

Religion is of life, and the life of religion is to do what is good

(Doctrine of Life 8)

The New Church is an international organization of people striving to improve their conscious relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ, the one God who rules heaven and earth.

We extend a warm welcome to everyone, and invite you to take what you like and return it freely. We use the Bible and the Heavenly Doctrine revealed by the Lord and published by Emanuel Swedenborg to guide us in our lives, especially in our relationships. We freely share our love and understanding with each other, and try to give one another support in our spiritual journeys.

Temporarily the Hurstville Society is without a **Pastor**. During this period the Society will be served by lay leaders and visiting preachers.

Worship Services are held each Sunday at 10:00 AM. **Sunday School** is held concurrently with the worship service.

Young People's Group is held once a month in conjunction with the Young People's Group at the New Church at 2 Shirley St, Roseville.

A tea and social in conjunction with **discussion** meets on the 1st Friday of each month (January excepted) beginning at 7 00 pm. This will be conducted by visiting ministers when available or lay led as appropriate.

Bible Study and **Discussion Classes** previously held midweek have been suspended until further notice.

The Swedenborg Bookroom, at 22 Dudley Street, Penshurst, contains books by and about Emanuel Swedenborg for sale or loan. It is open by appointment.

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Call or come at anytime.



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society March 2008

Children are Precious in the Eyes of God

by Rev Don Rose

When I was young, I was particularly liked the words, “in the eyes of heaven.” The phrase conjured up for me the divine providence of God and a heaven of protecting angels. Today I will mention specific angels who are watchful over children.

One way of looking at an organization, large or small, is to view it as if it were a human form. Some people in it are like the nervous system, some are decision makers, some are the arms and shoulders for heavy lifting, so to speak. Some connect and circulate. Some purify and eliminate waste. We can think this way about an entire country or a city, and even a committee.

When Emanuel Swedenborg tried to convey the nature of heaven, he said it

was a kingdom of useful activity comparable to a human form.

An angel has a sense of belonging and identity in knowing that his individual use contributes and fits into a functioning whole. It is even said that an angel can identify his usefulness with a corresponding function of the human form. I will be asking you presently whether you have a sense of what part may be your own destiny.

The province of the eyes is special, involving insight and discernment and also watchful care. I understand that when little children die, they are under loving auspices. Jesus said of little ones, "I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father" (Matthew 18:10).

The prophet declared that He shall "gently lead those who are with young" (Isaiah 40:11).

"Behold the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him" (Psalm 33:18).

If a child dies, does God not see it? "He who formed the eye, shall He not see?" (Psalm 94:9).

If not a sparrow falls without our Father's care (Matthew 10:29), we should know that He is intimately present when a child dies, for the death is "precious in the sight of the Lord" (Psalm 116:15).

As I understand it, children are received in the most beautiful surroundings. I read of a "rainbow heaven." It is in the province of the eyes.

The Latin word for "rainbow" is iris. And the iris is not only the name chosen for a flower but also for a colourful sector of the human eye.

The book "Heaven and Hell" presents scenes of children bedecked with flowers of gorgeous colours. And there it is asserted that children being in the province of the eye is a sign that they are under the direct view and care of God (paragraphs 333 and 337). We are told that people who had a tender love for children take great delight in caring for them in the hereafter.

2009 Family Camp

Rev Julian Duckworth is looking at the Anglican Centre near Nowra for the next camp. The Shoalhaven Outdoor Conference Centres, run by the Anglican Youth Group, are located on 262 acres of lush river flats and natural bushland. With two kilometers of waterfront views of the Shoalhaven River, this is a spectacular location. Look for confirmation on this in a future newsletter. In the meantime the website is:

<http://www.youthworks.net/index.php?session01=&c=20&d=187&w=7000&r=Y>

News Notes

As this newsletter goes to press the Heldon girls **Carolyn, Angela and Michelle, Rachel, Donna**, along with husbands, boyfriends etc should be ending a week long hike through the mountains of Tasmania from Cradle Mountain to Lake St Clair. For Donna and her husband Jason this is a follow on to a 12 day trek through the wilderness of South West Tasmania. We look forward to lots of spectacular pictures on their return.

