

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

Swedenborg

The New Church In Victoria Newsletter

April / May 2020

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

All April and May activities have been suspended

All readers will be well aware of the difficulties faced throughout the world in dealing with the effects of COVID-19; our community here in Victoria is certainly not immune. The restrictions now imposed by the Government with regard to indoor gatherings are very specific as are the social-distancing requirements. The Community Centre we currently hire for Sunday services in Mt. Waverley, Wadham House, while not closed as yet, has also introduced quite stringent guidelines for groups using its premises.

Taking all this into consideration, The New Church in Victoria Board, in conjunction with our Spiritual Leader, Rev. David Moffat, has had to make the regrettable decision to cancel:

- **holding services at Wadham House and in Ballarat at least through April and May; and**
- **the Sunday 29 March Community Picnic.**

During this time, if you have any general questions regarding Church matters, please contact either the Board Chair, Karl Robinson, or the Church Secretary, Helmut Lopaczuk. Our Spiritual Leader will be available to discuss pastoral matters; in the case of illness, please do make contact with him asap.

It is pleasing to report that Rev. David Moffat is now at the point of being able to live-stream over the Internet. This will begin on Sunday mornings from 5 April 2020. Until we are able to hold services again, the material streamed will include readings, prayers, music and an address. Please see the notice about the *Streaming Services* on page 4. You can also listen to David's *Recorded Addresses* as referred to on the same page. For those not having access to the Internet or wish to have access to written material for personal meditation, you can receive this by contacting Neville Jarvis (if phoning, please leave a message should your call not be answered at the time). You are urged to take all necessary precautions to safeguard your health from this virus which will likely be a concern to us all for many weeks ahead.

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Why do you come to church? [part one]

I've got a question for you. Actually, a few questions, although in my mind they're really just three ways of asking the same thing. They have come to mind, thanks to the useful conversations I've been involved in with the church board.

Why do you come to church? What do you come to church for? What do you hope to receive, or gain, when you come to church?

Now I've been asking these questions in the last few weeks, and I'd like to share some answers, not in detail, but drawing the common themes I've heard being expressed. But before I do that, I'd like you to consider your own answers to those questions, and I'd like to hear or read them if you haven't shared them with me already. Ponder them now, for a few minutes before reading on. Perhaps it might be helpful to write them down. Then, let's see how they relate to others' responses.

Just so you can't read on too quickly, let's talk about something else first ...

LOGOPRAXIS

Have you heard of *Logopraxis*? Have you ever wondered what it is, or even thought you'd like to try it?

Logopraxis is a meditative and devotional reading of sacred texts, developed by Rev David Millar, of the Australian New Church College. David has been leading *Logopraxis* groups for well over ten years now, and it has steadily gained popularity across the world with readers of Swedenborg, both new and experienced.

Groups meet every two weeks, sometimes face to face, sometimes using video conferencing. Participants read a section from Swedenborg's work in preparation for the meeting. The important distinction *Logopraxis* makes is that we read for application, not for understanding. We are looking for a sentence or phrase which speaks to us, rather than struggling to understand everything that is written. So, you might skim through large sections which would otherwise ensnare you, looking only for the



principle that you can grasp and use. This is because understanding comes from application, not the reverse. From those nuggets, we create spiritual growth tasks, observe ourselves as we live with that task for the rest of the fortnight, and write a submission to the group based upon our experience. The submission is frequently misunderstood. It is not a blow by blow account of our fortnight, a confession of our failings, nor a public bearing of our souls. Rather, it is a sharing of the insights gained along the way, with perhaps a little of the journey we have travelled as we grapple with the ideas that have called to us. Frequently, we find that others have shared some of our path, and similar passages and tasks are often chosen. It is a journey we take together.

Would you like to try *Logopraxis* for yourself? Feel free to contact Rev David Moffat if you wish to get involved. There is an existing face-to-face group in Melbourne, but there are also many participants meeting on line at various times of the day, and we can always create another group if a larger group are interested.

Why do you come to church? [part two]

Now, without naming names or going into too many specifics, I want to share the results so far of my little survey. It seems to me that almost all responses fall into three broad categories:

- **Devotion.** A sense of rest from the daily routine, a space for reflection, contemplation, reverence, gratitude, to refocus on a different attitude to life.
- **Connection.** **Firstly, with the Divine**, experiencing the Lord's presence and guidance, and hearing His Word. **Secondly, with others, in community**, enjoying fellowship, mutual support, travelling the spiritual journey together.
- **Learning.** Finding purpose in life, discovering and becoming everything that the Lord wants for my life.

