

Roseville New Church 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 : revhathompson@gmail.com

On Facebook – Roseville New Church

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The Faith of the New Church is summarised 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.

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CANCELLED!!

The Roseville New Church is following the COVID-19 (coronavirus) advice from the NSW Government and, until advised otherwise, all services are cancelled.

CANCELLED!!

Roseville Services Update

Rest assured that during the period that church will be closed we will be delivering online content to aid you all with home-worship. As we have not historically had live feeds of our services and as I do not presently have a YouTube channel that I produce regular content for I, like most of you, will have to learn to adapt. If you are on Facebook or receive this newsletter electronically, I will give some notification when this online content is available. This first week may be a challenge but I plan to have a video up prior to each Sunday. ~ Howard

The World Turned Upside Down



Faced with the reality of a global pandemic which is sweeping the world and significantly disrupting our lives, many of us are asking ourselves this question; “What can I do?” With the 24/7 news cycle it is easy to become overwhelmed. “What can I do?” I certainly find myself asking this question. I, like many of us I’m certain, find it hard to wrap my head around the situation. Questions like; “Will we have to go without pay?” “What if one of us gets the virus?” “What if school closes...for six months?” “What if I need to go to hospital for something that is not the virus?” “Will we run out of food?” “When will I be able to buy toilet paper again?” And these questions just touch the surface, each of us is facing different concerns. For the months (maybe years) ahead we appear to be facing, as one of the songs from the Broadway musical “Hamilton” says, a “world turned upside down.”

This situation reminds me of the Children of Israel on the precipice of their escape from Egypt. Backed up against the shores of the Red Sea and being pursued by the army of Pharaoh, the Children of Israel probably started to ask themselves some questions. Maybe not the same question we are asking ourselves today but definitely from a similar place. The Children of Israel certainly had to be concerned with the future given the uncertainty they faced. It was at this moment that Moses stepped forward.

But Moses told the people, “Don’t be afraid. Just stand still and watch the Lord rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. The Lord himself will fight for you. Just stay calm. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving!” ~ Exodus 14:13-15

“Stand still...get moving.” What a contradiction? How can we both “stand still” (do nothing) and “get moving” (do something).

The story of the Children of Israel between this “rock and a hard place” holds a simple but useful lesson for all of us today. You see, one thing

that comes clear to anyone who seeks to understand the true nature of God is that because God takes care of everything does not mean that we don't have to do anything. Of course, on its surface, the Red Sea story seems like God performed a miracle, and so he did. But while the Lord no longer performs miracles in the same way he did in the Old and New Testaments, he still performs miracles. The miracle the Lord performs for you and me today takes place between the "stand still" and the "get moving."

The Bible contains numerous examples of God or His prophets telling people to "be still" as in the following: "**Be still, and know that I am God!**" (**Psalm 46:10**). Simply put, God is saying "be quiet." He's saying "be quiet" because we can't think straight when overwhelmed by the noise that typically accompanies a difficult situation. One needs only to look to videos of people going to blows over a few rolls of toilet paper at the grocery store to know that in the heat of the moment humans find it hard to think straight.

The Lord tells us to be quiet, stand still, to remain calm because we can't think straight if we don't. And, if we can (remain calm) in this space the Lord can perform His miracle. His miracle is the gift of rationality, the gift of kindness and the gift of useful thought. Then, and only then, can we "get moving" with activity that is useful.

**That the Lord takes care of everything,
does not mean that we do not have to do anything.**

"Be still, and know that I am God!"

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This Month at the Swedenborg Centre

Due to rapid changes occurring to scheduled events in the wake of the current health situation, here's a brief update on what is happening (and what is not happening) at Roseville.

For very last minute changes of event details, please keep an eye on the website at <http://www.swedenborg.com.au/>

The Swedenborg Centre is following the COVID-19 (coronavirus) advice from the NSW Government.

