

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

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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.



*“I will set up My standard for the peoples”, says the Lord God.
“They shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters
shall be carried on their shoulders.”* Isaiah 49:22

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The Duckworth “Farewell” event is on Saturday July 14th
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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 or by a personal visit, 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

NOT KNOWING WHERE THINGS ARE KEPT

As you can imagine, we have been settling into our new home for exactly one month today. The stuff all got delivered on May 25th and most of you will know the process that then begins, of where to put things that were automatically findable only two weeks earlier into their new places. The result is chaos and confusion and panic. You all know where your pillow cases and woks are; be glad of that and never take it for granted.

There was, though, one redeeming feature. Our Welsh Dresser got everything put in exactly the same place here as they were back in Sydney. I confess sitting looking at this a few times with great affection because it was my oasis and proof of continuing sanity. But the other seven or eight chests, drawers, cupboards around the house continue to be places of fear and mystery.

However, time is the great healer and I am gradually building up a confident repertoire of likely hiding places for most things, far from completion as yet. I do know where the piano is of course, another important refuge when nothing else seems normal.

Most things in this present life seem to be parables of deeper realities. Maybe the Lord designed physical life deliberately to teach us and give us the direct experience of personal states and deeper things to make our own by choosing to. People say that space and time as we know it here disappear in the next life because we are all living in the moment, but I

for one don't put down the value of several decades coping with them to learn that there is a basic order to our lives which will stand us in good stead when we're in the next life living in the moment.

We are all likely to lose track at times or lose the plot. Whenever we allow a lingering unpleasant thought – usually involving someone else and not us! – to hang around limpet-like, we have lost it. One of my very favourite New Church teachings is the one about angels who come into a sense of evening twilight at times and a bit too much self-absorption, but being angels who love the Lord, they recognise this change very quickly and snap out of it by turning back to the Lord and feel better.

There is the Bible story of Saul. His father, Kish, had some donkeys which had wandered off and got lost. So Kish sent Saul and a servant to go and look for them. They couldn't find them anywhere, and Saul said, "Let's go back because my father might start worrying about us more than about the donkeys." The servant said, "Wait, in the city near here there is a man of God. Let's ask him." This was Samuel, and the Lord had said to him the day before that a man would come (Saul) and he was to be made the Commander of Israel. All this happened.

The loveliest bit in the story is that Samuel told Saul after anointing him, not to worry about the donkeys because they would go back to Kish. Little Bo Peep had it about right too. But the point is that searching for what was lost brought Saul to Samuel, the man of God. That is one of life's great truths, that when we search and look and try to get back what we feel we have lost, we may initially feel we're not what we were, but it's this which has the capacity (from the Lord) to bring us to a new discovery.

There are of course, many losses in our lives; some are trivial, some are devastating and hard for us. They are united in the fact that this life is intended to teach us basic things, and in the truth that we are probably not looking at life in the right way. In them all, the Lord is there with us, managing our way through the maze, leading us, if we will be led, towards good outcomes.

Julian

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Here's a paragraph from our church teachings linked to the previous article.

“Before our natural mind is joined to our spiritual, we think whether we want self-love and worldly love to be done away with, and if we want to be ruled by what is spiritual. This is our freedom. Our natural mind would reject that, because it is full of such things, and afraid that life would be nothing without them. When some light flows from the Lord through heaven into our natural we begin to think differently. We start to understand what being led by good and truth from the Lord will bring us. And when we see that all the angels in heaven are like this and have a joy defying description, we go to war with our natural, wanting it to be fully dependent on the spiritual.” from the Arcana 5650

ROSEVILLE CHURCH SERVICES IN JULY (a reminder)

ANGEL SERVICE (Sat 5 p.m.)

Sat June 30th Julian Duckworth
Sat July 7th NO SERVICE
Sat July 14th NO SERVICE
(due to Farewell Dinner)
Sat July 21st NO SERVICE
Sat July 28th NO SERVICE
(Sat Aug 4th Julian Duckworth

SUNDAY SERVICE (10 a.m.)

