

“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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He Is Risen

... they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Luke 24: 2 – 4



The heavens are full of human beings, who are angels, and these are clothed with garments shining in varied degrees of brightness. But these beings cannot at all be seen by a person on earth through the eyes of his body, only through the eyes of his spirit, when the Lord opens them. The angels who were seen by the ancients, such as Abraham, Sarah, Lot, Jacob, Joshua, Gideon, and also the Prophets, were not seen by those persons' bodily eyes but by those of their spirit which had been opened then. The fact that they would also have appeared clothed in robes is clear from the angels sitting at the Lord's tomb, whom Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James saw, and who were wearing shining white garments, Luke 24:4.

Swedenborg: *Secrets of Heaven* paragraph 9814²

Wishing all readers a blessed and happy Eastertide

Community: A Maths lesson

Perhaps you've heard the old Chinese tale of the man who visited heaven and hell. Perhaps it's entirely apocryphal, but it's still one of my favourites. The man visits hell first: he is ushered into a banqueting hall, in the centre of which is a large dining table covered with all imaginable delicacies. Around that table are seated a crowd of the most miserable people he has ever seen, each one struggling to feed himself because all they have been given to eat with are chopsticks which are four feet long. Of course, the next stop on the tour is heaven. Surprisingly, he is shown into an identical banqueting hall. A similar dining table is seen, holding the same kind and quantity of delicacies as the first, and the same four feet long chopsticks. But this time the band seated at the table are happy, because they are feeding each other. Each person is thus fed and content. This is more than just a nice story. It actually suggests a way of life.

There's another saying, this time from the West, which is similar in some regards: "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." I don't need to tell you what happens when each of us tries to scratch our own. Swedenborg's work contains similar ideas:

"... the delight of heaven is not the delight that goes with being great and having position over others, but the delight that goes with being humble and with the affection for serving others; and so it does not consist in wishing to be the greatest but to be the least ..." (Secrets of Heaven, paragraph 3417²)

"... some communities exist [in the spiritual world] which have no end that has any use in view apart from mixing with friends, male and female, and enjoying themselves there; thus they are wholly self-indulgent and care about no one else but themselves. ... As soon as they arrive their sphere gets to work and destroys in others their affections for truth and good. And once these have been destroyed those spirits experience the delight which they share as friends with one another." [2] ... A sad fate awaits them. In the end they live in squalor and in such stupidity that scarcely anything at all of their human ability to understand things is left to them. For the end he has in view is what makes a person, and the essential nature of his end determines the nature of him as a person and therefore of his human ability to understand after death." (Secrets of Heaven, paragraph 4054)

Heaven works because each person's focus is on fulfilling the needs of others, and thereby one's own needs are fulfilled. Hell fails because everyone focuses upon fulfilling their own needs, but these can never truly be satisfied because selfish desires are insatiable. One leads to abundance, the other to paucity.

The same principles apply to communities in this world.

There's another old saying: "Give a man a fish, he will feed himself for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will feed himself for a lifetime." Imagine those communities in terms of fishermen. One fisherman trying to feed a whole community will always have a shortage of fish. But if that fisherman were to teach the whole community to fish, there will be plenty for everyone. Jesus also used fishermen as an analogy: "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (Mark 1:17; Matthew 4:19) The survival of the church, 2000 years after its first Fisherman, is testament to the power of His method: an ever-expanding number of fishermen.



And here's one more that found me on Facebook ...

"A professor gave a balloon to every student, who had to inflate it, write their name on it and throw it in the hallway. The professor then mixed all the balloons. The students were then given 5 minutes to find their own balloon. Despite a hectic search, no one found their balloon.

At that point, the professor told the students to take the first balloon that they found and hand it to the person whose name was written on it. Within 5 minutes, everyone had their own balloon.

The professor said to the students: "These balloons are like happiness. We will never find it if everyone is looking for their own. But if we care about other people's happiness, we'll find ours too."

Why not test it for yourself? Here's a thought experiment to try. Imagine two communities if you will, identical in every way (number of members, finances, etc) except that one has established a culture of service to one another and to society at large, while the other has a culture of seeking the fulfilment of personal needs and desires. Which one would you rather join? If we were to revisit these two communities in ten or fifteen years time, what condition would we find them in?

The maths of heaven just works. It stacks up.

