



E-NEWS



The General Conference of the New Church **News**

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Rise and Shine Radio Show

Our Spiritual Leader, Revd Jack Dunion, broadcasts his own online radio show every Sunday at 9am on River Radio (formerly Leven Radio):

<https://riverradio.uk/>

The link below now gives access to all backdated Rise & Shine programs:

<https://www.mixcloud.com/RevJack/>

H A P P Y
2021
new
Y E A R

2020 Advent Calendar

Judith Wilson writes:

Thank you to all involved in making this calendar available to us through E-News: Revd Julian Duckworth for compiling the daily thoughts and prayer, Carolyn (with Ray's backing) for creating the crafty idea and Gemma for her skills in making it available to us each day (and not a day earlier!). Some people just used the daily words and others added their creative skills. However it was used, it gave a thought for the day which led from darkness to light over 24 days. I found it a very precious experience for which I am very grateful. Thank you all.



Judith Wilson's Picture



Lara Nicholls' Picture



Carolyn Kennion's Picture



Margaret Presland's Picture



Susan Hadfield's Picture

November News from the Council

Shannon Fitzgerald reports:

With the news of vaccines on their way our hopes and prayers are that we soon can meet again in our normal capacity but for now we see each other on screens which is a nice replacement now we have all got to grips with Zoom. Revd Christine Bank started our meeting with Psalm 19 and we then began our agenda.

Some exciting news came from Revd Becky Jarratt's updated allocation of duties which show a shift towards new areas of technology such as YouTube and other online video content. The hope is that branching out to these forms of media will engage more people in the writings of Swedenborg. Consequently, Revd Alison Southcombe has also been very busy creating a comprehensive document regarding copyright licensing for online situations. The document explains what individuals producing online worship need to do to stick to copyright laws. This is well needed and we thank Alison for all her hard work on this.

Additionally, as we know the Ministry is working very hard to put together services for us to enjoy online. The Council thanks everyone who has made donations this year and notes that Conference can take donations through cheque by sending them to Sally Field or through online banking. Please contact Sally Field if there are any concerns with this.

The Company Accounts report was comprehensive as ever and we thank Sally Field for her work with this. Due to the complications this year has brought, the Conference forecast shows an operating deficit of £9K for the current year. The main causes of this are a reduction in investment income and Purley Chase being a larger cost to conference than usual. Luckily, Sally Field is monitoring the cash flow situation continuously. In light of this, Societies should be aware of the need to pay insurance premiums promptly as this is a large cost which can affect our cash flow. The Council also agreed the re-appointment of the Finance Advisory Committee and we thank them for all their work this year.

We also heard that the Youth Team is very busy planning activities and events for our children, young people and parents. There have been parent discussion groups, quizzes, services and another film club recently which all sound to be going very well. Big thanks to our Youth Team for planning, organising and running these events, the Council is thrilled to hear our young people and parents are still meeting together.

The Council has also been updated with Lee Differ's education and are excited to hear more in the future. Lee Differ is currently working toward the MA in Philosophical and Systematic Theology at Nottingham University, his studies there highlighting potential for broader applications of Swedenborg's Writings. Ideas usually thought of as exclusively 'Swedenborgian', enjoying a far broader currency than previously acknowledged, are taking

deeper roots in today's churches and theologies, revealing connections of significant depth with more fundamental historical philosophy and theology.

Such findings could enable our Church, if it so wishes, to further its interpretations of the Writings and make connections with parties who are today intuitively moving towards 'Swedenborgian' concepts. This would therefore enable the growth of these ideas amongst the wider 'new church (in the broadest sense) to come', introducing and maintaining, as it might, the presence of Swedenborg in theological discussion and life.

Looking ahead to next summer, the Conference programme is well on its way to being completed. I am sure we would all be delighted with the thought of being together at Conference one day. In the meantime have a Happy New Year from the Council.

Carol Services

Gwendolen Rowe reports:

I attended two Carol services and thought that it might be of interest to know that, despite the restrictions, some of our Churches are managing to meet together for worship.

Bradford

On Sunday 20th December Bradford New Church held their Carol Service which was led by several Worship Leaders and members of the congregation. We were pleased to welcome a couple of friends from Dalton New Church and we had a beautiful service. Because we couldn't sing hymns we chose to have Carols sung by a choir so we could really engage with them. We also interspersed this with appropriate songs such as 'Mary did you know' sung by Aled Jones. We lit lots of tealights around the Church and with a lovely tree decorated by Shannon Fitzgerald our Church looked really atmospheric.



Alongside the usual readings of the birth of Jesus and visits by the Shepherds and Wise Men we had some meditative passages from books by Nick Fawcett which imagine, in a modern and powerful way, what a character in the story might have felt as they witnessed the events at the time. During the carols Elliott brought up the various characters of the nativity and put them in our makeshift stable. A tradition in our Church which really adds to bringing the story alive and visual.



The readings were all read really well and really added to create a wonderful account of the events of so long ago which still can operate in our hearts today if we but welcome the Lord into our lives. I shall particularly remember hearing from the Wise Men which was read as a conversation from a Nick Fawcett meditation and one could really imagine the conversation that may have taken place all those years ago.



We were also treated to Elliott singing (suitably distanced) Silent night first in English then in Spanish which was very special too.

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who took part and for reminding us of the true meaning of

Christmas. It has certainly been a dark year but lighting those advent candles certainly brought light into my heart this Christmas.

NB More of the pictures from this event can be found on the [Bradford New Church Facebook page](#).



Dalton

On Monday 21st December I gathered with members and friends at Dalton New Church for a service of carols and readings. It was led, worshipfully, by Christine Mrozek with the help of other worship leaders who reiterated the stories of the birth of Jesus reminding us of events long ago but which still hold meaning today.



The Church was beautifully lit and the advent candles were also lit reminding us of the light that the birth of Jesus brings into a darkened world. I was particularly moved by a poem read by Christine called Santas secret wish. This delightful poem reminded us that whilst we give gifts to each other the greatest gift we can give is our heart, our love. It was lovely to hear the organist, Roger Jessop, playing the organ with gusto. It really

added to the atmosphere.

It was lovely to be able to worship in Church at this special time of year and despite the difficult circumstances be with others worshipping together. Thank you to everyone who took part and to everyone at Dalton New Church for making this possible at this time.