

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

Swedenborg

The New Church In Victoria Newsletter

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Locations

Melbourne

Wadham House
52 Wadham Street
Mount Waverley 3149

Postal Address
PO Box 2224 Mount
Waverley VIC 3149

Ballarat

318 Fussell St 3350
53 315638

Website

newchurch.net.au

Contacts

Karl Robinson

Chair of The Board
0417 514 960

Helmut Lopaczuk

Secretary
0409 184 643

Newsletter Coordinator

Neville Jarvis
03 8555 9116
anjarvis72@optusnet.com.au

Supplementary Edition

A Vision for our Future

from the Rev. David Moffat



In the months since accepting the invitation to minister in Melbourne, I have spent considerable time developing my vision for the way forward from 2020. This is a summary of the longer document I shared with the Board some time ago. It is also worth noting that this is not set in stone: there may well be other opportunities that emerge later, and I hope to engage the church community in a wider discussion during our first year. I will be asking questions, like:

- * *What excites you about our church?*
- * *What do we have that people need?*
- * *What can we do that people need?*

There are four key areas: **Devotions**, **Outreach**, **Ministries** (community activities) and building **Community**.

DEVOTIONS. Currently members of the congregation are engaged in a monthly family service, and there is also a traditional service which takes place on the third Sunday of each month. These will continue, the latter being lay-led, although I will be present and active in support of this service to continue. In addition, I envision the other weekends of the month with [a] a Bible focus, and [b] a Doctrinal focus. On fifth Sundays, a “Useful Service” Sunday, will see us engaged in a number of activities sharing our energies and talents with a community greater than ourselves.

I hesitate to call any of these “Services of Worship”, only because this tends to call a particular focus and activities to mind. While all these activities will be spiritual in nature and worshipful, they are not intended to fit within traditional notion of “worship”. Some of these may not take place on Sunday mornings.

Our **OUTREACH** will use a number of technologies and media to make our teachings known in the wider city. We will continue to develop our website, establish a social media presence, stream and record services and other presentations, and make use of traditional forms of advertising (newspapers, etc.). A great deal of work has taken place in the last few years, globally, making Swedenborg’s work more widely known and available. This work is bearing fruit, across the world, and in Australia too. One of my colleagues has recently shown that it’s a relatively simple process to hang our success upon the coattails of those pioneers. We will also have a number of attractive information displays available on the premises for newcomers and visitors to enjoy, and to stimulate questions. We will work to make information available in English, Tagalog and Mandarin.

Our **MINISTRIES** will be about reaching out to others: friends, neighbours, the wider community. This is about service to others, and about using the facilities available to us for the benefit of all. All members can have a great contribution to this work. As an example, it is my intention to use my own interest in music to make contact with a broader music-loving community, and invite them into our premises, to use the space, and to see the displays: running concerts, a community choir, music classes, etc. The possibilities are endless, really. I hope members will feel encouraged to run events and groups which will turn our facilities into a vibrant community hub. *What could you do?*

Our **COMMUNITY** underpins it all, and in some measure, its quality will determine our success. What does a great community look like? What is the kind of community that will keep people engaged, working alongside one another, enjoying each other's company? I don't think I need to tell you. We've all been part of communities we've loved, and others we've hated: it might be at work, at school, clubs, or other social settings. We know what keeps us coming back for more and what keeps us away. A little reflection upon our own experiences can tell us that.

The real question is, how do we *create* a great community? It's simple really: most people would like to be treated the same way I would like to be treated. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." So, that is how I must act: trust, mutual respect, listening to views that are different from my own, serving the needs of others. An author I have read and listened to in recent years is fond of saying, "it's simple, but it isn't easy." So many communities, workplaces, and churches fail, not because any of this is a mystery, but because the practice is personally challenging. When tempers flare, or when disagreements arise, it is those moments that shape the community we will become. Our *practice* of the doctrine of charity becomes critical to the success of this adventure together.

"... everyone who has any religion thinks about heaven and wishes to go there. Heaven, however, is granted to none but those who know the way to it and who walk therein. This way can in some measure be known from a knowledge of the character of those who constitute heaven, and also by knowing that no one becomes an angel, that is, comes into heaven, unless he carries with him from the world something of the angelic character; and in this there is present a knowledge of the way from walking in it, and a walking in the way through a knowledge of it."
(DIVINE PROVIDENCE, paragraph 60)

Pam and I look forward to sharing the adventure with you all.

David

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Sunday September 15 ~ Morning worship at Wadham House

We are pleased to announce that this service will now be led by Rev. John Teed, commencing 10.30am. The theme will be *Death and Resurrection*.

Sunday September 29 ~ Picnic in the Park at 11.45am

Valley Reserve, 80 Waimarie Drive, Mt Waverley meeting at the picnic area adjacent to the car park. There are tables and benches available (but we suggest you also bring a chair) and great children's play equipment.

Rolls, meat, salad etc. provided by the Church for everyone to make their own lunch plus soft drinks and maybe a few other goodies! For those preferring a barbecue, bring your own meat etc. and use the facilities in the park.

For catering purposes, please let Alexis and Neville Jarvis know by 25 September if you will be joining in the activity (email: anjarvis72@optusnet.com.au; ph 85559116;) and advise if you have any dietary requirements.

Come and be part of a social and fun time

Advance Notice

Sunday October 20 ~ Annual General Meeting

Following the morning service conducted by Rev. John Teed, including the administration of the Sacrament of the Holy Supper, there will be a second 2019 AGM due to the change to our financial year. Full details will be sent to members separately.