected to the natural world and the changing of seasons that he is aware of it all the time. I remember a time when I was a farmer. It is good to think back on that reality and remember how closely I was connected to seasons, weather, the outdoors, having to deal with the world exactly as it is. It reminded me that though we can’t control the seasons, we can certainly predict them. We can prepare ourselves mentally and physically for the change, knowing for certain that it is coming.



Another person spoke about the cycle of the seasons being so reassuring. I guess we all have a season or seasons that we like better than others. This can change, depending on where we live. I once lived in a climate where extreme cold was for me the harshest seasonal reality, minus 40 degrees was not unusual. Daily highs of less than -20 for weeks could be expected through from November to March. Our visit to the New Church in Australia church camp north of Brisbane reminded me once again that in some places extreme heat and humidity is the harshest seasonal reality. Here in Melbourne we are in what is for me the hardest season of the year. Summer will pass. Summer will come around again.

Renewal is a theme many associate with the seasons. Spring, birth and rebirth, and new things growing; always comes around again, no matter what. Changes of state, of our moods, of the challenges we face in overcoming negative emotions, help us to gain perspective. We will not always be discouraged, nor will we always be filled with joy. We will not always wrestle with resentment, nor will we always feel gratitude. We will not always battle anxiety and fear, nor will we always experience peace and courage. Change is the one constant, and like spring it is tangible reassurance that good things will return and that life will prevail over death. The Melbourne New Church congregation is experiencing change in the life of the church. This is not a cause for worry or fear or even joy. It just is. Everything must change. Reflecting on the seasons can raise our minds above the external or material focus.

Swedenborg writes that the whole of the created universe is a theatre reflecting God. We can see, observe, and reflect on so many lessons associated with the changing of the seasons. For today, I choose to accept the natural world as it is – God given, awe inspiring, out of my control. My friend Kris says that there is always spiritual work to be done. My spiritual work for today is to seek out the blessings in the heat, to work with it as reality rather than wishing it were not there. I wish for you all to find much enjoyment in the season. If looking for blessings in the heat is too much of a stretch for you, perhaps you can find blessings in the promise that “this too shall pass.”

Glenn

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Spiritual Growth Series

Rev Glenn and Mary Alden will run two series of spiritual growth workshops during February and March, each on a weekly basis. Each series is designed to support individuals to grow spiritually in the way the Lord directs them, within an atmosphere of mutual respect and support. Participants will need to purchase a book (\$15).

The **Rise Above It** series, facilitated by Mary, focuses on both the universal and the deeper meanings of the Ten Commandments to help participants practise applying them more fully in their personal life. Building on the complementary teachings of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism and emphasising that God’s law is in all the world, the teachings of Swedenborg will guide weekly practice and application of each commandment. This series will be held on Tuesday evenings (see calendar). Should you wish to participate in it but have yet to register, please contact Mary at mary@sunrisechapel.org or on 0412 637 179

The **Joy of Spiritual Growth** series, facilitated by Glenn, will help participants wake up to spiritual life, help deal with difficult emotions and identify more closely with positive emotions, present opportunities to learn to let go of baggage such as criticism and judgment, lying, and false anger, learn the practice of following the golden rule, and experience allowing the Lord to be in charge of our lives. This series will be held on Wednesdays evening (see calendar). Should you wish to participate in it but have yet to register, please contact Glenn at glenn@sunrisechapel.org or on 0412 637 179

You are encouraged to take part in one or other of these series aimed at enhancing personal spiritual growing based on the teachings found in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg while we have Glenn and Mary with us.

News Of Events And People

The first Sunday in December saw a delightful number of members and friends gather at the Church in Mt. Waverley to be part of the first service of worship conducted by Rev. Glenn Alden, 5 days after arriving from USA with Mary, at the start of their visit to Victoria. The service was followed by a meal, catered by Alexis Jarvis, providing those present with an opportunity to informally chat with Glenn & Mary. It was great to see members of the Filipino families join us for the day and also Rev. John & Mary Teed travelling from Woodend to join the celebrations.

Those who attended the spiritual growth workshops offered by Glenn and Mary during December gained much from their participation. It is clear that such activities will be a significant part of the Society’s program as we move forward in endeavouring to bring new interest in the teachings we offer, as well as providing an opportunity for existing members and friends to strengthen their faith and beliefs.

Our Christmas Eve morning service was in part directed towards the younger generation. Mary related the Christmas story to the children present in words and pictures, giving them angels she had made for hanging on their Christmas trees. It was pleasing to have Linda & Michael Francis along with their children, Harry, Charlie & Lucy, joining in the storytelling.

Then on Christmas morning, we welcomed Suzanne & Steve Cottren with Chantelle and Ryan to the service with traditional carols and readings.

January saw Rose Robinson having a spell in hospital for knee replacement surgery. This was followed with a period of rehabilitation. The whole procedure has gone very well and we look forward to seeing Rose back at Church during February.

Diary of Events in February 2018

Activities at 426 High St Mt. Waverley unless otherwise stated

Let's get together for fun and fellowship, and to share what the church means to us.

Dinner For Six at 3/14 Lang Road, Mount Waverley 3149

Mary and Glenn have extended an invitation to everyone reading this newsletter to join them for dinner and fellowship at their home. Four to six guests can be accommodated at a time and the dinner will provide a chance to get to know one another. Conversation after dinner will focus on the meaning of the New Church in our lives. Look over the "Dinner for Six" times in this schedule and call us to let us know when you would like to come. If we don't hear from you, we will phone you to see what will work.