* is the Holy Supper Sunday
*Sun July 1st Julian Duckworth
Sun July 8th Graham Hall
Sun July 15th Julian Duckworth
Sun July 22nd Wayne Kasmar
Sun July 29th NO SERVICE
*Sun Aug 5th Julian Duckworth)

Apologies about the lack of Angel Services in July but it's the way the trips to Sydney work out this month.

NOW THE GOOD NEWS!

The really good news is that the temporary 2 year visa for Howard, Debra and Lance Thompson has been fully approved by the authorities. This means that they can ship their things (which they have already prepared to do in early July), which will take about 6 weeks to arrive, they can book their flights (which they have done the morning they heard the good news, because the earlier you book...) and they will arrive in Sydney at 7.15 a.m. on Wednesday August 15th, after spending

two and a half weeks with their folks in Philadelphia. It all becomes very real now, they said. The 2 year visa will be able to change into permanent residency after we have secured the Labour Agreement.

At our end, it is the end of much waiting and uncertainty. The work on renovating the manse and the front two rooms facing the street is all taking place, as well as the vestry which Howard will use for his office, but now it is slotted along with the timetable we have. I am sure that we are just as pleased and relieved as they are.

One point is that their shipment is likely to arrive about one week after they do. The committee has been looking into booking a serviced apartment in Chatswood for the interval.

The next three months are going to be busy and exciting for us all. Be supportive of everything and perhaps also patient with how it all unfolds.



When I heard the news, it took me back to the Eastern Distributor before the 2000 Sydney Olympics. The city's roads going south were in a terrible mess for years and then one day it all suddenly cleared and became a kind of heaven.

This is a photo of Howard and Debra Thompson which was taken by Gretchen Keith.

STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR JULY

Note, this is based on the revised services schedule

Sunday	Worship Leader	Steward	Flowers
1 st (Sac.)	Julian	Wayne Kasmar	Synthetics
8 th	Graham Hall	Rhonda Hall	Lillian King
15 th	Julian	David Curry	Ruth Duckworth
22 nd	Wayne Kasmar	John Wilson	Synthetics
29 th	NO SERVICES THIS WEEKEND		

SOCIETY NEWS

Apart from the obvious area of news (see p4-5) other things have been happening. A very tall pine tree was dying and was taken down, along with another tree's very dead branch. Two new gas fires have been put in the hall which are very efficient and really easy to use: switch on and switch off! And Telstra have recently been to do things I am not qualified to talk about.

It was a very interesting weekend when Ruth and I were last down. Just before we started the Angel Service with a good number there, two very pleasant young men walked in and joined in in the best way possible. Alex and Edward, brothers living in Chatswood. I sat with them for an hour afterwards and they were impressive. They clearly had a great interest in religion and spiritual ideas. They were very aware of Swedenborg and kept referring to this enthusiastically in our chat.

On Sunday we celebrated New Church Day and I used the very last chapter in the Bible, Revelation 22, after the vision of the Holy City in chapter 21. Again, we had quite a good number there, including a couple, Cameron and Edwina, with their four children who all went off to Sunday School and had a lovely time.

The Lord works in mysterious ways they say. The minister moves away and semi-retires and suddenly people start coming along. Not that the church necessarily revolves round the minister, or that people come

because the minister has gone, but the timing is rather strange. Or it's just a simple co-incidence. Well, all things are directly under divine providence.

We were sad to hear that Graham Hanna had a bad fall while he and Elizabeth have been away, with I think two broken ribs. They have decided to come back to Sydney earlier than they intended. We wish Graham and both of them well and send our love.

Ruth and I called in to see Stella Green at Tea Gardens, where she is very happy to be. We found her cheerful and chatty and interested to hear about things, and she was full of appreciation for the Estia Health care provision for her there.

SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK



I am an observer of life. I research life and people. When I go into a room I melt and become invisible, yet staying full of observation. I am a real practitioner.

- Christine Feehan

Whenever people agree with me I always feel I must be wrong.

- Oscar Wilde

Two souls do not find each other by simple accident.

- Jorge Luis Borges

Human beings, who are unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are remarkable in their disinclination to do so.

- Douglas Adams

Never trust anyone completely but God. Love people, but put your full trust only in God.

- Lawrence Welk

My philosophy is that life is hard but God is good. Try your best not to confuse the two.

- a lady called Anne

SWEDENBORG CENTRE

... what's happening at the Swedenborg Association of Australia?

After a cracker of a night in the Egyptian Room of the Petersham Masonic Lodge in May at which we witnessed what the Egyptians (and the Masons) know about how to live a spiritual life, this time, on the fourth Friday of June, we had a very entertaining and insightful assessment of the signs of spiritual awakening, very capably presented by Michael Chester using a YouTube clip from OffTheLeftEye as a catalyst. This also stimulated some very useful contributions from the audience. Who would have thought that the signs would include sweating, weeping, hearing noises, gladness, chills and shuddering. The presentation was capped off by an amusing song which summed it all up. So, a very successful night.



Prior to the main event was a delightful Reading Group session in June, looking at the equilibrium (in us) of heaven and hell. A lively discussion sprinkled the pauses between reading sections of Heaven and Hell on that fascinating topic.

We are presently in the midst of negotiating an upgrade to the audio-visual equipment at the church (our present venue) so that we might enjoy such presentations in even more glorious colour and sound.

On the fourth Friday in July we have an event at Roseville which was temporarily billed as 'A Heavenly Secret' (see website promo). What's in a name? 'Secret' because even we don't yet know which one of you will be keen and brave to have a go at presenting or facilitating something, or simply to offer an idea to be explored on the night. It is promised to be a useful night, entertaining and enlightening, no matter who and what turns up. Perhaps Divine Providence will be on show?

We thank you for your support of the SAA and look forward to have you participate in its future program. Please check the website at

www.swedenborg.com.au for the latest SAA event details and for news about the move of the Swedenborg Centre from North Ryde to 4 Shirley Rd, Roseville which is presently scheduled to happen on 25th July.



SWEDENBORG ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
MONTHLY MEETING
at the New Church, 4 Shirley Road, Roseville
FRIDAY JULY 27th 2018
at 7.45 p.m. with the Swedenborg Reading
Group beforehand, at 6.30 p.m.

A HEAVENLY SECRET

*Opportunities to share your ideas with us
... the secret being what YOU might come up with*



No set topic this time. Those who come are invited to open up on something to share with us, a belief, an idea, a concern, an epiphany. Or even perhaps a question. That's the invitation. But do come anyway, because while you might not want to air your wisdom in public (and no one has to speak), some fascinating areas may change the way you see everything.

Refreshments and even more chat follows afterwards

*More information from the Swedenborg Association website at
www.swedenborg.com.au*

THE UPSIDES AND DOWNSIDES OF FENCES

Fences are there all around us. Your garden will have several of them. They may be your pride and joy or you may be very ashamed of them and their disrepair.



Fences divide, and that's their point.

This is ours and over there is yours! But we can always hang over the fence and have a neighbourly chat; perhaps in today's world a rarer thing than in the past.

Dogs know ever such a lot about fences and see them as yet another inhibition we humans put on them to restrict what they would just love to do if they had the chance. They also love to smell each post, one after the other, always when you've only got six minutes to take Rover down the road.

Fences must have an interesting history. We wonder who might have put up the very first fence ever, and suddenly turned the vast open plains into two parts. Which raises the interesting question: Suppose we (everybody) simply took down all our fences and began living in an open-planned classroom. Surely we would handle this perfectly well and it might completely change some of our biggest misperceptions of ownership. Plants would spread unhindered around us all. But what about washing lines? Let's have a really big one running the length of three gardens and actually begin to share.