How do your responses compare? Do they fit under these headings, or is there something that I haven't considered here? Whatever the case, I'd be glad to hear what you have to say.

You may ask, "Why is this all so important?" Well, there are changes ahead for our organisation. Together, we are in the process of "reinventing" the church, in the hope that it will be here to serve the needs of others like us, well into the future, long after we are all gone. But in the midst of that change there are certain things that we must hold onto, things to honour as dear and sacred. Whatever happens we must preserve those things.

Contemplating all this, I note one area missing, at least from my summary (although some specific responses do allude to it), and that is, **being of "use"**. I do wonder where that fits in. But then I also realise that we are neither alone, nor unique, in the kinds of things we have identified here as essentials. There are many people, the world over, seeking **Devotion, Connection, and Learning**, in one form or another, and perhaps serving those needs is in itself the best use we can perform.

With every blessing to you all. I look forward to hearing your responses.

David

Rev. David Moffat, Spiritual Leader



Back-to-basics Bible Study



Rev. David Moffat is offering a program initially focussed on understanding the literal text of the Bible. Correspondences may come later. Would you like to participate in this project?

While physical meetings will be offered from time to time, attendance at them would have to be optional. Social media platforms including Skype or similar will be used. It does involve participants taking the time and responsibility to do their own Bible reading.

If you would like to know more, do speak to or get in touch with Rev. David Moffat (contact details on front page of this Newsletter).



Swedenborg's Summer House

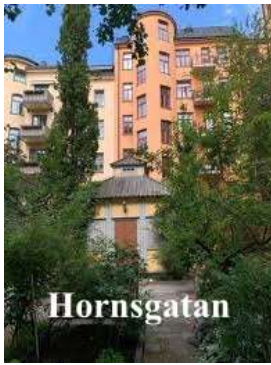
Readers who have delved into the life of Emanuel Swedenborg will be well aware that he spent a good deal of time contemplating and penning his spiritual writings in a summerhouse at his Hornsgatan, Stockholm property. Swedenborg purchased this building in 1743, owning it until his death in 1772. It remained in situ for 124 years, but gradually fell into a state of disrepair during the 19th century and in 1896 it was rescued and moved to Skansen, Stockholm's famous open-air museum.

Today the summerhouse can be visited along with other historic buildings in the museum but apart from a single reed organ, it is otherwise devoid of contents, austere and there is little formal interpretation to provide any sense of its spiritual context.

However, did you know there is a second Swedenborg summerhouse in Stockholm? It's a replica but authentically constructed, erected where the original stood in Hornsgatan by the Swedenborg community in Stockholm. Externally, it retains the original appearance but being a building providing space for special occasions, both spiritual and social communion, inside there are modern plug sockets and a chandelier!

But there's more! a third Swedenborg summerhouse in Stockholm! Another authentically constructed replica, located in the grounds of the Swedenborgian church, and is a living building regularly used by members of the congregation.



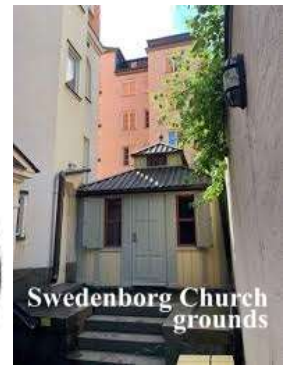


This summary information was sourced from the 30 July 2019 *Cambridge Heritage Research Centre Bulletin*. Why not search the Internet for 'The summerhouse of Emanuel Swedenborg' adding either of the following:

- Cambridge Heritage Research Centre;
- Fun facts.

Neville Jarvis

Medallion issued in 1896 when the original summerhouse was moved to the museum



Contributions to this Newsletter



Any contributions readers may wish to make to the Newsletter would be most welcome. They can be in the form of an article, favourite quote, reading, poem or even a useful illustration. Maybe something you have discovered in Swedenborg's life or in the history of the Swedenborg movement. Please email them to Neville Jarvis or phone to arrange for them to be obtained (see front page for contact details).



Recorded Addresses and Streaming Services

Over the course of several years now, Rev. David Moffat has recorded his addresses and published them for others to listen to. He has been recording the addresses given in Melbourne since his arrival in February, and these are now available for listening online, to download, and to share with others. You can find them at a variety of locations:

- [1] the church website, www.swedenborgcommunityvictoria.net.au
- [2] soundcloud.com/lovelearnserve

Streaming services of worship (broadcasting them over the internet) had already been planned to begin for the benefit of isolated members and friends, but given the current policies of quarantining those who are sick or who have travelled overseas, we are bringing those plans forward. It is our hope to begin live streaming worship material from Sunday 5th April, at 10:30am and when activities are back to normal, full worship services. You will be able to access the live streaming using the following link –

www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XdmuAz1HRQ

You can even subscribe to Rev. David Moffat's channel, to receive notifications of new videos and services at www.youtube.com/channel/UCnCukZugciX7TsZRKNi-dBw/featured.

