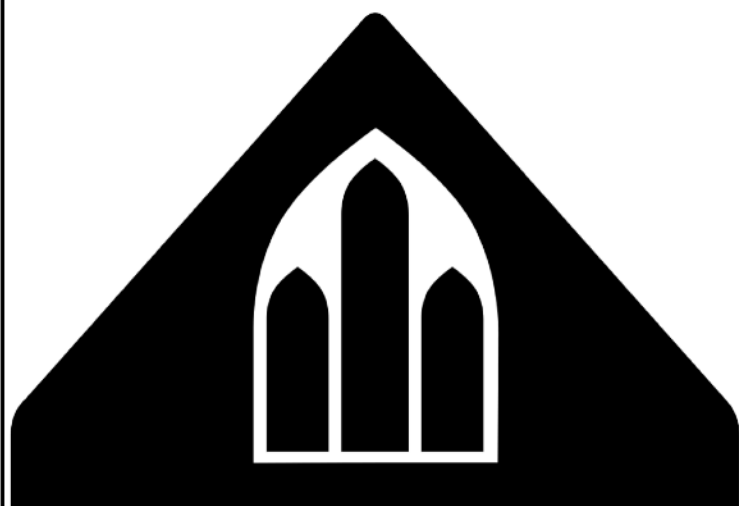


HE IS RISEN

MATTHEW 28:6



**ROSEVILLE
NEW CHURCH
NEWSLETTER**

**APRIL
2021**

Directory

Society Minister

Rev. Howard Thompson

Officers

Secretary

Graham Hall

Treasurer

Joel Duckworth

Church Officer

Debra Barratt Thompson

Sunday Service

The Roseville New Church holds a regular service of worship each Sunday at 10:00am. The first Sunday of each month includes an opportunity to partake of the Holy Supper.

Sunday Social Hour - **RESUMED**

After every service we have tea and coffee in the hall and the opportunity to meet socially, sometimes more formally.

The Angel Service - **CURRENTLY SUSPENDED**

~~The Angel Service is an informal service that invites participants to reflect on the active role the spiritual world plays in our physical lives. The service involves reflection, discussion, sometimes a brief talk and always concludes with prayer.~~

~~The Angel Service is held each month on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays at 5 p.m.~~

Different **classes on New Church teachings** are held midweek. These are generally held fortnightly, but vary. Consult the coloured calendar insert inside the Newsletter.

The Swedenborg Centre can be visited at 4 Shirley Road, Roseville NSW 2069. You are welcome to drop in and look around. The Centre is generously supported by the Sydney Society of the New Church and provides an independent and relaxing place to meet and discuss a personal approach to finding spiritual meaning. The Centre has a wide range of study materials, Swedenborg's works, and books by supporting authors. The Centre and its director Joe Vandermeer can be reached on phone (02) 9416 2812 or email info@swedenborg.com.au Opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm. More events details at www.swedenborg.com.au The Centre can also be used to answer enquiries about the New Church, its literature and its teachings.

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

April 2021

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.

* * * * *

“I believe, therefore I don’t believe!”

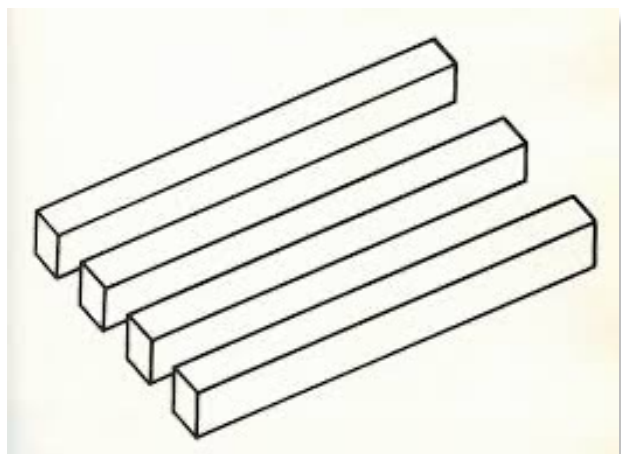
Believing and not believing come to the fore in the Easter story. In Luke, the women at the empty tomb were told ‘He is risen’. They went and told the disciples “and their words seemed to them like idle tales and they did not believe them.” Quite a bit later, Jesus appeared to the disciples and stood in their midst and showed himself to them. Then it says, “While they still did not believe for joy...” One clear meaning in all this is that believing is not that easy!

