

January 2016 News & Notes

Living Gratefully - A New Spiritual Growth Program

Do you know how it feels to be “in the flow”? It happens when you are so immersed in what you’re doing that you lose all concept of time. Whether you are painting, working at your job, making music, or spending quality time with family, you feel alive, present, happy and connected. You’re not focused on yourself. In fact, you seem to lose yourself, becoming connected with something much larger. It is a holistic feeling of deep appreciation that permeates your whole being. Swedenborg describes this flow as “divinity working among us,” where the following happens:

The Lord comes in with impulses of love for our neighbour. The Lord opens the skylights and then the windows in our walls. . . . By the spiritual light and the spiritual love that then flow in together, the Lord enables us to recognize that through divine providence God is taking care of everything.”

Swedenborg’s book *Divine Providence*, which inspired this Living Gratefully program, provides an assurance that life is moving toward a state of peace and happiness – as long as we let ourselves go with the flow. Of course we are always in complete freedom to resist the flow by getting stuck in selfish thoughts and behaviours. This program will offer us a chance to practice ways to break free from the sticking points so that we can stay in the flow. Because when we flow, we make the world within and around us a more loving, more beautiful place.

In this program, we will explore five of the “laws of divine providence” that Swedenborg describes, as well as the gifts that lie within them. We’ll be running two discussion groups: one at 11:30am on Sundays and then at 7:30pm on Mondays at Baringa. If you are interested in joining the Sunday group via internet connection, please contact jenn@beiswenger.net . The program will conclude on 14 March.

Calendar

There will be **NO CHURCH** on **December 27**. On **January 3rd** we will have a family style service, but with **Holy Supper** offered at the end. I’ll be talking about our need for recreation, which should be appropriate as we have all likely been working hard through the Christmas holiday and prepare to head off to camp. Camp starts on the 4th and runs through the 10th, so there will be **NO CHURCH** on **January 10th**. Classes will resume on February 1st with the first “Living Gratefully” small group meeting - see above for details.

Christmas Pageant

Hurstville New Church was attractively decorated for our evening pageant service on Sunday 20th December giving it a welcoming feel. The familiar Christmas story was portrayed using a clever mix of music, singing, readings, video clips, and live actors. Particularly moving was having Mary and Joseph played by a married couple, **Kristen** and **Sam Johnson** and their children, **Dylan** and **Liam** joining them as shepherds in the manger scene. **Matthew Cooper** and **Zach Beiswenger** were excellent shepherds too! **Carolyn Heldon** sang a cappella the ethereal Magnificat, Mary’s words spoken in praise to God during her visit to cousin Elizabeth. Thank you to **Todd** for the seamless flow of the service and to **Jenn** for her creative concept and directorship. Last but not least, a thank you to **Britte Genzlinger** for playing the piano, **Ralph Horner** for setting up the lighting and **Amanda Altshuler** for her production assistance.



Sunday School teachers, please note:

You are invited to a quick meeting after church on Sunday January 24th to review the Journey Program and HNC Sunday School resources. Thanks so much for your ongoing support of this really important use!

Exodus Foundation Food Drive

Thanks to everybody who contributed to our Exodus Foundation food drive on December 20th! We collected 3+ milk crates *full* of various canned goods (soups, beans, coconut milk etc), boxes of cereal and biscuits, packages of rice & pasta, as well as toothbrushes, soap, razors, socks - the list goes on! Those who benefit from the donations are very grateful for our support, and the folks from the Exodus Foundation thank us sincerely. Thanks for spreading some Christmas spirit. *Our next food drive will be in conjunction with our harvest festival service in March -- stay tuned!*

Birthday Party Invitation!

Mike and Kerry Lockhart are inviting you to join them in celebrating Kerry's 70th birthday! The party will happen at Baringa on Saturday 23rd of January, 6:30pm. They say you don't need to bring gifts, but my suspicion is that if you gave her an all expense paid trip to Hawaii she'd quite appreciate it. Just an idea.

Birthdays – Margaret Heldon (9th), Thomas O'Brien (15th), Kerry Lockhart (24th), Bronwynn O'Brien (25th), Kaye Macfarlane (30th)