Although nearly all of our public events would arguably fall within what is permissible under the NSW guidance (less than 100 people and 4 sq. metres per person) we have made the prudent decision to cancel our indoor group events and concerts which were to be held in the Roseville New Church.



All other regular events which are held at the Swedenborg Centre will continue for the foreseeable future. This includes our small group meetings (5-6 people) and one-on-one meetings. Of course, should NSW revise their guidance we will continue to seek to comply.

We recommend doing what you can to keep your immune system strong and healthy, which means getting exercise, enjoying some fresh air, relaxation practices, eating good fresh food plus vitamin C, drinking immune boosting beverages like ginger tea with lemon and honey, basing our actions on sound knowledge, watching the emotional states in ourselves, and in general living a healthy spiritual life with plenty of good humour. If anyone wishes to link up with us using Skype, FaceTime, or via phone call, or using some other online method, we are also open to trying these ways to stay in touch.

We wish for everyone's good health and happiness to be maintained or restored as best and quickly as possible. We know that our charitable good will, patience, love and care towards others is needed more now than at any other time. To use our best knowledge to safely care for others is part of exercising charity with discernment.

Elbow hugs,
Joe

Report on **Roseville New Church** **Harvest Festival Meal**



Though our numbers were down a bit with several of our regulars attending the Women's Weekend (see separate report), on March 8th nearly 20 of us gathered at the church to celebrate the Harvest with a service followed by a shared "ploughman's meal" in the hall. At the beginning of the service a generous offering of fresh fruit and veg was placed before the altar. This collection was delivered to our grateful friends at the Salvation Army who, in receiving our offering, said that "this would be much appreciated by the families we serve."

For our message on this day we wrapped up our 3-part series on the Trinity with a look at the Holy Spirit. What a perfect subject for our Harvest Sunday since the Holy Spirit is the Lord's action in this world.

What clearer example of His action in this world than the growth we see in the foods we eat from seedling to harvested crops.

“These three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are three essential components of one God. They are one the way our soul, our body and the things we do are one” (TCR 163).

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An Easter Message for Uncertain Times

Often when I am reflecting on the Easter story I try to place myself in the minds of the disciples after the Lord had been crucified but before His resurrection. The best biblical vehicle for me to do this is Luke’s account of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.



That same day two of Jesus’ followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. But God kept them from recognising him.

He asked them, “What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?”

They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn’t heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days.” (Luke 24:13-18)

“They stopped short, sadness written across their faces.” I find this an easy state to imagine. Here these two disciples, close followers of the Lord, who anticipated the Lord would transform not only their lives but transform the world, were now processing the realisation that He was no longer with them. They must have had doubts, they must, at one level, have felt hopeless, dead inside. While the story ends with the Lord revealing Himself to the disciples and restoring their hope, imagining myself in their shoes on that walk can bring to mind aspects of my own life where I feel hopeless. It also can bring to mind the hopelessness

many of us are feeling at this time. Most readers of this newsletter are under some sort of travel restriction, work-from-home order or even shelter-in-place order. And, while some initial government statements suggested this might be two weeks under these conditions most now are talking months. Our future, like that of the disciples who thought the Lord had left them, can look very bleak indeed.

When we celebrate the Holy Supper in church I always include lessons related to the Easter story, the Lord's crucifixion and His resurrection. One passage that I am particularly fond of speaks of how angels hear this story when we read it.

Angels have no knowledge at all of death or of sickness and consequently form no mental image of them. Instead they form an idea of the continuation of life, and an idea of resurrection. When a person dies they cast off solely what has served them for use in the world and enter into the life their spirit has led. This is the idea that comes to angels' minds when a person reads about 'dying' and 'being sick'. An idea of regeneration likewise comes to mind, since regeneration is resurrection to life. (AC 6221)

The message I take from this lesson is that the Lord is calling us to a more angelic way of thinking. The Lord is calling us to look beyond the difficulties of the day. Do not focus on the collapse of our normal daily routines, but focus on the rebirth that will follow it.

“Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognised him. And at that moment he disappeared! They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32,33)

Look beyond the despair that is all too easy to focus on and look forward to the time when, as in the story, your eyes will be opened, and you will recognise Him. Look forward to the time when your hearts will burn within as you read His Word and understand His true nature and his unfailing love for the human race.

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Report on the March Women's Weekend

Last August, a group of women gathered for our first Australian New Church Women's Weekend together. That was such a success that, in early March this year, a dozen ladies did it again! The group consisted of



some 'newbies' and some 'oldies' – some who'd attended the last weekend, others who had not, some who've been part of the New Church for decades and others who'd only discovered it within the past few years. We spent the weekend in a spacious 21-bed, 6-toilet Airbnb house in Penshurst, NSW, coming from as far as Port Macquarie and as near as four minutes down the road. Our biggest contingent drove all the way from Canberra! Once again we shared delicious home-made meals, fun ice-breaker games, insightful instruction on a woman from the Bible (this time Rebekah), regeneration and Jacob & Esau, and relaxing & enlightening meditations on the Lord's Prayer and the woman at the well from John 4. Oh, and we again assembled 200 sterile birthing kits for childbearing women in developing nations! Despite the packed schedule there was still time in-between for prayer, conversation, JennTangles and friendship-building. This weekend received good reviews, once again; so much so, in fact, that we're already looking ahead to another wonderful women's weekend in September, possibly in the Southern Highlands! Please let Jenn know if you'd like to be on the email list for that one. (jenn@beiswenger.net)

Where two or three are gathered together in My name,
there am I in the midst of them!

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New Church In Australia Assembly
15th - 17th May, 2020

Notice recently went out to NCIA members and associate members of the upcoming Assembly to be held in Brisbane. At this Assembly a major item for discussion is a proposed change to the membership structure of the NCIA. The Board is looking at the future of the organisation and believes there is a need to adapt to align with the changes we are seeing in our environment. The recent dissolution of Societies in Canberra and Perth, decreasing attendance at Sunday services, along with increasing use of online resources are some of the aspects that have been considered by the Board in coming to its recommendation.

Members and associate members who have not received their notice of Assembly are encouraged to contact Kevin Attwater, NCIA Secretary (attwaterk@bigpond.com).

Words of comfort

Even when I walk through the darkest valley,
I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.
Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.
Psalm 23:4

Happy are those who hear the joyful call to worship,
for they will walk in the light of your presence, Lord.
Psalm 89:15

Lord, through all the generations
you have been our home!
Before the mountains were born,
before you gave birth to the earth and the world,
from beginning to end, you are God.
Psalm 90:1,2

Joyful are those who have the God of Israel (Jacob) as their helper,
whose hope is in the Lord their God.
Psalm 146:5

Those who love your instructions have great peace
and do not stumble.
I long for your rescue, Lord,
so I have obeyed your commands.
Psalm 119:165,166

For the sake of my family and friends, I will say,
“May you have peace.”
For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
I will seek what is best for you, O Jerusalem.
Psalm 122:8,9

The Lord is good to everyone.
He showers compassion on all his creation.
Psalm 145:9

Minister's Contact Information and Office Hours

Rev. Howard A. Thompson
Office Hours: 11:00 am - 4.00 pm
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

