

## News & Notes – January 2022

### Car Rally & Free Lunch - Sunday 23rd January 2022

*Last chance to book in for this event. Please call Owen Heldon on 0407 647 280*

#### Schedule for the day

8 – 8.30 am: Church Service, optional

8.30 – 9 am: Obtain instructions for car rally.

9 am – 11.30: Car rally, destination Audley Dance Hall

12.00 – 2.00 pm: Lunch. A menu will be provided when you book.

4th January: Last date for booking and menu choices.

### Virtual Retreat January 6-9

Are you missing our annual summer retreats/camps? While there won't be any water slides, beaches or swimming pools, Rev David Moffat has organized a virtual retreat to quench your doctrinal thirst. There will be a variety of sessions, led by David, Rev Julian Duckworth, Rev Ros Taylor, Joe Vandermeer, Sarah Walker, among others. Dates are January 6-9, with Anyone who is interested should in the first instance register with David ([d a moffat@yahoo.com.au](mailto:d_a_moffat@yahoo.com.au)), and he will make sure you get the relevant information, Details and registration information will also get sent around on the New Church Google Group.

### Spiritual Growth Program/Discussion Group - Pause: Make Space for God. Starting February 2022

Shop for groceries. Pay the bills. Finish that important project. Get the mail. Eat. Clean the kitchen. Sleep. Where did our relationship with God go? How often do we come to the end of the day and realize we didn't live the active spiritual lives we had intended to live? We want to look to God in our daily lives, and yet we let the days slide away without giving Him the attention we would like to.

That's where this program comes in. *Pause: Make Space for God* brings some breathing room back into our day, giving us a chance to consciously renew and strengthen our relationship with God. This program asks us to designate a portion of time every day to explore the Bible and listen for God's messages. The goal of the program is to allow participants to experience the presence of the Lord in a new and powerful way.

But how do we experience the presence of the Lord? The Writings of the New Church offer an approach for inviting God's presence and conjoining with Him: "The acknowledgment and worship of the Lord, and the reading of the Word, cause the presence of the Lord; but these two together with a life according to His commandments effect conjunction with Him" (*Apocalypse Revealed* 796). In other words, we have a path laid out for us for spiritual growth: acknowledge and worship the Lord, then read and live the Word. Through this

process, our minds and hearts open up to a powerful connection with our Creator, bringing new light and freedom into every area of our lives.

Although the four steps of spiritual growth may seem pretty straightforward, we all know that good habits take time to develop. With this in mind, the program starts with the suggestion that we pause just for ten minutes every morning. Even while still in our pajamas with messy hair, we can pick up the Word and read a passage or two, and think about how to apply the lesson to our upcoming day. As this begins to feel manageable, we can add another break at lunchtime for prayer and reflection. As the morning and afternoon breaks become an established part of our day, and we find ourselves doing our part of the spiritual work through pausing more often, we may find our hearts shifting and changing in response to our new, more peaceful outlook. Eventually, we will begin to experience more fully the energizing, healing, and strengthening power of the Lord.

This seven-week program will be starting Sunday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, with discussion groups on Monday evenings at 7:30pm. Workbooks will be provided, please let me know if you would like to join in!

### **Final Thoughts**

Another crazy year, right? Like 2020, I think we're all ready to scrap 2021 to the rubbish bin of history. It's been a tough year for a lot of people.

In this country we've been blessed in that the disruption has been more along the lines of financial pain and travel difficulty, and less along the lines of health issues. No matter how the virus has impacted your life, I think it has highlighted just how valuable faith in the Lord and the afterlife is.

The Lord promises that He's ever mindful of what is going on in the world. This virus hasn't caught Him by surprise. He's willing to let it disrupt our lives, but with it we hopefully can see a reshuffling of priorities... maybe more time spent with our immediate family, and a realization that the time spent with them is more important than the money earned or trips taken. Ultimately we can relax, because even if we're not sure how exactly this mess will get cleaned up, we can rest assured that the Creator is on the job inspiring those who are able to do the job required.

Things looked pretty bleak at the time of the Lord's birth, and yet He found a way to perform a miracle to save us all. While the situation is different, He's still the same God who as the Scriptures remind us, "is ever mindful of His covenant" (Psalm 111:5).

Like Moses, Joshua, Job, and many others, one day we'll be able to tell the story of how the Lord led us through this crazy time, how He provided an unexpected solution, and how we're better off for having had this challenging, strengthening experience. We just had to be patient. So hang in there, this virus didn't come to stay, it came to pass. Have a great 2022!

"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31 NKJV).