



E-News



The General Conference of the New Church

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Rev'd Jack Dunion broadcasts his own online radio show every Sunday at 9am on Lomond Radio (formerly River Radio):
<https://lomondradio.co.uk/shows/rise-and-shine>

The link below allows you to catchup Rise & Shine programs:
www.mixcloud.com/RevJack/



Thank You

Muriel Morgan writes:

Dear all,

I wanted to say thank you to all who contributed to my leaving present and for all the messages I received following the announcement that I was leaving.

As you will know, it was not something I wanted to do, but the law is the law and I had no choice; I trust that

the Lord has His Divine Providence working and that all will be well.



Paul and I are still members of Conference and we will still be in touch; equally, feel free to contact me on my private mail address:

murielmorgan1706@gmail.com

Once again, thank you and I wish you all the very best!

Please keep in touch!

With much love,
Muriel xx

Annual Report Corrections

It has been brought to the Council's attention that there were two omissions in the Annual Report which was written by the Chair, Margaret Cowie.

The first is a sincere thank you to all the Worship Leaders whose much appreciated work keeps Church Services going in the absence of a Minister. They are the people who keep the Societies alive, and are a vital part of our organisation.

Also missing from the Report was the resignation of Mr Rob Taylor. Rob resigned from the Council, for personal reasons, shortly after the 2023 annual conference and AGM. Rob was a Trustee and Council member for just over two years, and his contributions to the Council's discussions were invaluable. His help and participation were, and continue to be, a sad loss. We thank him greatly for the time he spent as a member of the Council.

Conference Council.

Annual Conference

Report of the Annual Conference 22nd to 26th July 2024 at The Hayes Centre, Swanwick



Carolyn Kennion reports:

On **Monday** the Conference Council and other committees had meetings and families spent some social time together but the main conference started on **Tuesday** afternoon when most people arrived and signed the roll. It was a delight to welcome



some 'new' faces including Revd David and Pam Moffat from Melbourne, Australia, and also two new employees - Paul Crone, IT Manager (on left of photo), and Paul Mehew, Company Accountant (right) with Natalie Welch, Company Secretary (centre). The opening family worship was led by the New Church Youth Association plus 5 year old Verity, who read the benediction. In the service we were welcomed to conference and reminded of the theme of **Faithfulness** as illustrated by the story of Daniel who remained faithful to the Lord even in the face of being thrown into a den of lions.

There followed some announcements including the sad news that Ruth Friend was unable to be with us and lead the music as her father had died the previous day. Revd Becky Jarratt very ably took over the music-leader role and the music for services and the singing of the choir were once again highlights of conference.

Greetings were received from Revd Ian Arnold (Australia), Betty and Michael Clubb, David Friend, Isobel Hindley, Revd



John and Jenny Sutton (New Zealand), and Stephen Thomas.

Tributes were paid to members who passed into the spiritual world during the last year - Revd Ian Russell, Walter Richardson, Howard Turner, Joy Hasler, Nellie Thomas, Brenda Slack and Ernest Baxendale.

Revd Jack Dunion, Spiritual Leader, gave his keynote address saying that, following last year's conference when we considered the need for change in the church and how we might respond to this, some people had been asking what had happened since then. To fix anything we need to identify and fix the spiritual causes of the problems not just the effects. Jack assured us that a lot of groundwork has taken place to enable things that have held us back for a very long time to start to change - things such as traditions, customs, attitudes and expectations, many of which we inherited from the old Christian church. The Lord cannot allow us to move forward until we remove the barriers. (The full address will be published in E-news).

On **Tuesday evening** we were offered a choice between free time or three organised activities (circle dancing led by Marion Curry, the New Church Children's society AGM, or our questions answered by a panel of ministers.) I attended the NCCS AGM where we learnt how they give financial support to children and families in need. The meeting finished just in time for me to enjoy the last two circle dances!