While every effort will be made to ensure this takes place as planned, it is possible that we're not quite up to the challenge, especially given our limited technical expertise! Please be patient with us if we don't manage it on this occasion, we will certainly endeavour to publish the recorded addresses, as before.



News of Events and People

The Australian bushfires caught much attention of those around the world with many contributing to appeals. One group of New Church young people in Main, USA, decided to express their concern by making a Snow Kangaroo with Joey surrounded by snow heaps with red markings to indicate the fires, a very thoughtful gesture. This photo uploaded to Facebook with \$1 donated from each 'like' to the Australian Wild Life Rescue Foundation. This information was provided by Rev. Jane Siebert, President of the Swedenborgian Church in USA, who herself experienced Australia's extremes while on her first visit in January with both the bushfires and the extreme hailstorm in Canberra.



Sunday 2 February was a most memorable day for The New Church in Victoria with the induction of Rev. David Moffat as our Spiritual Leader. We were blessed with perfect weather after extreme heat of 43 degrees two days prior, heavy driving rain the day before and a cold, wet dreary day afterwards! The 27 present well filled the room and there were



several who had indicated they would be along but in the end didn't make it. There were others who would have wished to be present but for varying reasons were unable to attend. The service and induction were conducted thoughtfully by Rev. John Teed, the Society's Minister in 1980s and also a past New Church in Australia President.



At the conclusion of the service, we all moved into an adjacent room when David & Pam, David's wife, were given a less formal welcome and during which various greetings were read. We were also able to recognise the 90th birthday of one of our longest standing members, Matthew Arnold, with the cutting of a special cake made for him. Afterwards, we all enjoyed a delightful catered morning tea with there was much animated chatting. If you were unable to attend and would like to receive a copy of the service sheet, please contact Neville Jarvis.

Would you be interested in joining the duty roster on Sundays when services are held in Melbourne?



Participation includes:

- arriving about 30 minutes early to help setting up;
- providing flowers for the altar if required;
- bringing forward the offertory for dedication; and
- assisting with tidying up before premises are vacated.

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

*Yesterday is history
Tomorrow is a mystery
Today is a gift
(Bil Keane)*

** ENJOY LIFE TODAY
BECAUSE YESTERDAY
IS GONE AND TOMORROW
IS NEVER PROMISED*

Jesus told us: *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6: 34)*

Those who trust in the Divine, despite having care for the morrow, still do not have it because they do not think of the morrow with concern, still less with anxiety. Their spirit is unperturbed whether or not they obtain the objects of their desire; and they do not grieve over the loss of them, being content with their lot. If they become rich, they do not set their hearts on riches; if they are raised to honours, they do not regard themselves as more worthy than others; if they become poor, they are not made sad; if their circumstances are mean, they are not dejected. They know that for those who trust in the Divine, all things advance toward a happy state to eternity; and that whatever happens to them over time is still beneficial thereto.

(Swedenborg: Secrets of Heaven 8478³)

Gathering Leaves

An ongoing event programme that seeks to draw women from all branches of the Swedenborgian Church and from all quarters of the world together to share in Christian fellowship. It had its beginning in the spring of 2002 and groups of women have met regularly in USA and UK subsequently. This year, 2020, it is being held at the New Church Purley Chase Conference Centre, Warwickshire, England from 28th to 31st August.



The theme will be ***The Fruit of the Spirit***, originating from Paul's letter to the Galatians 5: 22-23: ". . . *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*"

There will be various activities including worship, workshops, sister circles and yes, a day-trip out. A gracious benefactor has offered to pay the room and board fees for women from the USA, Australia and New Zealand.

If interested in attending, contact Rev. Roslyn Taylor, emailing hrtaylor@temple.edu. We have been advised that at this time, the event has not been cancelled but the situation is being monitored in terms of travel and other Government restrictions.



Dates - a few reminders

While there is no Calendar for the months of April and May, here are several special dates to bear in mind:

April

Sunday 5 2.00am	Daylight Saving Ends. Turn clocks back by 1 hour.
Sunday 5	Palm Sunday
Friday 10	Good Friday
Sunday 12	Easter Sunday

May

Sunday 10	Mother's Day
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