LET'S GET TOGETHER.

Sunday 4 10.30am	Service of Worship conducted by Rev. Glenn Alden Topic ~ <i>Dealing with the Beasts in the Basement!</i>
Tuesday 6 7.30pm	<i>Rise Above it</i> Group session to be held at 3/14 Lang Road, Mount Waverley "One True God"
Wednesday 7 7.30pm	<i>Joy of Spiritual Growth</i> Group session "Waking up to Spiritual Life"
Sunday 11 10.30am	Bible Study led by Glenn Alden ~ "Powerful and Powerlessness" on the story of Samson (please read Judges 16 in advance). If you are planning to attend, please send your intentions to Glenn Alden at glenn@sunrisechapel.org who will send you additional readings from the Writings of Swedenborg to help us 'dig a bit deeper' into the meaning of this story.
Tuesday 13 7.30pm	<i>Rise Above it</i> Group session "The Name of God"
Wednesday 14 7.30pm	<i>Joy of Spiritual Growth</i> Group session "Applying the Golden Rule"
Thursday 15 6.00 pm	Dinner for six at Alden's
Friday 16 7.30pm	Swedenborg Association meeting. Presentation by Glenn Alden ~ <i>Taking credit for our actions</i>
Sunday 18 10.30am	Service of Worship conducted by Rev. Glenn Alden with the Holy Supper administration. Topic ~ <i>Escaping Negativity</i> . "The Lord uses miracles of bodily healing to teach us how He heals our spirits"
Monday 19 6.00 pm	Dinner for six at Alden's
Tuesday 20 7.30pm	<i>Rise Above it</i> Group session "The Sabbath"
Wednesday 21 7.30pm	<i>Joy of Spiritual Growth</i> Group session "Identifying with Positive Emotions"
Sunday 25 10.30am 3.30pm	'In the round' gathering including meditation and reflecting on the message in a Bible story. <u>Ballarat</u> . Devotional service led by Rev. Glenn Alden including the Holy Supper administration. Topic ~ <i>Dealing with the Beasts in the Basement!</i>
Tuesday 27 7.30pm	<i>Rise Above it</i> Group session "Our Spiritual Inheritance"
Wednesday 28 7.30pm	<i>Joy of Spiritual Growth</i> Group session "Letting Go of Criticism"

February Duty Roster: Sunday 4: Elke & Klaus Drevermann. Sunday 18: Marika Sivak

Preliminary Diary of Events in March 2018

(to be confirmed in the March 2018 Newsletter)

Thursday 1 6.00 pm	Dinner for six at Alden's
Sunday 4 10.30am	Morning service conducted by Rev. Glenn Alden Topic ~ <i>Judgement</i>
Tuesday 6 7.30pm	<i>Rise Above it</i> Group session to be held at 3/14 Lang Road, Mount Waverley "Do Not Murder / Be a Life Giver"
Wednesday 7 7.30pm	<i>Joy of Spiritual Growth</i> Group session "Dealing with difficult Emotions"
Friday 9 6pm	Dinner for six at Alden's
Sunday 11 10.30am	Bible Study (or alternative) led by Rev. Glenn Alden
Tuesday 13 7.30pm	<i>Rise Above it</i> Group session "Do Not Commit Adultery / Honour Marriage"
Wednesday 14 7.30pm	<i>Joy of Spiritual Growth</i> Group session "Taming the Wild Elephant"
Friday 16 6.00 pm	Dinner for six at Alden's
Sunday 18 10.30am	Morning service conducted by Rev. Glenn Alden including the Holy Supper administration.
Tuesday 20 7.30pm	<i>Rise Above it</i> Group session "Do Not Steal, Do Not Bear False Witness / Be a Credit Giver and Truth Teller"
Wednesday 21 7.30pm	<i>Joy of Spiritual Growth</i> Group session "Dealing with Lying"
Thursday 22 6.00 pm	Dinner for six at Alden's
Friday 23 7.30pm	Swedenborg Association meeting
Sunday 25 10.30am 3.30pm	'In the round' gathering including meditation and reflecting on the message in a Bible story <u>Ballarat</u> . Devotional service led by Rev. Glenn Alden including the Holy Supper administration.
Tuesday 27 7.30pm	<i>Rise Above it</i> Group session "Do Not Covet / Cleanse the Inside"
Wednesday 28 7.30pm	<i>Joy of Spiritual Growth</i> Group session "Living in the Present"
Thursday 29 6.00 pm	Dinner for six at Alden's
Friday 30 10.00am	Good Friday service conducted by Rev. Glenn Alden
April Sunday 1	Easter Sunday service conducted by Glenn Alden at 10.30am

March Duty Roster: Sunday 4: Elke & Klaus Drevermann. Sunday 18: Alexis & Neville Jarvis

The New Church in Australia Summer Camps

For readers who have Internet access, the following links will provide great information about recent camps and the 2019 Camp to be held at the Jindabyne Alpine Village lodge (NSW) in January:

- Photos and some presentations given at the 2018 and previous camp (follow the links under 'New Church Retreat') ~ <http://newchurch.net.au/>
- Details & Application Form for the 2019 Camp ~ <http://newchurch.net.au/new-church-retreat-program/jindabyne-new-church-retreat-2019>