Wednesday was designated **Spiritual Day** and started with the Holy Supper Service, led by Revds Christine Bank and Brian Talbot, assisted by Revd Bruce Jarvis, Jonathan Millar and Lynne Griffiths (ordination student). To illustrate his theme of 'taste' Brian had set up 'Brian's Bar' and asked for volunteers to taste and identify different flavours of drinks (non-alcoholic!). In the same way that we taste and discern what is good for us to drink we have to discern what is good for us to taste and feed-on spiritually and then accept it from the Lord. This year, for the first time, the children stayed for the whole service and were offered bread and fruit juice at the same time as the adults.

After a short break, an invited facilitator, Gayle-Anne Drury, introduced three sessions on developing a vision for the future of the church. We were to be split into groups and follow a set structure to enable each group to consider and record their discussions about three possible aspects of a vision for the future. These had been drawn up by the Ministry and Conference Council and were as follows:

1. Encouraging and supporting varied and diverse approaches to worship.
2. Applying doctrine based on personal conscience.
3. Becoming more accepting and inviting.

I think it is true to say that the group I was in found this a challenging but worthwhile experience in which we listened and learned from each other. Gayle-Anne will analyse the notes made by all of the groups and make them available to us, to contribute towards developing a vision for the future.

For **Wednesday evening** there were three activities or free time as options (Singing and playing, AGM of the Historical Society or questions answered by a panel of ministers.) I attended the latter where questions included: what to tell people when they ask about our church and beliefs, the literal and spiritual senses of the Word and Writings and difficulties accepting some of Swedenborg's statements, Swedenborg's attitude to Paul, David and Mary and a possible explanation for this.

Gwendolen Rowe reports:

Thursday



The opening Service was led by the Young People's Committee. This service involved a lot of the young people and they shared the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace using props they had made themselves. This was a lovely start to the day.



The first session saw us having a good opportunity to get to know our new Company Accountant, Paul Mehew. Paul, confidently, took us through the accounts and explained some ideas he had for making the accounts easier to understand. A lot of the attention focussed on Purley Chase which, although having had an increase in

revenue, have also had increasing costs. The following discussion centred around the idea of increasing charges to outside groups but also ensuring it remains affordable for most people. Paul will be looking into the option of adding VAT. He also mentioned a grant which was made to Bradford for their Community Project.

The Council report followed, presented by Margaret Cowie. Pauline Grimshaw, who had stood down from the Council, was thanked for her service on the Council and tribute was also paid to Revd Robert Gill for many years of dedicated service. Gordon Kuphal, has attended Conference for 60 of the last 64 conferences and, although not on the council now, still offers support and advice where needed. He was thanked for his commitment over many years.

Revd Bruce Jarvis then took us through the changes required to the articles and rules. Because of the volume of work the Council are doing the decision regarding Honorary Life Members will be considered next year.

Concern was expressed that we still have no programme director for Purley and the Council was urged to make this a priority.

The sales of churches at Bournemouth, Chester, Clayton-le-Moors and Radcliffe are still ongoing.

Finally, Revd Bruce Jarvis was re-elected as a Trustee and appointed as Vice-Chairman of Conference Council, Nigel Sutton was re-elected as trustee and Barry Friend and Trevor Millar were elected as new trustees.





The afternoon started with questions being invited to reports from The Committee of Ministers, The Swedenborg Open Learning Centre, The Committee for Auxiliary Ministry, Purley Chase, The New Church Youth Association and the Youth and Family Team. There were no questions but a comment was made that it would be useful to have more of an idea of what each Minister is doing. Revd Robin Wooldridge presented Lynne Griffiths with her completion of her second year of ordination training certificate.

We then watched a video presentation from Shannon Fitzgerald telling us what goes on at the Bradford Community Project. This was a lively clips giving us a flavour of life at the project where they provide food, activities for children, outings, Bible teaching and a community garden. We were informed that, as part of the Bradford City of Culture for 2025, Shannon, who runs the project, is to receive an unsung hero award for her outstanding work. She is one of only five receiving this award.

The highlight of the afternoon, for me, was the next session where we heard from the Young People's Committee. They gave us an amazing account of the work they have been getting up to in the last year. The committee consists of:

Chairman: Jack Ramsay

Secretary: Libby Jones

Treasurer: Sharmaine Fitzgerald

Social Media/Communications Officer: Lucy Friend

The amount they have done is absolutely incredible and includes setting up an Instagram page, regular posts on social media, planning, running an 18+ week at Kildwick, and a Bible discussion on Zoom. Their enthusiasm is to be congratulated.

