

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

Swedenborg

The New Church In Victoria Newsletter

October / November 2019

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Why Change?

A message from Rev. David Moffat

Last week, Pam and I spent four days in Dubbo, NSW, while I played for ballet examinations. We left home for the drive north (four and a half hours) at 5:45am on Sunday morning, and I played for rehearsals until 7:30pm. So, a day off on the Monday was a welcome break, before two days of exams on the Tuesday and Wednesday. Being my last year playing for exams in NSW, Pam and I decided to use the opportunity to visit Dubbo's Western Plains Zoo.

During Sunday's rehearsals, I told one nine-year-old, Evie, about our plans to visit the zoo, and she recommended a visit to the playground, as she felt sure we would have a great time there. So, come Monday, Pam and I decided to have a bit of fun, and take some photos of me on the playground equipment, especially for Evie's entertainment. Apparently she was quite convinced we must have spent our whole day on the playground, and she concluded that we probably saw very few animals.



Evie also handpicked the serviettes with which our food was served. After all, who doesn't love unicorns?

In her own childish way, Evie was applying the Golden Rule: "Do to others as you would have them do to you." (Luke 6:31) But, of course, you can see the problem, can't you? She assumed that we would enjoy the playground because she enjoyed playground. But there are times when that is clearly not always the case. It is a simple mistake for any child to make, and it brought us all much fun and amusement. But it's not so cute coming from an adult. The expectation is that as we grow we will develop a more nuanced approach to the Golden Rule. We understand that everyone has different desires and preferences, and really what we ought to do - what we hope others will do for us - is listen to and honour others' preferences.

There is a similar idea found in Swedenborg's descriptions of love: "Love consists ... in feeling the other's delight as delight within oneself. That is what it is to love. In contrast, to feel one's own delight in another, and not the other's delight within oneself, is not to love; for this is loving self" (*Divine Love & Wisdom*, paragraph 47)

It is spiritually immature to assume that because I love something, you will necessarily love it too. Indeed, that is actually what self-love looks like. Instead, we are urged to delight in others' happiness, irrespective of whether it actually arouses the same joy in us. So, adults know they must take children to playgrounds because adults know it makes children happy, even though adults do not naturally gravitate towards playgrounds for their own entertainment.

Now, I say, "spiritually immature", knowing full well that I've made the same mistake as an adult. Many times. We all do, continually. The real trick is to recognise the error and learn from it. As a teacher, especially as a young teacher, in both music and theology, I quickly discovered that my own viewpoint (my particular fascination with the topic) is rarely shared by my students. In order to teach effectively, I have to step outside of my own preconceived notions and appreciate perspectives very different from my own. And that takes maturity.

That is part of the road we are all urged to travel: both individually, in our own lives and relationships, and together as a church. Not everyone comes to religion from the same direction as I do. Not everyone sees the world as I do. Not everyone can (or will want to) sit and listen to me tell them "how things are". But that doesn't mean they are incapable of learning.

So, why change? Well, first of all we do it for others, understanding that if learning is to happen at all, we must begin where they are, and often take a different path from the one that naturally suits our own dispositions.

But secondly - and importantly - we do it for ourselves, because the purpose of our lives is learning how to love. As Albus Dumbledore admitted to Harry Potter : "Youth cannot know how age thinks and feels. But old men are guilty if they forget what it is to be young . . . and I seem to have forgotten lately" (J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*)



From *Rev. David Moffat*.

REMINDER:
Daylight Saving commences at 2am
on Sunday 6 October. Clocks go
forward 1 hour!

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Stepping forward into the unknown

(Brisbane New Church Society's move from Rosalie to Dutton Park)

Ian's Reflections on the Brisbane New Church move

Whether it is from old home to new home, or even office to office, moving most definitely holds its challenges. And so it was for the Brisbane Society just a few short years ago, moving from Rosalie – with which its Church building there had come to be so much identified - across the river to Dutton Park. When it comes to a Church it is, of course, not just one person or one family that is called on to make the decision. All of the members are and were involved, meetings held, misgivings heard and reasons patiently spelt out. Amongst those reasons, for us, were impending and very large refurbishing costs, increasing parking difficulties, and the freeing up of capital to enable our new Pastor to be employed full time. And an eager buyer was waiting in the wings.

Fortunately, and once the sale was completed and we had moved out, we were able to have the use of the Chapel at Trinity College (The Theological College of The Uniting Church here in Brisbane) for our Sunday Services and this proved as good as we could possibly have hoped for as a "stepping stone" until we could move into what would be our "own" premises again. Having said that, and while uncertainty hung in the air, the search for a new building not – in the early months - yielding anything suitable, Darren's steadfastness, and prayer which he encouraged, steadied things a lot.

Fired with enthusiasm immediately following one of the January Church Camps which he attended, and trawling through property ads on the internet for a possibly suitable building to become the new Church Centre, it was Nathan Brunne who located what we now have in Dutton Park. It is a pleasantly modern building, two storeys high, opposite and across

from the railway station, 150 metres at most from a major arterial Road, a 10 minute walk to Princess Alexandra Hospital and a pleasant 500 metre walk through Dutton Park to The University of Queensland.