I want to look at believing in another way. I’d say that I have come to have stronger beliefs more and more over the years but that’s a long story. My beliefs are not rigid or dogmatic; it’s “there” and sometimes it isn’t “there” that much, but I’ve come to accept that and see that times of uncertainty are very good for me.

Because I believe – and this is where it starts to get interesting to me – because I believe, there are things I have come to not believe. Here's one example to give you the idea. I just do not believe that this lovely natural world all around us is self-sustained and that's all it is.

Why? Short answer – because I believe in God. Longer answer – because nature is full of meaning and a lot of things that go on in me, go on in nature, like sprouting, and like decay.

Another big thing I do not believe is that when we die, that's it and we don't exist anymore. It certainly looks like that but I don't believe it. Why? Because I believe in God! Longer answer... because the person inside is still young and vibrant, and growing frail and elderly here is all part of our all-round 'education'. I believe we all live on and on for ever ... and I don't believe we get fed up with that either!



So, there are two big ideas where I have things I don't believe. Let's keep going with some more down-to-earth ones. I don't believe for a minute that there are really gaps between people! (That might startle you!) There are gaps between our bodies of course but if you and I fall in love, get on well, agree on things, share a beautiful sunset, believe some things in common... we are as glued together as anything, best buddies. You can be in Wollongong and I can be in Wangaratta, but that doesn't matter.

Here is another. I don't believe that "having things" is the way to bring us happiness, fulfilment. But golly, I sometimes

fall for that one as quick as lightning. If I can have that chocolate éclair I shall be in paradise! And then I think I deserve that éclair so much too. But joy – a much better word than happiness – is not “got”; it comes in the wake of loving, serving, offering and helping; in other words in forgetting ourselves. Then it becomes a paradox which is hard to explain or prove, that the more I forget about me, the more content I shall be. But I’d suggest we’re actually all aware of this and it’s already our experience.

Imagine you’re a newspaper or TV reporter and you are interviewing me on this point of my Non-Beliefs, and anything goes, so be as “in the face” as you want. What would you ask me if I believe or not? “Do you believe in destiny, that everything’s already set on course?” “Do



you believe that racism is always going to be around?” “Do you believe there’s sex in heaven?” “Do you believe that anyone who is in hell is going to be there for ever?” “Do you believe that God sent the Covid virus to give us a wake-up call?” Okay, enough... What I would like you to do, is think what I might answer (‘Pass’ is not allowed) and then think what you would answer, and then think what a thought-through belief in God would tend to produce.