Arriving on Monday 25th February for a 10 day stay in Sydney with **Owen and Margaret Heldon** are **Karen and Dale Luce** from Pittsburgh. Karen was Margaret's bridesmaid almost 34 years ago! How time flies.

The Property Trust has approved the repainting of the interior of most of Baringa in the near future. As well the carpet in the hallway and office which is in poor condition will be replaced. As we did for the outside of Baringa a colour consultant has been engaged to advise on the décor.

Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Tracy Hinds** (4th), **Mikayla Hinds** (4th), **Debbie Walsh** (7th), **Don Macfarlane** (7th), **Graham Horner** (12th), **Edward Horner** (18th) and **Bill Hall** (26th)

Visit of Rev David Moffat

Rev David Moffat and family are coming to Sydney on the weekend of 5th/6th April for the Billy Elliot show and staying in Baringa. David has kindly agreed to lead the service on Sunday 6th. He gave us a choice of a traditional service or one styled after the spiritual growth services he gives once a month in Canberra. After discussion with a number of people it has been agreed to have David lead a spiritual growth service.

Typically he takes quotes from the Bible and The Writings and in conjunction with the congregation explores the topic culminating in a practical task that people can make use of. Topics that have been tackled in Canberra are “The Beatitudes”, “Angel Qualities” and the “Seven Days of Creation”. We look forward to having David and the family with us in April.

Harvest Festival Service – 9th March 2008

The Hurstville Society has decided to join the **Roseville New Church** for a Harvest Festival Service on Sunday 9th March.

Donations towards the harvest display in the church (monetary or by taking food on the day) will be appreciated. All food is given to Mission Australia. There is a “Ploughman’s Lunch” afterwards. Bringing a green salad to go with the ploughman’s lunch has been suggested.

We will work out final arrangements including transport the week before (Sunday 2nd). **Please note: there will be NO service at Hurstville** on this day.

A **ploughman's lunch** is a cold snack or meal, comprising at a minimum a thick piece of cheese (usually Cheddar, Stilton, or other local cheese), pickles, crusty or chunky bread, and butter. It is often accompanied by a green salad; other common additions are half an apple, celery, pâté, sliced hard boiled egg or beetroot.

Source : Wikipedia

What if you were asked where you fit in the big picture of human uses or even whether you could mention a function of the human form that answers to something you love to do? The question at first left me blank, but I gave it time and considered thought.

Yes, there are activities in which I feel comfortable. If I were to be received into the kingdom of heaven, I would perhaps want to be some sort of connector. Maybe what I like doing is comparable to the function of one of the body’s connective tissues.

You might want to see where this line of thinking takes you. For you do belong in the grand scheme of a Divine Creator.

Lo, I Am With You Always



Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him... (Luke 24:31).

The Lord is present with every person, urging and pressing him to receive Him.... [A] person receives Him...when he acknowledges Him as his God, the Creator, Redeemer and Saviour. (True Christian Religion 766)

After the Lord’s crucifixion, His followers were grief-stricken and terrified, thinking that the Lord had left them forever.

They were so convinced He was gone, that they did not at first recognize Him when He appeared to them after His resurrection. But as He spoke with them, let them touch Him, and shared food with them, the disciples

saw that Jesus, whom they had followed for three years, really had risen from the dead. And, because of His resurrection, they finally understood more—that He is in truth the Lord and God of heaven and earth.

The appearances of the Lord after His resurrection give the same message to us as well. For although we do not necessarily notice or feel His presence, the Lord is always with us, urging us to turn to Him and receive the joy and peace of spiritual life from His hands. If we turn toward His goodness and truth and follow His teachings, the Lord will open our spiritual eyes and we will perceive Him. At times, it may seem otherwise, but the Lord is always with us, through the power and glory of His Divine Human. It is His will that we open our hearts to receive Him.

May your Easter season be filled with a sense of the Lord's eternal presence with you!

