

ROSEVILLE NEW CHURCH

**APRIL
2024**

“How beautiful on the mountains are
the feet of the messenger who brings good news,
the good news of peace and salvation,
the news that the God of Israel reigns!”

(Isaiah 52:7)

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 -

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

Calendar - *Included*

The Swedenborg Centre -

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.



The Word is Divine Truth from the Lord, which deals in its highest sense with the Lord alone. All this being so, those who receive enlightenment when they read the Word see the Lord. They do so because of the faith and the love they have.

Secrets of Heaven 9411

Roseville New Church Newsletter

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Minister's e-mail : revhathompson@gmail.com

On Facebook – Roseville New Church

April 2024

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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Spiritual Shorts

Our minister, Rev. Howard Thompson, posts a weekly video on his YouTube channel, Spiritual Shorts. Begun during the pandemic to support home worship, these videos underwent a format change in 2023. This new format dispenses with the “ritual” elements used in the previous videos and results weekly episodes of around 5 minutes in length.



Spiritual Shorts YouTube Channel:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsrICJGeGmrnXVawn_Y7UQA

A Journey Begun

Now this may seem an obscure diversion for New Church minister, but I hope you'll indulge me. In early 2023, I engaged a solicitor to help with a legal issue. During our meeting we were discussing faith and he mentioned that he was a Stoic. Now I am not a philosopher, nor have I ever studied philosophy, so when someone mentions "stoic" all I can think of is the common dictionary definition; "not affected by or showing passion or feeling." But, this definition didn't seem to align with the person I was speaking with, nor did it seem aligned with his descriptions of his spiritual practice. And so, a seed was planted to take a deeper look at what it means to be a Stoic.

Of course, like any seed, this seed sat dormant in the soil of my mind for months, only occasionally pushing to the surface and reminding me that I needed to give this some attention. Fast forward to the short break after Christmas and the seed germinated and broke through; I read some general articles about Stoicism online and found a useful YouTube channel. These led me to order two books; "Meditations" by Marcus Aurelius and "Letters from a Stoic" by Seneca. For those familiar with the Stoics, Epictetus is next. The reading was fascinating and I thought I would share some of what I took away from it with our readers over the next several issues of the Roseville New Church Newsletter.

With this in mind I thought I would start this series where I started. As noted above, when I heard the word "stoic" I could only think "non-emotional, unfeeling." Apparently, this is quite a common response, the same response my wife had when she overheard me discussing Stoicism with our

son. In the introduction to his book “The Daily Stoic,” Ryan Holiday notes:

Except to the most avid seekers of wisdom, Stoicism is either unknown or misunderstood. Indeed, it would be hard to find a word dealt a greater injustice at the hands of the English language than "Stoic." To the average person, this vibrant, action-oriented, and paradigm-shifting way of living has become shorthand for "emotionlessness." Given the fact that the mere mention of philosophy makes most nervous or bored, "Stoic philosophy" on the surface sounds like the last thing anyone would want to learn about, let alone urgently need in the course of daily life.

What a sad fate for a philosophy that even one of its occasional critics, Arthur Schopenhauer, would describe as "the highest point to which man can attain by the mere use of his faculty of reason."

Far from advocating for a life devoid of emotions, the core Stoic teachings emphasise not the absence of emotions but the mastery over them, advocating for a life led by reason and virtue. Central to Stoic philosophy is the belief that while we cannot control external events, we can control our reactions to them, thereby maintaining our tranquility and freedom from the disturbances we so often allow external events to cause.

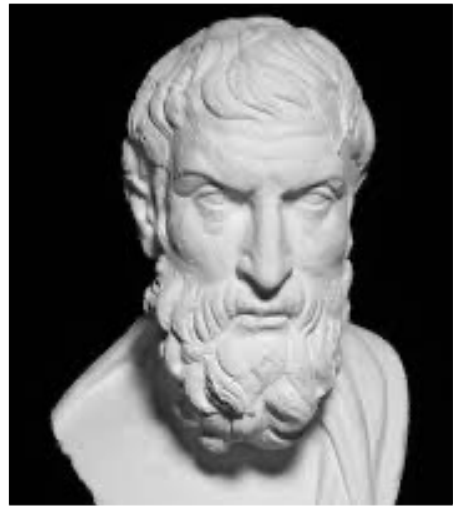
Marcus Aurelius, a Roman Emperor and Stoic philosopher, captures this essence in his meditations:

"Understand at last that you have something in you more powerful and divine than what causes the bodily



Marcus Aurelius

passions and pulls you like a mere puppet. What thoughts now occupy my mind? Is it not fear, suspicion, desire, or something like that?" This quote underlines the Stoic view that emotions are not to be eradicated but understood and governed by the higher faculties of the mind, specifically reason.