Julian Duckworth

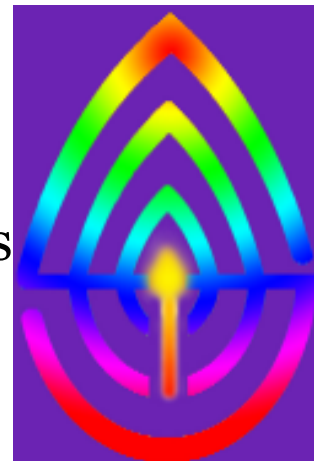
* * * * *



Swedenborg Centre News

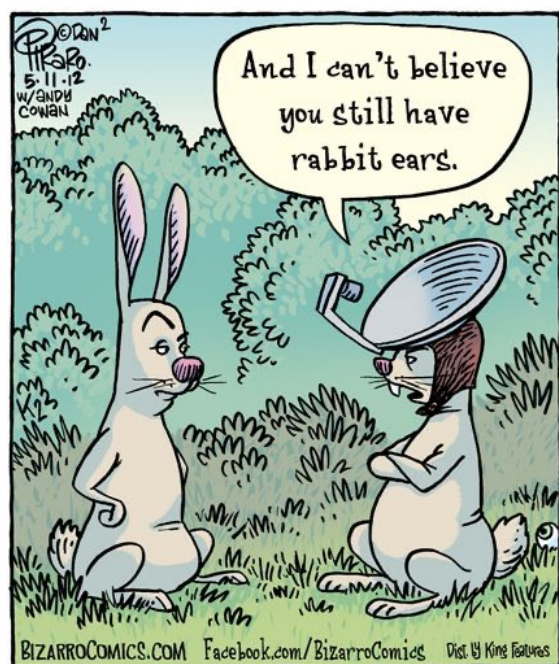
When Swedenborg was born, newspapers had only been around for a mere 83 years. But the popularity – and business – of providing news in print spread very rapidly to every continent during his lifetime. But as with every significant industry, time introduces challenging changes. The printed news business – as well as the book business – is now not what it used to be. I find it fascinating to look at historical trends. Some trends arise when new technology becomes available and I rejoice that our modern telecommunications allows me to connect weekly with people so far away as the Philippines, Germany, Canada, the US, UK, and even to cross long distances in our own country, so that we are joined weekly by people from Perth through events which interest them. A spiritual law is that the things we love in common draw us together. While that law requires no special technology to manifest itself in the spiritual world (it operates there as a default mode of ‘transport’), technology sure makes it more possible in this modern natural world, helping it (us) become more spiritual. Other trends arise because our spiritual needs are not met adequately. At the Centre we recently took a closer look at the changing art world to see what it might teach us.

How can art continue to connect us with the deeper meaning our soul needs? We continually need new ways to express the things we know to be true with the things we need to do in our lives to put that knowledge to use. One thing is certain – that relationships are crucial. Check out the findings of a Harvard study about relationships by tracking individuals for over 80 years. The findings are fascinating. See <https://bit.ly/3lKoQAF>



But closer to home, here are the event offerings for the new month. Please note two important changes:

Daylight Saving Time ends in Sydney on April 4th when our clocks move backwards by 1 hour at 3am



Weekly Swedenborg Readings are now held every Wednesday 10am (no longer on Thursdays).

The website swedenborg.com.au has all events, Zoom links, and any last minute details. Events last up to two hours maximum. Sydney times are used below. Our regular events continue throughout the Easter holiday period.

Talk by Dr Andrew Heslop: “Beyond the Fourth Way”

Saturday 27th March at 7PM

Read and explore Gurdjieff's teachings using Swedenborg's insights

Mondays - 11AM

Bible Study from Swedenborgian Perspective

with Rev Howard Thompson

Tuesdays 13th & 27th April - 11AM

Read and reflect on Swedenborg's writings

Thursdays - 10AM

Explore insights based on the work of

Dr Philip Groves

Fridays, 2nd, 16th and 30th April

11AM and 2PM and 7PM

Swedenborg Saturday: discover, discuss, celebrate

Swedenborg's life and writings

Saturdays, 3rd & 17th April - 10AM

**Swedenborg Centre Open Discussion, bring Q&A, ideas and
insights from our life**

Tue, 13th April 2PM and 6PM

Contact me on (02) 9416 2812 or joe@swedenborg.com.au if
you need to know more.

Have a wonderful Easter.

Joe

* * * * *

Marriage Moats: *Penguin Bloom*

I am on the look out for movies that represent strong marriages. They are in short supply. Falling in love is a plot line we have in spades. That and chase scenes.

I happened on one this week. Penguin Bloom is based on a real family, whose life embodied the fulfilment of their dreams. Sam and Cameron Bloom lived on the Australian

coast, spending their days surfing and taking photographs with their three sun-kissed boys. They take their family on holiday to Thailand, where Sam leans on a rickety railing and falls, breaking her back. She survives, but is forced to give up mobility, and the expansive freedom she was used to.

I loved that the fulcrum on which her depression pivots is a magpie named Penguin. He, too, is hurt and needs help. Resentfully Sam starts to care for him, and begins to climb slowly out of her own pit.

What touches me is the honest portrayal of a couple who are thrashed by heartbreak. We can witness their pain, which it turns out is not fatal. They slog through the arduous pilgrimage from life as they chose, to life on life's terms. On the way they are tripped up by the all too familiar detour of blaming each other.

My wish is that we all know dozens of these rich stories. Lorenzo's Oil is another, and Searching for Bobby Fisher. Fireproof, The Story of Us, Courageous, Shall We Dance?, It's a Wonderful Life and The Incredibles are more.