Source: The New Church Vineyard – article on General Church website

An Australian Retreat – An Advance Taste near Canberra



As readers of this newsletter will be aware considerable interest has been generated in the last three months during the visit of **Rev Alain Nicolier** and his wife **Jeanne** who have proposed setting up a retreat in Australia to serve not only New Church people but the public in general.

As background readers might be interested to know that Alain began his career in special education for juvenile delinquency, later qualifying in

Redding, CT; and Karen D. Stoeller, Glenview, IL.

Retiring from the Board and thanked for their years of dedicated service were: **Murray Heldon**, Hurstville, Australia; Tracy McCardell (9 years), Huntingdon Valley, PA; Don O. Synnestvedt, Arlington Heights, IL; and Dr. Candy Zeigler, Sioux Falls, SD.

Visit of Bishop Brian Keith

The big event for March will be the visit of Bishop **Brian Keith** and his wife **Gretchen**. Arrangements have been finalised for them to visit Perth from Thursday 13th March to Tuesday 18th March when they fly on to Sydney. This means that the Hurstville Society will get to celebrate Easter with the bishop.

The following is the planned schedule for the visit.

Wednesday 19 th March	7.30 p.m.	Doctrinal Class or final week of <i>The Journey</i> program.
Friday 21 st March	7.30 p.m.	Good Friday Holy Supper Service
Sunday 23 rd March	10.00 a.m.	Easter Service
Sunday 23 rd March		Society Luncheon followed by Society Meeting with the bishop.

Brian and Gretchen will be leaving on Tuesday 25th March so the above schedule gives plenty of time for any extra events to be scheduled and for people to invite them for a meal or outing. They are wonderful people and this will be a great chance to get to know them.

If you want to invite the bishop and his wife please contact **Lori Heldon** on (02) 9579 5248 who has kindly offered to co-ordinate arrangements so that we don't all invite them out on the same day.

Bishop Tom Kline said the approval of this program by both Boards is “a significant, historic moment in the Church” and will produce very positive results.

The Academy’s decision to move ahead with the science classroom building and a building that will include admissions, dining, student life and health care facilities, is part of the administration’s and Board’s commitment to growth, particularly in the College. Please see the architects’ renderings of the new buildings, which can also be seen in Pendleton Hall and on the College website, www.brynathyn.edu.

Meanwhile, the new Dining Hall on the Secondary Schools campus is moving aggressively toward a May 1, 2008 completion date, and the new student housing complex for the College will be ready this September, 2008 in time for the new school year.

The Academy Board heard a powerful presentation on the growth and admissions plans for Bryn Athyn College and the Secondary Schools, including the underlying philosophy and the well-thought-out process that is in place.

Jeff Lites and Jeff Penecale, fathers of boys new to the Church and Academy, gave moving testimonials of how the Academy is transforming their sons’ lives in positive ways. Rather than “nontraditional families” they like to think of themselves as “extended family.”

The administration affirmed that it is fully committed to growth because “we think it is the right thing to do.”

At the General Church Corporation meeting on Thursday, January 31, the following were newly elected to the Board: Hugh R. Brown, Kempton, PA; Shaun M. Buss, Bryn Athyn, PA; Mark O. Elder, Rochester, MI; Dr. Charlotte Gyllenhaal, Glenview, IL; Gen. Ronald K. Nelson, Huntingdon Valley, PA; Jason V. Reuter, Longmont, CO; and Matthew A. Smith, Mitchellville, MD. Re-elected as incumbents were: Michael S. Cole, St. Augustine, FL; Fay S. Lindrooth, Bryn Athyn, PA; Timothy V. O’Connor,

counselling (specialising in marriage and family, grief, addictology, nervous breakdown). He was ordained as a minister in 1978, and he serves groups in France and French-speaking West Africa. Alain continues to derive much of his income from his counselling work. Alain and his wife Jeanne also run a retreat centre in France.

The Canberra group took the initiative to invite Alain and Jeanne to give them a taste of what a retreat might offer and invited them to a beautiful country setting just south of Canberra over the Australia Day weekend. In the end about 20 people attended at various times over the weekend including six from Hurstville.