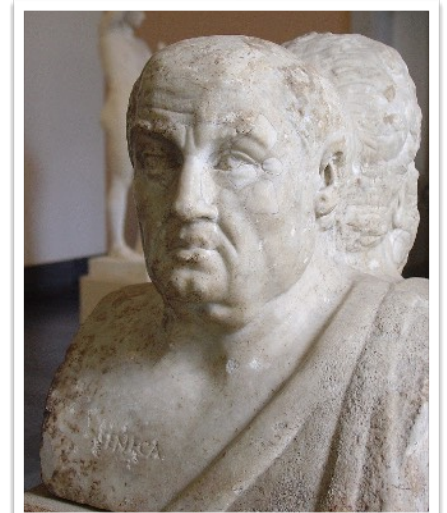


Epictetus

Epictetus, another towering figure in Stoicism, further clarifies this position in his Discourses: "It is not events that disturb people, it is their judgements concerning them." Here, Epictetus emphasises that emotions themselves are not problematic; rather, it is our judgments about external events that cause distress. Stoicism teaches that by examining and changing our judgments,

we can maintain composure in the face of the exigencies of life.

Seneca, a Roman Stoic philosopher, offers a practical application of this philosophy in his letters to Lucilius: "If you wish to be loved, love." Seneca illustrates that Stoicism does not reject emotions but guides one to engage with them in a rational manner. Love, an emotion, is presented not as something to be suppressed but as a virtue to be cultivated wisely.



Seneca

Stoicism, therefore, does not call for a life stripped of emotions but for a life where one is not enslaved by them. It teaches the development of an inner citadel, a mental fortress that allows one to observe emotions without being

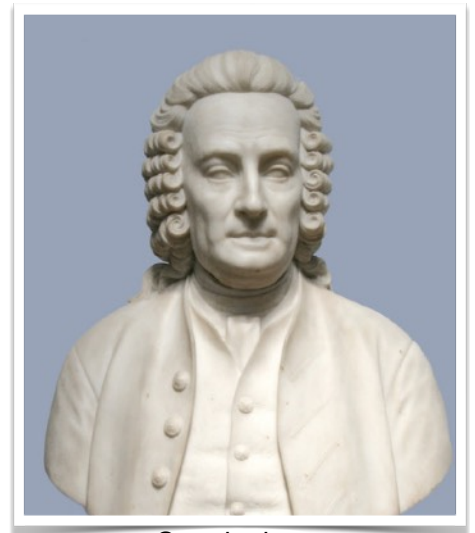
swept away by them. This is a path of wisdom where one recognises the presence of emotions but chooses actions based on reason and virtue.

The Stoic practice of *premeditatio malorum* - the practice of contemplating potential misfortunes to reduce their emotional impact - further demonstrates this balance. By contemplating potential misfortunes, Stoics prepare themselves emotionally and intellectually to face challenges without panic or distress, thereby exercising control over their reactions. Of course even the practice of *premeditatio malorum* needs to be done with reason and rationality in order to avoid anxiety and worry. This, however, is a subject for a future article.

In summary, Stoicism's approach to emotions is nuanced and profound. It acknowledges the natural human experience of emotions but champions the idea that true freedom and happiness come from not being controlled by these emotions. Through the teachings of Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, and Seneca, we see a consistent message: Emotions are to be understood, moderated, and aligned with reason and virtue, leading to a life of tranquility and resilience. Stoicism, therefore, does not espouse emotional suppression but emotional intelligence and mastery.

If this concept sounds familiar to you, it is likely due to New Church teaching that true freedom comes from not being controlled by negative emotions.

Swedenborg emphasises the importance of being led by the Lord, which leads to a state of freedom. In his



Swedenborg

writings, he describes how enslavement occurs when cravings and falsity rule over us, leading us to believe we are enjoying freedom when, in reality, we are not. Only when we are regenerated and led by a love for what is good and true can we experience true freedom.