"True worship of the Lord consists in performing useful services; and such services during a person's life in the world lie in a proper fulfillment of his function by each person, whatever his own position, that is, in serving his country, its communities, and his neighbour with all his heart. They also lie in honest dealings with fellow human beings and in the diligent discharge of duties, with full regard for each person's character."

These useful deeds are the principal ways of exercising charity and the principal means of worshipping the Lord. Going to church regularly, listening to sermons, and saying one's prayers are also necessary; but without the useful deeds they have no value at all, for they do not constitute a person's life but teach what that life ought to be like. The angels in heaven get nothing but happiness out of being useful; and they receive it in proportion to their usefulness. So true is this that to them usefulness is what makes heaven." (Swedenborg: Secrets of Heaven, paragraph 7038)

With every blessing to you all.

David

Rev. David Moffat, Spiritual Leader



2021 Priorities: a summary from Rev. David Moffat

As we settle into our new premises and look to the future, I've been asked to write about my priorities for the year ahead and the activities we can expect to participate in together.

I am working closely with the Board in streamlining our decision-making process and developing a succession plan for the future. We will be looking at the roles and responsibilities of the officers and board members, as well as myself as spiritual leader.



Many of the activities we have enjoyed together in the last year you can look forward to continuing in 2021 and beyond: Services, Bible studies, and Doctrinal studies. I hope we can continue to gather socially on occasions, and add events specifically for younger members and friends, especially our group of young families. Alongside these activities we do also need to encourage members to step forward to take on some of the roles and responsibilities that enable these to take place: I have already mentioned the need for people to step forward to fill the duty roster and technical desk for services, for example.

One of the bonuses of this past year has been the recording of regular services, which provides material for promotion of our teachings on the internet (using our website, YouTube, SoundCloud, Facebook, and so on). We will be further developing our technical capabilities to improve the quality of that material: the material itself, the equipment used to record it, and the production values. All of these contribute to the "professional" appearance of our end product.

What can you do to support this work? Your attendance and participation are always welcomed, and words of encouragement don't go astray either! Feedback and generating new ideas for talks and activities are also a valuable part of any organisation's development, so tell us what you enjoyed. But aside from that, your participation in the planning and leadership of these activities is always welcomed. Then, promoting our activities and teachings to family and friends is another great way to assist, especially where you hear a need or an interest being expressed.



Face-to-Face Bible Study

We are about to embark upon a new Bible study group, face to face on Sunday afternoons. This is going to be an introduction to the Bible, for those who are unfamiliar with reading it, unsure of its contents or where to find the well-known stories. Over time, we may well advance to deeper topics. If you are interested in joining us, please talk to our Spiritual Leader, David. The first meeting is likely to take place sometime after Easter.

VIRTUAL WOMEN'S WEEKEND

Where Two Or Three Are Gathered Together.....

by Jenn Beiswenger

The middle weekend of March saw a number of Australian New Church-minded women gather together – a few in the flesh, others via Zoom – for our fourth semi-annual women's weekend. There wasn't any heavy doctrine this time, but over the course of the three days we got to know each other through introductory ice breakers,



learned about 'Stephen Ministry' and practised listening skills with guest speaker Nina Cooper Dewees, did some 'care cooking' to give to someone in need, received insights into mindfulness and did a guided meditation, and enjoyed a mindful doodling tutorial. We had a good mix of ladies from Sydney, up the coast, Melbourne, Adelaide and Canberra (and our guest speaker from east-coast America!). Each session was led by a different woman, and each session had its unique take-aways. Feedback indicates that participants found the weekend to be very enjoyable, and we look forward to doing it again sometime! Please let Jenn know if you'd like to be on the mailing list (jenn@beiswenger.net). More than two or three were gathered together, this weekend, and the Lord was surely in that place.



New Church Family Retreat 2021

The Retreat will be held from **Friday July 2nd to Thursday July 8th 2021** at the Phillip Island Adventure Resort (PIAR). Full details appeared in the December 2020 – January 2021 Newsletter. While final payment will not be required until **1st June 2021, should you wish to attend, you need to book**. Please contact the Spiritual Leader, Rev. David Moffat, immediately should you be still thinking of attending (see front page for David's contact details).