With a library of stories about commitment to draw on, we have a better chance of climbing out of our own deep holes.

Love,
Lori



* * * * *

Conscious or Un-Conscious?

Joe Vandermeer and Ian Arnold recently collaborated on the following reflection on Apocalypse Explained 790, detailing the process required to form a conscious soul. It is a passage particularly rich in content and instruction.

AE790 excerpts:

[3]...Every man has two minds, one natural and the other spiritual.

[5] That the spiritual mind may be opened and formed it must have a storehouse from which it may draw its supplies; [supplies of knowledge from the Word.]

[6] The spiritual mind is primarily opened by man's abstaining from doing evils because they are contrary to the Divine commandments in the Word....So far as evils are removed so far goods enter.

[8] The spiritual mind is formed from those things that are in man's memory from the Word...



[9] When a man's spiritual mind has been opened and formed then the Lord forms the natural mind...to the idea of such things as are in heaven.

[10] This formation of the two minds with man goes on...to eternity

Ian Arnold followed Joe's invitation to reflect with the following useful reflection on it.

Before we shun evils as sins against the Lord what we take on board as truths, or persuade ourselves are truths, or are persuaded are truths, are - as well as being but appearances of truth - heavily infiltrated by self regard (proprium). So, in fact, they are not genuine truths at all.

The shunning of evils as sins starts the process of opening the spiritual mind through which, now, flows an influx from the Lord which then strips out self regard (proprium) from what we have been telling ourselves, or have been persuaded, are truths, and as this process progresses, the genuine truths emerge and are lifted up into the spiritual mind.

And it is not just a matter of the stripping out of self regard (proprium) but a weakening of the appearances which are so heavily wrapped around truth; appearances which cannot but be and will never be obliterated.

At the same time as this is going on, the Lord is gifting the person with an affection, from Himself, for the truths now being transformed in this way.

We hope you also enjoy reflecting on this excellent passage.
Joe and Ian

* * * * *



March Virtual Women's Weekend

**** Report ****

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

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 lead 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.

Jennifer Beiswenger

* * * * *

Easter Passages for Reflection

The angels in heaven are unable to think about any blood or about the Lord's suffering; they think instead about the divine truth and about his resurrection. When we think about the Lord's blood, angels think instead about the divine truth of the Lord's Word; when we think about the Lord's suffering, they think instead about the Lord's glorification, focusing exclusively on his resurrection.

(True Christianity 706)

[The Lord's] rising on the third day meant the glorification, the union of his human nature with the divine nature of the Father.

(True Christianity 130)

In all the struggles the Lord faced while he was being tested, though, he never fought out of self-love, or for his own sake, but for everyone in the universe. He did not want to become greatest in heaven, because this is contrary to divine love. He hardly even wanted to become least. All he wanted was for everyone to make something of themselves and be saved.

(Secrets of Heaven 1812)

Through spiritual crises and victories he drove out everything he had inherited from his mother and shed the human nature received from her so completely that finally he was no longer her son. Jehovah, who was within him, nevertheless seemed to be absent during his spiritual crises to the extent that he was centred in the human nature he had from his mother. This was the Lord's state of being humbled. Through spiritual crises and victories the Lord set everything in the heavens in order. By the same means he also united his human nature to his divine nature - that is, glorified his human nature.

(The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Teachings 302)

* * * * *

“Why? WHy?! WHY?!?”

If you have not personally, it is likely you know someone who has, been faced with so tragic a loss in their lives that they, of desperation, are left to ask; “Why? WHy?! WHY?!?” This same question and accompanying emotional feelings of horror and anguish sometimes can come up for each of us as we read and reflect on the account of the Lord’s crucifixion and death. For anyone reading the literal story of the last days of the Lord’s life the horror of the event is inescapable. And, for the person genuinely seeking knowledge of the nature of the Lord, the question of why the Lord died in the manner He did is also inescapable. He was, after all, the Lord. All authority in heaven and on earth was given to Him (Matthew 28:18).