Consider for yourself how the above teachings from Stoics resonate with the following teaching for the New Church (Secrets of Heaven 892):

We first come into a state of freedom after we have regenerated; until then, we are in a state of slavery. Enslavement occurs when cravings and falsity rule over us; freedom results when a fondness for what is good and true takes charge. As long as we are enslaved, we have no perception of the actual state of affairs. The first perception dawns when we come into freedom...We never come into a free condition until we have regenerated and until the Lord leads us by means of a love for what is good and true. Once we arrive there, we are able to see and perceive for the first time what liberty is, because we then realise what life is and what true pleasure in life and happiness are. Up to that time, we do not even know what goodness is, and occasionally we refer to the height of evil as the greatest good. When people who enjoy a state of freedom given by the Lord observe a life of perverted desire and false thinking, and particularly when they sense it, they are as horrified as if they saw hell gaping open before their very eyes.

Howard

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The Beautiful World of Proverbs

(Rev. Julian Duckworth)

Every now and then I go back into the short, pithy, deep world of the world's proverbs.

They do what we could well learn from (myself supremely), that human and spiritual truths can be encapsulated in ten words, not ten thousand. The other beauty of proverbs is that they often come from within the race and culture - so, the real situation for people - and express a joy, sadness, truism, wisdom, in this lovely craftsmanship.

I will share ten with you, but at the end of this tedious long article, I will put some online links for you to find an abundance of sayings to make your heart leap and your day smile at you.

"If you can't live longer, live deeper."

(Italian)

"Begin to weave, and God will give you the thread."

(German)

"A bird does not sing because it has an answer...
it sings because it has a song."

(Chinese)

"It takes a whole village to raise a child."

(African)

"Even though you know a thousand things,
ask a man who knows one."

(Turkish)

"The best candle is understanding."

(Welsh)

"Coffee and love taste best when hot."

(Ethiopian)

"Some men go through a forest and see no firewood."

(English)

"If you can walk, you can dance."

(Mexican)

"The night rinses what the day has soaped."

(Swiss)

Every human instance can be "proverbialised." The beauty lies in the subtlety of catching "it". And the real wonder is that each human being just gets it, as if we are each a package of infinite wisdom embedded within us, waiting and able to come to the surface and be seen. Which of course is the truth, that God's loving wisdom is not on the other side of Jupiter but on the waiting beat of my own heart, if I will stop talking and just listen.

My all-time favourite proverb is an Arab one and I share it at a time when there is deep hardship in that region of the world. "Do good, and throw it into the sea."

The oldest known proverb is on a clay tablet from ancient Assyria around 1800 BC. It's part of a clay letter from one king to a neighbouring one. "Don't be like the bitch who, in her haste, brings forth the blind." (Take bitch in its original meaning...) In other words, think twice.

And we're still coming up with them. One-liners are the cousins of proverbs. "Before you marry, watch your girl when her computer is coming in slow!"

The Bible of course has a whole book devoted to wise sayings, some of which rival the world's best proverbs and life's richest truths. "Go to the ant, you sluggard." "Say to wisdom, 'You are my sister.'" "Bind God upon your brow."

www.winesofproverb.com

quoteproverbs.com

www.rd.com

<https://thecultureur.com/around-the-world-in-52-proverbs/>

<https://www.thoughtco.com/famous-proverbs-and-quotes-2833003>

Enjoy the wisdom and the browsing but don't forget to live too, where proverbs are coined.

Julian

Swedenborg Centre News

It's already Easter again (yes, it came early this year).

If you would like some pondering over an Easter subject, then you can head for the website at swedenborg.com.au to read or download a feature article on "Who is Jesus Christ?" by Rev Sarah Walker in the latest new edition of the quarterly Candela magazine. And if you don't already get it in the regular post and would like to, drop us a line and we'll add you to the postal recipient list.

Also on the website, you will find 30 newly digitised booklets, articles, leaflets and lecture transcripts which we have been working on over the past few months (thanks to Liz Kemmis). The items we like to keep our eye on for this purpose are material which is hard to access or out of print,

but which still contains relevant interesting material. To access these uploaded items, go to the menu on the website and select "**Resources**," then "**PDFs**," then scroll to the end (bottom) of that page to links to open each item.

And here are our activities (but please always keep your eye on the above website for late updates, links and news).