Post-Resurrection Appearance of the Lord to His Disciples Explained

The Lord's process of glorification was a transformation of the human nature that he took on in the world. The transformed human nature of the Lord is the divine physical form. A proof of this is that the Lord rose from the tomb with the whole body he had had in the world. Nothing was left in the tomb. Therefore he took with him from the tomb every aspect of his earthly human form. This is why after the resurrection he said to disciples who thought they were seeing a spirit, "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Feel me and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have" (Luke 24:37, 39).

Emanuel Swedenborg **True Christianity** paragraph 109

Good Friday, 2 April



Rather than holding our own gathering reflecting on the events of Good Friday – the Lord's crucifixion, we will be participating in the Mt. Waverley and Chadstone InterChurch Council event – *Way of the Cross*. As a member of the Council, it will be a positive activity as a community to join with fellow Christians on this special calendar day.

The event will commence at 11.15am in the car park at St John's Uniting Church, 37-43 Virginia St, Mount Waverley.

It is hoped that as many New Church members and friends will be able to be present that morning. For more information, please speak with either our Spiritual Leader or Mrs Marika Sivak, New Church representatives on the InterChurch Council.

Love in the Home – thinking of Mother's Day on 9 May

If I live in a house of spotless beauty with everything in its place,
but have not love, I am a housekeeper--not a homemaker.

If I have time for waxing, polishing, and decorative achievements, but
have not love, my children learn cleanliness--not godliness.

Love leaves the dust in search of a child's laugh.

Love smiles at the tiny fingerprints on a newly cleaned window.

Love wipes away the tears before it wipes up the spilled milk.

Love picks up the child before it picks up the toys.

Love is present through the trials. Love reprimands, reproves, and is responsive. Love crawls with the baby, walks with the toddler, runs with the child, then stands aside to let the youth walk into adulthood.

Love is the key that opens salvation's message to a child's heart.

Before I became a mother I took glory in my house of perfection. Now I glory in God's perfection of my child. As a mother, there is much I must teach my child, but the greatest of all is love.

(Author unknown. From www.dennydavis.net/poemfiles/bbychld/mthrpem.htm)



NEWS OF PEOPLE

As noted in the December 2020/January 2021 issue of the Newsletter, Rev. John Teed celebrated his 90th birthday on 29 December 2020. The occasion was celebrated with a large gathering of all of John and Mary's children and granschildren together with some long-standing friends. These latter included our own Matthew Arnold who was John's bestman at John and Mary's wedding in the 1950s in Jersey. Matthew reminisced that they rode in a Rolls Royce to the Church, the first and only time he has been aboard such a prestigious vehicle. There were many cards and greetings from around the world which made the day so very happy and memorable for John, Mary and the whole family.

Daughters Rosemary and Margaret have now prepared a photo book including details and photos of significant events over John's 90 years as well as incorporating the many greetings and photos received from the many people who have had associations with John over the years, both related to community activities along with those of the New Church. John trained for the ministry in England, served a New Church Society there before returning to Australia and over the years serving at all New Church Societies associated with The New Church in Australia. The Photobook delightfully brings all this history together and the Church has been privileged to be gifted with two copies by John's family, one to be held here in Melbourne and the other for circulation to members and friends in the Interstate New Church Societies, finally being kept in the Church national archives.

Should you wish to see the Melbourne copy, please let Neville Jarvis know. It will be held at our Duerdin Street premises.

John and Mary were able to enjoy a number of days on the Victorian south coast early in 2021 but after arriving home, Mary had a bad fall there. Fortunately, there were no significant injuries but after consultation with her doctor and the family, it has been decided that it would now be best for Mary to be in care at a Nursing Home. Currently Mary is in one at Woodend, therefore close to John and daughter Pam, and the longer term future is being assessed. Our warmest wishes go to Mary, John and their family at this difficult time of change for them all.

It has been good to have Rose Robinson back in our midst for services, both on Zoom and face-to-face after a much longer period in hospital than originally anticipated to deal with a health issue. We trust that the health improvements will continue unabated.

