Roseville New Church, 4, Shirley Road, Roseville, NSW 2069

CHURCH BULLETIN FOR AUGUST 2026

Each Church Bulletin will come out online or get to you posted before the end of the previous month. If anything is to go into the next one, it needs to be with me by the previous 25th, please. Feel free to contact me on 0427 938 732 or julian@duckworth.me Thanks, Julian

Minister's Message

I knew someone who jogged every morning out there somewhere for about three quarters of an hour, and, as he jogged, he reflected on one phrase of Psalm 23, one phrase a day, letting it open up ideas, memories, connections, feelings, gratitude, and whatever came along. He told me it was a wonderful experience. The early morning, the uprising sun, the sounds around him, the rhythm of his feet, and "The Lord is my shepherd." Wow! The next day, all that again but today it is to the words "I lack nothing". And when over time he got to the end of the psalm, he just started out again with the shepherding God. All this, over several years of daily jogging.

And you could tell, when you met him, that this joined experience of light, nature, movement, and God was doing him good. Such a lovely man, now no longer jogging here, but in the spiritual world.

The 23rd psalm is about the most well-known portion of the Bible, possibly outdone by the Lord's Prayer (which has suddenly made me think that that would make a great jogging reflection!) So why is it so popular, been turned into two hymns and possibly more, used at funerals and commemorations, learned by heart, and printed on cards and tea-towels? You could say 'because it's so beautiful' but that doesn't say very much. I think the real answer is that this great psalm brings us into a direct experience of God and is all about God from the first phrase "The Lord is my shepherd" to the last phrase "…and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

Maybe we should all now find a Bible and read it all through again! Even more blessed are those who actually know it off by heart! When I think of Psalm 23 I immediately think of 'green pastures' and 'still waters' and 'the valley of the shadow of death' as powerful images, but I should really be thinking more about God making me lie down, God leading me beside, and God always being there with me, which are God's powerful actions and protections.

So let's just take one phrase and go jogging… "Your rod and your staff, they comfort me." When we 'reflect' we don't preach, or work out correspondences, we let what comes just come… Rod and Staff. Two fairly similar-looking things mentioned together, bringing me comfort that they are there for me. Perhaps they are like the arms of God reaching out to embrace me, and comfort me when it's hard or unclear. I do like the staff, because it gives me something to lean on which is God of course. It's firm and dependable. But wait, a shepherd's staff is a 'crook' with a curved top to gently pull the sheep back. I like that. I often need bringing back.

At first, I don't get much from the rod, and the bit I do get bothers me. Rods are straight and stern. "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Is God berating me or taking me into some challenge to see if I can cope? Not much comfort there, though! Aha, the rod is not for me, but to ward off what might come after me! A doubt, a wrong feeling, some judgmental thought about someone. Do ward them off, Lord, with your rod. I don't want them plaguing me or making me forget you and what you are. So I can lean on God's presence while knowing that God firmly holds at bay those interfering undermining thoughts I get at times. There's the double comfort! Oh look, jogging over, and I'm ready for all that today will bring.

Go well, wherever it is, Julian

Church Services at Roseville during August

Sunday, August 2nd 10 a.m. Rev. Julian Duckworth (including Holy Supper)
Sunday, August 16th 10 a.m. **Rev. Rachel** visiting us from America
Sunday, August 30th 10 a.m. **Ben** visiting us from America
(see second page for details)
Note: September's services will be provided in the September Bulletin.

Update about Rev. Rachel's visit Please do read through this

Rachel arrives in Sydney on Monday, August 10th and leaves us on Wednesday, August 19th. A schedule is well in hand with events, Sydney+beyond trips, visits, zoom, important discussions, showing her the church, the manse, the Swedenborg Centre rooms, and much talking and listening. Rachel will be staying in a serviced apartment in Chatswood. Julian will be in Sydney to help from Tuesday, August 11th (evening) to August 17th.
Please note there are two set occasions to meet Rachel and we hope you can come to one or the other or even better, to both.

Social 'meet Rachel' evening – Wednesday, August 12th in church from 7 – 8.30pm
Tea and coffee and nibbles available

Church service followed by light lunch – Sunday, August 16th 10 a.m. onwards.
Please bring sandwiches, savouries, biscuits or fruit plate. Thank you very much.

Update about Ben's visit Please do read through this too

Ben arrives in Sydney on Tuesday, August 25th and leaves on Tuesday, September 1st. The schedule for Ben will be similar and different and **we will send out a Bulletin on August 20th with the information. Ben is taking the service on Sunday, August 30th. Please NOTE that this is <u>not</u> our regular Sunday in the month! Please do join us.**

News for August from the Swedenborg Centre

See the website at https://swedenborg.com.au/ in the "Upcoming Events" column for further event details, news and for a Zoom link to join the event when it begins.
Online event for your calendar
Swedenborg discussions: every Tuesday from 11am to 1pm. Bring any topic or questions of interest to explore that relates to your spiritual path and life or to anything to do with Swedenborg's writings.
Swedenborg reading and exploration: every Wednesday from 10am to noon.
Currently reading Swedenborg's *True Christianity* (also known as *True Christian Religion*) which is a fascinating summary of Swedenborg chief teachings. You can join any session since we usually begin with a reminder of the context of the passage being explored.
Note: while Joe is on annual leave, there will be no online events for the three weeks starting Monday, August 10th. So events will start again on Tuesday September 1st.
Best wishes from the Swedenborg Centre.

Joe Vandermeer

Monday Meditation meet-up

Kathryn Baker leads an in-school-term weekly meditation group both physically in church and online from 10 a.m. to after 11 a.m. Those taking part really appreciate this. It is generally a guided meditation and has some discussion before and also after the meditation. All kinds of different ideas are explored.
If you are interested, it would be good to contact Kathryn, find out details, and come along one Monday. If you ask Ruth or Julian, we can give you Kathryn's phone number.