The place chosen was Caloola Retreat, located at Tharwa 30 kms south from Tuggeranong Town Centre. With its 206 hectares of pristine, tranquil beauty situated in a valley near the Naas River and adjoining Namadgi National Park, Caloola Retreat was an ideal location. With one aspect of the retreat devoted to nutrition it was appropriate that the retreat was self-catered. In fact the food preparation time was part of the retreat sessions with everyone getting involved.

In addition to Health and Nutrition, sessions were held on Communication Skills, Relationships and the Divine Within. The group was a very diverse group with people of a wide range of ages and stages in their lives and with a number of newcomers, including one with no previous contact with the New Church. It is a tribute to Alain and the group as a whole that this group was able to blend together so well and there was such good participation. Although New Church jargon was mostly avoided it was thoroughly explained where needed.

Although the sessions took up most of the weekend there was still time for relaxation with walks and running in the surrounding countryside, some games and with **Angela Heldon** providing aromatherapy as a bonus.

Rev David Moffat has recorded some of the sessions on CD and anyone interested should contact David for more information.

Thank You to Rev Alain and Jeanne Nicolier

The Hurstville Society said goodbye to our friends Alain and Jeanne on Sunday 17th February at a luncheon after church. They were presented with a lovely timber bowl handcrafted from the burl of a Coolibah tree in appreciation of their work here. In almost three months here they visited Queensland, Tamworth, Canberra (and conducted a weekend retreat in the nearby countryside) and Perth as well as playing a leading role in the Summer Camp and conducting the funeral for Trevor Favell. In addition we had a series of services and classes leading to Christmas and recently have done half *The Journey* programme before they left. Many also benefited from counselling advice, which is Alain's special talent.

Alain and Jeanne have loved us, nurtured us, challenged us and given us a vision. They would love to come back. The idea of an Australian Retreat has generated considerable interest in the New Church right around Australia. Translating the vision into a workable plan is something that a number of people are chewing over at present. Who knows what the future will hold?

Gathering Leaves Retreat

A wonderful opportunity for Australasian New Church Women.

The organisers of a gathering of New Church women at Purley Chase residential centre in the U.K. want to encourage representatives from the New Church in Australasia to join them. This will be the third annual women's retreat called "Gathering Leaves" and runs from the 11th-14th July 2008. At the retreats /they welcome New Church women from all over the world and provide opportunities to share ideas and experiences to create new energy and harmony in their work for the Lord. During their time together they will be visiting a historic place such as Warwick Castle or Shakespeare's Stratford.

In recognition of the cost of travel from this part of the world the USA

organisers are very happy to subsidise the fares of one or two women and the U.K. organisers will also subsidise 50% of the retreat accommodation costs. This will reduce this cost to £80.

This sounds like a wonderful opportunity not to be missed. If you are interested please contact :

Rita Russell @general.conference.org.uk or

Helen Brown at bryanhelenbrown@Care4free.net

and for subsidised fares Lisa Hyatt Cooper at lhcooper@verizon.net

From John Sutton on behalf of the one of the organisers (i.e. my sister)

News from the General Church and Academy Boards February 4, 2008

The General Church Board of Directors and the Academy Board of Trustees gave joint approval on Saturday, February 2nd, for a significant new program to attract new students to the Theological School.

Increasing enrollment and the training of New Church ministers is the number one priority of the General Church and Academy strategic plans. The plan approved for the Theological School will help it reach that goal. It provides funding so that candidates – especially second-career men – will not have to work at side jobs to support their families. Also it will dramatically increase training in managerial and practical skills to prepare ministers in all aspects of a pastoral role.

The Academy Board also approved funding for a new Grant Doering Center for Science and Research and an Admissions/Student Life/Health Building for Bryn Athyn College, both to be completed by September 2009.

Theological School Dean, Andrew Dibb, says that "While these proposals may be expensive, their long-term benefit for the life of the New Church is incalculable."