Two short pauses are planned for the regular events, namely;

- March 29-30 (Easter holiday break)
- April 9-10 (when I'm at the Council of Ministers Meeting)

Here are the remaining events (Zoom links are on the above-mentioned website):

Don't forget to put your clocks back by an hour when Daylight Saving ends Saturday night, 6 April.

Coming events: -

- Weekly **Swedenborg Readings** on 10am Wednesdays.
- Fortnightly Tuesday **Bible Study** with Howard Thompson are on at 11am April 16th and 30th.
- **Dr Groves Readings** will be at noon & 7pm on Fridays April 5th and 19th.
- **Swedenborg Saturday** discussions will be held on April 6th and 20th, always at 10am.

See you at an event or at the Centre. Have a wonderful month.

Smiles, Joe



A Little Easter Trivia

If you start saving (Easter is a year away now!), for about \$500 you can buy Bettys handcrafted 5kg Imperial Easter Egg (right), unless you're a vegans or vegetarian (for whom it is apparently not suited) or unless you're too low on cash to get the plane ticket to the USA to collect one.



These days easter eggs are mostly chocolate, but when I was a young Dutchman they were always hand-decorated boiled eggs (which we later ate) or emptied egg-shells which you could keep. Hiding eggs in the house or yard and hunting them is a great childhood joy, and gave rise to the later meaning of "easter egg" as an unexpected or undocumented feature in a piece of computer software or on a DVD, included as a joke or a bonus.

Decorating easter eggs is a folk tradition of many European countries. In some places wooden or even porcelain eggs are used for carving or painting. Many millennia ago the ancient Zoroastrians already painted eggs for the festival of Nowruz (their New Year celebration on the Spring equinox). This spread among the Persians of Islamic and other faiths today. Even in Judaism, a hard-boiled egg is sometimes an element of the Passover Seder to represent festival sacrifice. An engraved decorated ostrich eggs was found in Africa to be 60,000 years old, while in pre-dynastic times in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Crete, eggs were associated with death and rebirth and with kingship, and were commonly placed in graves as long as 5,000 years ago. In Christian countries, easter eggs (Paschal eggs), are decorated for Easter to

celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Eggs were a traditional symbol of fertility and rebirth, and so symbolise the empty tomb of Jesus when he was resurrected. This custom even spread via the Orthodox Churches as far as Siberia.

Joe

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Spring Women's Weekend **November 15-17, Hornsby**

We're doing it again! Ladies, mark your diaries: you're cordially invited to join other New Church-minded women across Australia and New Zealand for our spring women's weekend. We'll be gathering **Nov 15-17** at an Airbnb in **Hornsby, NSW and via Zoom**. There will be a nice combination of fun and inspiring sessions on offer, including a guest speaker chiming in from the U.S. and once again assembling birth kits for disadvantaged women in developing countries – plus down-time to visit with our sisters and explore the area (and go for a dip in the on-site pool!?). If this interests you and you haven't already signed up, please let Jenn know (jenn@beiswenger.net). The deadline isn't until October, but the sooner we know who's coming, the sooner we can start planning our weekend -- and the sooner we can all get excited!

On the subject of assembling birth kits, we will need to raise \$1000 to pay for the supplies, as in previous years. Since we're planning this well in advance, there's no urgency yet;

watch this space for further details! Thanks in advance for your consideration!

Jenn Beiswenger

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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



“The soul becomes dyed with
the colour of its thoughts.”

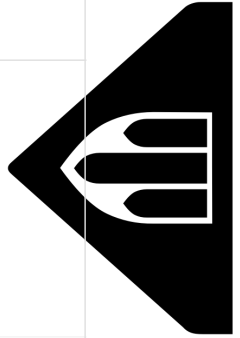
(Marcus Aurelius)

April

2024

March							May						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	26	27	28	29	30	31	
31													

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
Easter Sunday 10.00am Service of Worship Rev. Howard A. Thompson						
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
10.00am Service of Worship Rev. Howard A. Thompson						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
10.00am Service of Worship Rev. Howard A. Thompson		Bible Study 11.00				Swedenborg Saturday (Also the 6th)
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
10.00am Service of Worship Rev. Howard A. Thompson						
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
"ANZAC Sunday" 10.00am Service of Worship Rev. Howard A. Thompson		Bible Study 11.00				



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