Diary of Events in April & May 2021

Note: Unless stated otherwise, activities will be held at 3, 20 Duerdin Street, Clayton

Refer also to weekly details provided by our Spiritual Leader

Note: F2F = Face-to-face gathering; Z = Zoom; Y= YouTube

March		
Friday 26 to Sunday 28		Spiritual Leader participating in Logopraxis group gathering in Western Victoria
Sunday 28		First Sunday of Holy Week
	10.30am	Palm Sunday Service of Worship led by Neville Jarvis (F2F, Z & Y) Theme: <i>Reflections on the Lord's entry into Jerusalem</i>
Monday 29	8.00pm	Bible Study (Z)
April		
Friday 2	11.15am	Good Friday Way of the Cross activity, joining with Mt. Waverley and Chadstone InterChurch Council member Churches commencing in the car park at St John's Uniting Church, 37-43 Virginia St, Mount Waverley (see note on page 4)
Sunday 4	2.00am 10.30am	Clocks go back 1 hour Easter Family Service led by Rev. David Moffat. (F2F, Z & Y) Topic: <i>The Five Solas of Protestant Christianity: 3. Sola Christus (Christ)</i> Children's theme: <i>Breakfast on the Shore</i> - John 21:1-13 Memorial for Mrs Margaret Parker Administration of the Sacrament of the Holy Supper
Sunday 11	10.30am	The Doctrine of the Lord , Chapter 9, paragraph 45 – <i>God is One, and the Lord is God</i> (F2F, Z & Y)
Monday 12	8.00pm	Bible Study (Z)
Sunday 18	10.30am	Service of Worship led by Rev. David Moffat (F2F, Z & Y) Topic – Why am I here?
Sunday 25	10.30am	Service of Worship led by Neville Jarvis (F2F, Z & Y)
Monday 26	8.00pm	Bible Study (Z)
May		
Sunday 2	10.30am	Family Service of Worship led by Rev. David Moffat. (F2F, Z & Y) Topic: <i>The Five Solas of Protestant Christianity: 4. Deo Gloria (Glory of God)</i> Children's theme: <i>Joshua</i> – parts of Joshua 1, 3, 6, 7 & 8 Administration of the Sacrament of the Holy Supper
Sunday 9	10.30am	Mother's Day The Doctrine of the Lord , Chapter 10, paragraphs 45 - 54 – <i>The Holy Spirit Is the Divine Nature That Emanates from the Lord and Is the Lord Himself</i> (F2F, Z & Y)
Monday 10	8.00pm	Bible Study (Z)
Sunday 16	10.30am 11.45pm	Service of Worship led by Rev. David Moffat (F2F, Z & Y) Topic - The Lord Is God Himself, the Source and Subject of the Word Special General Meeting of Members (F2F & Z) Details will be sent to members independently
Sunday 16	10.30am	Service of Worship led by Rev. David Moffat (F2F, Z & Y) Topic - <i>When "I" becomes "we": What makes us, "us"? Where do "we" begin and end?</i>
Sunday 23	10.30am	Service of Worship led by Neville Jarvis (F2F, Z & Y)
Monday 24	8.00pm	Bible Study (Z)
Sunday 30	10.30am	'Useful Service' Sunday – details to be advised

Question Time Sessions

Most Thursdays at 10am and 8pm on Zoom (check information provided by the Spiritual Leader)

Duty Roster

April:	Sunday 4	Alexis & Neville Jarvis
	Sunday 18	To be advised
	Sunday 25	Marika Sivak
May:	Sunday 2	Marika Sivak
	Sunday 16	Alexis & Neville Jarvis
	Sunday 23	To be advised



Spiritual Leader's Availability

As well as on Sundays, Rev. David Moffat available to speak or meet with on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. He will generally be at 3, Duerdin Street between 10am and 4pm on most of the last three weekdays but please do make contact with David well prior to attending there to finalise arrangements.

David's 'official' day-off during the week remains Tuesday. However, David stresses he would not want "normal business hours" to prevent anyone with a real need from getting in touch.



Church Giving

Even though our services and meetings have recommenced so that freewill offerings can be made on these occasions, should you wish to make additional donations to the ongoing work of the Church, this can be achieved either:



- via the Internet by simply clicking on the link - <https://donorbox.org/new-church-victoria> - and following the straightforward instructions; or
- by sending a cheque payable to 'The New Church in Victoria' mailed to the same name at PO Box 2224, Mt. Waverley, Vic 3149.

All contributions are greatly appreciated, and the Church Board extends grateful thanks for those received while activities have been curtailed.

Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day. It is a choice based on the knowledge that we belong to God and have found in God our refuge and our safety and that nothing, not even death, can take God away from us. Joy is the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved and that nothing – sickness, failure, emotional distress, oppression, war, or even death – can take that love away.

Henri Nouwen (1932 – 1996), Dutch Priest & Author