Eighteen months on it has, indeed, come to feel like "home". It's different, not as "Churchy", upholstered chairs instead of pews, a lot more indoor space and it allows for – even invites – a more relaxed and informal approach such as we have, Darren leading, on the 2nd and 3rd Sundays.

Whilst buildings are not the most important thing, it is nevertheless great to have a permanent Centre, owned by the Church and where we can configure space to our needs and liking, store things, and use the space as we see to be optimally useful.

It can't be the building, as such, and yet surely it has helped, that since the move to Dutton Park we have welcomed a number of new people into our midst. It is exciting and we are greatly enriched by this. All have been searching. I have heard at least two of these folk talk of their introduction to Swedenborg and the Writings via the YouTube videos and weekly programmes that Curtis Childs does in the USA, available worldwide and called "Off The Left Eye". As well, we have a media savvy Pastor who, though operating from a very slim budget, searches out all possibilities to make known Services coming up, topics, and unusually striking quotations from the Doctrines set against – for example – an eye catching photograph of a sun set or path through a forest. Sitting in the Chapel for Darren's 2nd Sunday, "Sacred Circle", earlier this month, I counted 7 new people who have joined us within the past 2 years, attending regularly. All the indications are that they feel their lives are blessed and that they are strengthened on their spiritual journey by the wonderful teachings and insights of the Writings, and the approach, they have now discovered.

Ian A Arnold (Rev.)

Darren's Reflections on the Brisbane New Church move

Ian has so wonderfully captured here many of the struggles involved in moving a Society from one spiritual home to another. Equally such an event holds opportunities in disguise. Our Society at the time we chose to sell and make the move had a thriving family Service on the first Sunday of each month, while our other Sunday Services were in decline. One of my greatest concerns was 'how' to facilitate this move without harming the attendance. In other words, how could I turn the ship in a different direction and not accidentally throw anyone overboard. Therefore, high in our priority was a new spiritual home not too far from the old location. Little did I know that crossing the river, even if only 6.1 kms away, could cause consternation. It took time and lots of reassurance until everyone was comfortably settled.

Thus moving locations opened up the opportunity to comfortably experiment with two new ways of worshipping – 'Sacred Circle' (second Sundays) and 'Abiding in the Vine' (third Sundays). Again, my thoughts were on expansion (not contraction) and these two new Services are designed, from bottom up, to attract people who may not have a traditional Church background. It has taken time and patience and now we are seeing new attendees. As Ian mentioned, two found us through "Off The Left Eye" Swedenborg Foundation (USA) YouTube presentations. Another two had been reading Swedenborg for a number of years and found us through a search and the Church website. Two were invited through our separate reading groups and others were invited by those already attending.

The 'act' of inviting others I attribute to two things –

1. The excitement new people bring to the Service
2. The safe and flexible environment created by the two newer Services we offer.

It is my conviction that that the variety of approaches in our Services helps to illustrate to our newcomers how open and flexible the New Church is as a spiritual movement.

Ultimately it is the Lord who is sending in new friends for us to share the journey with and we are grateful and thankful to Him. We are also very excited for Melbourne as you take steps towards growth and newness in the Lord.

Go well, be of good courage and delight in the Lord.

Darren Brunne (Rev.)

News of People and Events

It is with a real sense of sadness that we report the peaceful passing on into the higher life of Eva Teed in the early morning of 26 September. Eva had celebrated her 92nd birthday earlier in the month. While the past few months had been particularly difficult health-wise, suffering a fall on 24 September added considerably to that situation. So her passing on will be a happy release from bodily restraints and those who have known Eva over the years will appreciate the immense joy she will share in being reunited with her beloved husband, Alan, as well as other dear family members and friends now welcoming Eva to her new home. Eva, neé Robinson, was born into a strong New Church family living in Central Victoria, the origins of which went back to the organisation's earliest days in England. The marriage of Eva and Alan (Teed) saw establishment of another New Church dynasty with 'tentacles' stretching far and wide! Eva's health had prevented her from attending worship for many months which greatly disappointed her. Eva leaves behind Peter and Alison to remember their dear mother and the happy memories of time spent together. The Church extends its deepest condolences to them, their families and to Eva's wider family.

In a word, to grow old in heaven is to grow young.

(from *Heaven and its Wonders, and Hell*
para. 414, Emanuel Swedenborg)

News has also come to hand of the passing on of Geoff Forster in his 94th year who had been unable to join us at Church for several years now due to deteriorating health. While not a member, Geoff communicated regularly with those readers of New Church teachings both in Australia and overseas. He was a member of the Swedenborg Association of Australia and during my (Neville Jarvis) time as Manager of the Swedenborg Centre in Sydney, he presented two lectures there, one being on a favorite area of interest ~ The influence of Swedenborg's teachings on the Austrian philosopher and social reformer, Rudolph Steiner (1861 – 1925), who founded the esoteric spiritual movement known as anthroposophy. Geoff also wrote a good number of articles, including on Swedenborg, which were published in various journals particularly in the UK (Geoff was a member of the UK Churches Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies). A wonderful mind, Geoff will be well remembered by many who knew him as he now journeys forward on what he would refer to as "the supreme adventure" (*Intimations of Immortality: Seeing that Leads to Believing* by Dr. Robert Crookall). Our sympathies go to Geoff's family.