Reflecting on this question and searching for answers it is not uncommon to come across the common Christian explanation that the death of Jesus, the son of God, was a ransom sacrifice in satisfaction for the debt on the souls of humanity as a result of inherited sin from Adam and Eve. Similar explanations go on to say that if

Jesus did not come to die in our place, we would have to pay for our own sins and since the sin penalty could never be fully satisfied, we would have to pay for them for all eternity. These archaic explanations are founded on two very false teachings. First, that the whole human race was damned for the misdeed of Adam and Eve - and a misdeed in which

there was no evil from a craving of the flesh or a wickedness of the heart. Second, that heaven and hell are reward and punishment for the good or evil that we have done in our lives. In other words, that spiritual life is “transactional” and that we could ever “pay” for our sins.



No, the thrust of Swedenborg’s explanation of the horrific manner of the Lord’s death and what was accomplished by it is two-fold. First, and primarily, through His temptations and trials, the worst of which was his temptation on the cross, the Lord subjugated the hells and united His Divine nature with His human nature thereby glorifying His human. His battle with the hells and subsequent subjugation of the hells was necessary as the human race had fallen so far as to have permitted the hells to so fully invade people’s souls to such an extent as to be able to flow into heaven. The Lord took on a human external in order to do battle with the hells on our level and in so doing was able to return to the human race a state of spiritual equilibrium whereby each of us is in freedom; freedom to will, think and act without the undue influence of evil spirits.

It is also this freedom that the Lord had His sights set on when he permitted His death at the hands of the people of Jerusalem. You see, because the Lord desires that we act in freedom, we must be permitted to do evil, otherwise we

would be incapable of loving the Lord. Consider this; can any of us be in a mutual and reciprocal loving relationship we are compelled to be in? No, the very idea of being compelled to love another is anathema. So the Lord had to permit the people of Jerusalem to so violently reject, even to hate the Lord, so as to leave them in freedom to love. Swedenborg explains (Divine Providence 247) that this was done under the laws of permission which are also laws of Divine Providence. Of course saying that God permits something is not the same as saying that He wants it to happen but that He can't prevent it because of His goal, our salvation.



Lastly, and no less importantly, the treatment of the Lord by the people of Jerusalem mirrors the way each of us can reject, even feel hatred towards, the Word when what we read in it and what we know from it stands in contrast to our own selfishness and our own desire to follow our will. This conflict, by definition, is a spiritual crises. A spiritual crises we can often be suffering through though not be aware of but for an experience of the internal turmoil as a generalised anxiety.

This is where looking beyond the literal story of the Lord's death in the Word can help us focus on the real spiritual work that needs to be done. In other word, as necessary as it is to have a solid grounding in the literal sense of the Word and the stories it contain, these stories, like the Lord's death on the cross can be a distraction if focused on in the literal

sense. That is why I have always found these words, often recited at the Holy Supper, to be so reassuring.

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)

Howard Thompson



* * * * *

“Quoteworthy”

Gary Chapman's *The 5 Love Languages* describes the way we feel loved and appreciated. Depending on our individual personality types, we may feel loved differently than how our partners do. Understanding and decoding these different ways of showing love will help take the guesswork out of your partner's expectations and needs.

According to Dr. Chapman, there are five love languages: Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Receiving Gifts, Quality Time, and Physical Touch.

- “Real love” - “This kind of love is emotional in nature but not obsessional. It is a love that unites reason and emotion. It involves an act of the will and requires discipline, and it recognises the need for personal growth.”
- “Our most basic emotional need is not to fall in love but to be genuinely loved by another, to know a love that grows out of reason and choice, not instinct... That kind of love requires effort and discipline.”
- “Forgiveness is not a feeling; it is a commitment. It is a choice to show mercy, not to hold the offence up against the offender. Forgiveness is an expression of love.”
- “I am amazed by how many individuals mess up every new day with yesterday. They insist on bringing into today the failures of yesterday and in so doing, they pollute a potentially wonderful day.”

Howard

Mythical Humour





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

Final Thought

With one last quote from *The 5 Love Languages*, Dr. Gary Chapman's emphasises the importance of "speaking" another person's love language:

"We speak and understand best our native language. We feel most comfortable speaking that language. The more we use a secondary language, the more comfortable we become conversing in it. If we speak only our primary language and encounter someone else who speaks only his or her primary language, which is different from ours, our communication will be limited. We must rely on pointing, grunting, drawing pictures, or acting out our ideas. We can communicate, but it is awkward."