Email: revhathompson@gmail.com

Phone: 0432 357 475



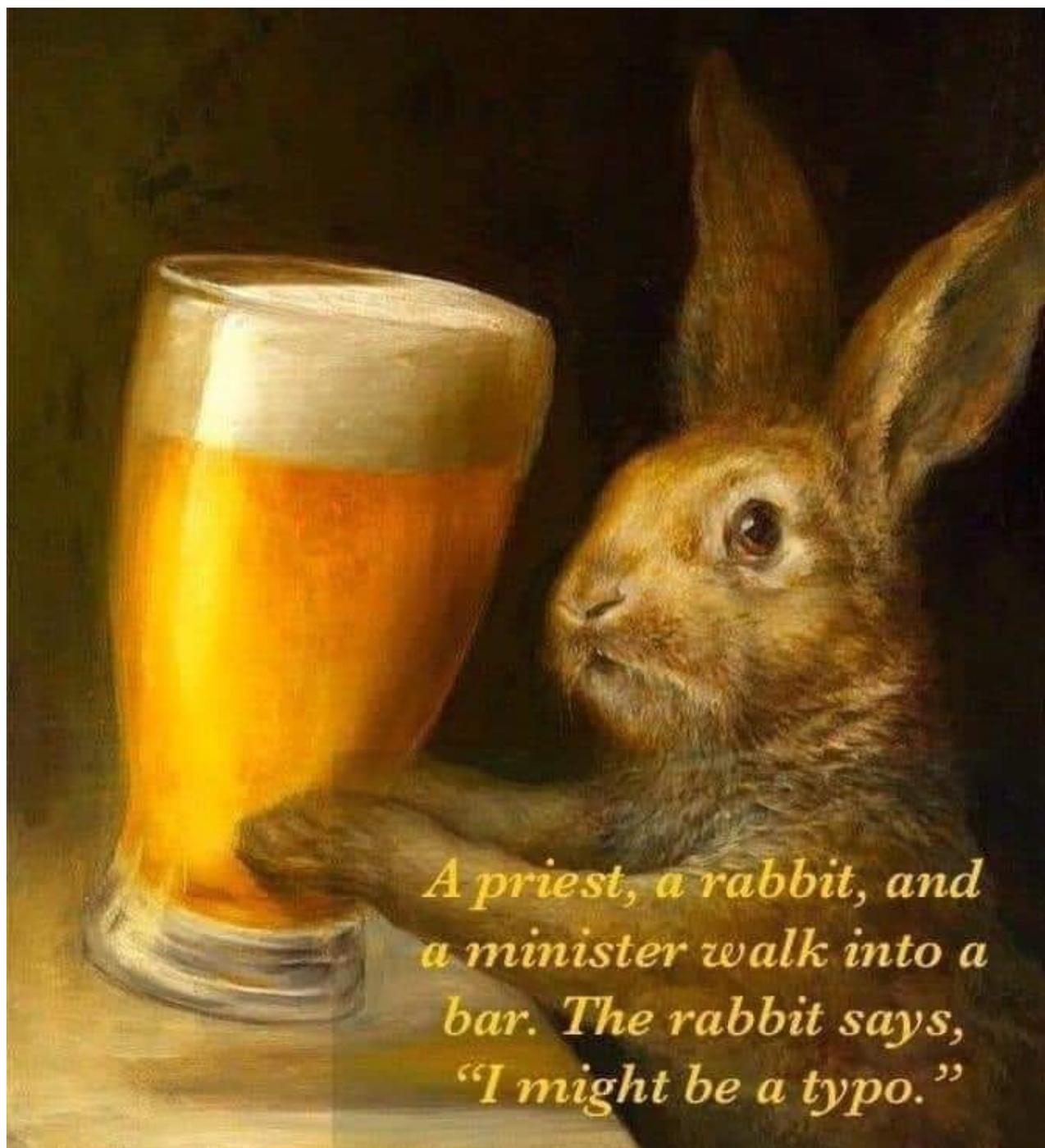
Fancy a Mid-Winter Break in Sunny, Warm, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania (USA)?

The General Church of the New Jerusalem will be marking the 250th anniversary of the Lord calling together His disciples, in the spiritual world, and sending them out to preach the gospel that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, and that His kingdom shall be for ages of ages" (True Christian Religion 791). Members and friends of the General Church are invited to gather together in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania 18-21 June 2020 for the 2020 General Church Retreat.

More information is available at

<http://about.newchurch.org/gc-retreat-2020/>

Pulpit Humour (Yes, we can still laugh)



*A priest, a rabbit, and
a minister walk into a
bar. The rabbit says,
“I might be a typo.”*