Regrettably, a most significant anniversary was omitted from the June / July 2019 Newsletter. The date was 23 June being the 65th anniversary of the ordination of Rev. John Teed in England in 1954. The ordination took place in South London during the 147th Annual Meeting of the General Conference of the New Church in Great Britain. Rev. John Elliott was ordained on the same occasion and they are now the longest serving living Ministers ordained by the British General Conference. Belated but hearty congratulations are extended to both John's along with their wives.

Disappointingly, after having made good strides in recovering from his stroke in late May, Klaus Drevermann came down with a severe case of pneumonia in mid-winter requiring more hospitalization. This has left him low in energy and with other issues but thankfully he has now been allowed home under the care of Elke with regular visits by a physiotherapist. Please keep Klaus and Elke in your thoughts and prayers as Klaus endeavours to regain his strength, with spring bringing the need to spend time in their beloved garden.

Margaret Parker sends her very best wishes to everyone. While still unable to join us for services of worship, Margaret is keeping well and getting more adept with her use of a walker at the home. Regular visits by her very young great granddaughter is a real highlight for Margaret.

It was delightful to have Clifford Phanjoo from the New Church in Mauritius join us for a service in August. Clifford, along with his wife Linda, were visiting daughters Jennifer and Crystal particularly to celebrate a significant birthday of Jennifer.

2020 New Church Retreat.

The 2020 Retreat will be held from Monday January 6th to Sunday January 12th at the Nunyara Conference Centre (Uniting Church owned) is situated in spacious grounds in the Adelaide Hills, a drive of 20 minutes from the CBD with an enviable view of the city. 'Nunyara' means 'place of healing' according to the Kurna people. More details, including booking details, can be found on the Internet by following the link - <http://newchurch.net.au/nunyara-new-church-retreat-2020>.



REMEMBER! REMEMBER! THE 6TH OCTOBER!

**Daylight Saving commences at 2am.
Clocks go forward 1 hour!**

**Remember this when locking up for the night on the
Saturday.**

Duty Officer Volunteers



Would you be interested in joining the duty roster on Sundays when services are held in Melbourne? The main involvement is arriving about 30 minutes before the service is due to start to help set up and bring the offertory forward or to bring flowers for the altar.

Please do think about this. Should you wish to know more or are agreeable to participate, please speak with either Neville Jarvis or Karl Robinson.

Inspiration for Living

from Helen Steiner Rice

A better world for all mankind where we are safe and free,
must start not with our fellowmen but within the heart of "me".

From heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind . . . '

Psalm 33:13

Today live by the rule that "peace in the world begins with me
and within me".

Diary of Events in October & November 2019

All activities will take place at Wadham House, 52 Wadham Parade, Mt. Waverley unless otherwise advised.

October

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday 6 2.00am | CLOCKS GO FORWARD ONE HOUR |
| Sunday 6 10.30am | Family Service led by Neville Jarvis There will be Bible story time and related activities for the children |
| Sunday 13 | No service |
| Friday 18 7.30pm | Swedenborg Group Discussion meeting – topic to be advised |
| Sunday 20 10.30am | Service of Worship led by Rev. John Teed, including the administration of the Holy Supper, and followed by an Annual General Meeting – see separate advice below. |
| Sunday 27 | No Mt. Waverley service Ballarat – 318 Fussell Street. Devotional worship led by Judy Robinson commencing 3pm. For more information, phone (03) 53 315 638 |

November

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday 3 10.30am | Family Service led by Neville Jarvis There will be Bible story time and related activities for the children |
| Sunday 10 | No service |
| Sunday 17 10.30am | Service of Worship led by Karl Robinson |
| Friday 22 7.30pm | Swedenborg Group Discussion meeting – topic to be advised |
| Sunday 24 | No service Ballarat – 318 Fussell Street. Devotional worship led by Judy Robinson commencing 3pm. For more information, phone (03) 53 315 638 |

Following Month - December

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday 1 10.30am | Advent Family Service led by Neville Jarvis There will be Bible story time and related activities for the children |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Duty Roster – Mt. Waverley

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| <i>October 2019:</i> | Sunday 6 | Rose & Karl Robinson |
| | Sunday 20 | Alexis & Neville Jarvis |
| <i>November 2019:</i> | Sunday 3 | Norma Whelan |
| | Sunday 17 | Marika Sivak |
| <i>December 2019:</i> | Sunday 1 | Rose & Karl Robinson |

Note: If you are unavailable on the Sunday allocated, please contact a member of the Duty Roster to swap.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Sunday 20 October 2019 at 11.30am

Wadham House, 52 Wadham Parade, Mt. Waverley

Due to the change of year end to 30 June as decided by members at the AGM in March 2019, a second AGM of members, to which all friends of the Church are equally invited, will be held following a shorter than normal period of worship led by Rev. John Teed. A separate Notice will be issued to members along with the required Reports.