Apparently, about 4000 years ago in coastal South America, the lovely early people there had no concept of fortification and lived in harmony each in their open village or settlement. People came and went and maybe the only problem was wondering where little Chuquaxipotal had wandered off to.

And suddenly (the archaeologists say) everything changed, for people came from afar, for overseas and brought a new paradigm called war.

And they began to seal the borders of their villages to fend off whoever might come to claim their prowess. Perhaps little Chuquaxipotal's parents thought this was a good move.

So we live with our fences and they won't get taken down in our lifetimes. Do notice, with the word 'fence' there is a lot of undesirable vocabulary that goes with it. We've already had fend off, but there's defender and defensive, and that sport with epees called fencing. It seems to say a lot about us. A hymn says, "We fence each other in with hate and war."



Regeneration is about becoming different or being transformed into a new being or into a person who now has a different understanding of life than previously. Part of this involves a major re-think about each other, realising that this person is clearly very different to who I am but they are entitled to be like that, within reason. They have their rights and they carry their responsibilities. And surely coming together with mutual similarities and differences will always be enriching for us all.

One last upside of fences... In the Bible there are many mentions of taking the 'fenced cities'. These were the cities who stood against Israel and were fenced (but really 'walled') to stop enemies coming in and even more importantly, to stop those inside from having dealings with those outside. Think Jericho! But think about an entrenched attitude and it begins to add up and be personal.

The Israelites were **not** warmongers for the sake of it, although it can seem like that at times. They were the people of God. They are our spiritual commitment to the Lord which must take over and root out our own natural tendencies and resistance to obeying the Lord. These can sit tight in us for a very long time and even hold us back. So we are, in that way, to do battle with fenced cities and take them. The first step is to realise they are there and where they can be found.

SOME MORE BIBLE TRIVIA

There are 10 questions and with each one there are five choices, of which only one is correct. The questions do get harder from 1 to 12. The answers are underneath the final fable.

1. Which one of these disciples was not a fisherman?
James, Nathaniel, Simon Peter, Andrew, John
2. In the parable of the Prodigal Son where was the son when he came to his senses? In a Tavern, In Bed, Gambling, Hiding, Feeding Pigs
3. Who was Joseph's full brother with the same mother?
Reuben, Judah, Benjamin, Asher, Simeon
4. From memory, which of these is the sixth commandment?
Remember Sabbath Day, No false witness, No stealing,
No murder, Honour your father and mother
5. Which is the last book of the Old Testament?
Malachi, Haggai, Daniel, Jonah, The Psalms
6. Who was the Roman Emperor at the time Jesus was killed?
Caesar Augustus, Tiberius, Nero, Julius Caesar, Claudius
7. Which one of these Parables is there in all four gospels?
Lost Sheep, The Sower, Good Samaritan, Feeding 5000, The Talents
8. What did Daniel and friends eat when they first came to Babylon?
Bread, Eggs, Fruit, Cheese, Vegetables
9. Who was King Solomon's mother?
Susannah, Miriam, Bathsheba, Zipporah, Sarah
10. How many fish were in the disciples' nets? 153, 50, 211, 42, 121

FINAL FABLE

A bat flew and grew tired and fell to the ground where a weasel pounced on him. He said, "Birds are my enemies!" The bat said that he was not a bird but a mouse. The weasel let him go. Some time later the bat again fell to the ground where another weasel pounced on him. "Mice are my enemies!" The bat assured him he was a bird since he had wings to fly with. The weasel let him go.

ANSWERS: 1. Nathaniel; 2. Feeding Pigs; 3. Benjamin; 4. No murder; 5. Malachi;
6. Tiberius; 7. Feeding 5000; 8. Vegetables; 9. Bathsheba; 10. 153