They thanked all those who had helped them in their first year getting themselves organised and for those being there to offer advice.

Following this we had a really interesting, illustrated, presentation from Revd David Moffat of the Australian New Church who is based in Melbourne. He brought greetings from Trevor & Joy Moffat, his parents. It was really interesting to hear that Australia is having similar issues to us with reducing numbers in their churches. David leads services about 3 times a month in Melbourne and live streams some of them. and also uses his service material for posts on YouTube and Facebook. He has a following of people who are interested in Swedenborg but who don't attend church, which



he calls 'Parallel Church'. He told us about his website which is called 'Swedenborg Community Victoria'. He said it was very important to get the right title in order for people to find the website easily.

We found out that both Revd John Teed in Australia and Revd John Elliot in the UK had been ordained 70 years ago and were both still contributing to the life of the Church. A round of applause was given to them from the floor.

In the evening there was a social with a mix of fun games and country dancing.

Friday

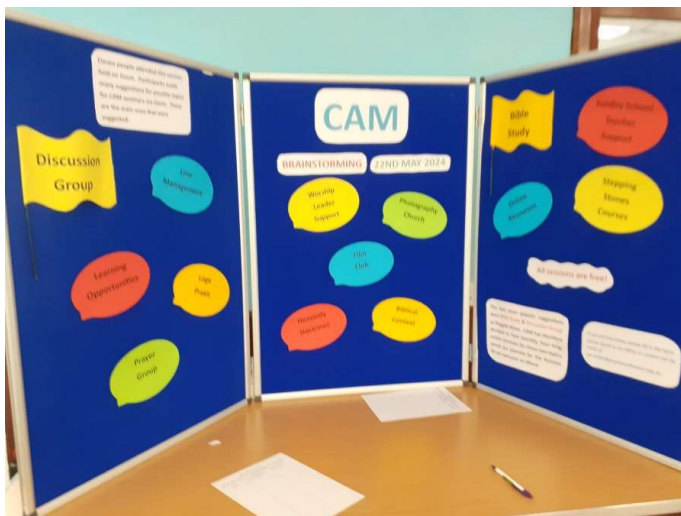


The last morning started with Jenny Jones presenting what the children and young people had been doing in their sessions together. We heard how they had considered what the word 'faithfulness' actually meant. They then looked at the disciple, Peter, whose name means 'Faith' and some of the young people shared what they had looked at.

Jenny then asked us to welcome our newest adult member of Conference, Harriet Jones, who turned 18 earlier in the week.

Following this session we had a feedback session following the Vision Facilitation earlier in the week. This will be collated and sent to Gayle-Ann Drury who facilitated the earlier sessions. The feedback was generally positive although there was some concern over the length of time the sessions took and the mental fatigue this caused.

The morning finished with a closing service of worship led by Revd Robin Wooldridge and Lynne Griffiths. Lynne had put together a lovely slideshow set to music of photos taken over the week. This was a lovely conclusion to our time together.



Young People's AGM

Jack Ramsey writes:

On Thursday the 25th of July, during one of the afternoon breaks at Conference, we held out first Young Person's AGM. This was an opportunity for the young people to ask questions and give feedback to the YPC about everything from the presentation we had just given and the things we had done over the past year, to the things we are planning to do in the coming months and ideas we had had. It was also an opportunity for the young people to give suggestions on what we could do as a committee, there were plenty of ideas thrown about – and hopefully many will come to fruition within the next year.



In attendance was 10 young people in person, 1 attending via zoom, and the 4 of us on committee. Towards the end of the AGM we voted on the election of a new person to be on the committee, Jason Nicholls, after his request to be on committee prior to the AGM. The motion to elect him was put forward, seconded, and voted on with a 100% majority of those in attendance – meaning the YPC is now formed of 5 committee members. Hopefully with the feedback and suggestions from both the young people in the AGM and the members of the general conference, we can do even more for the young people within the Church in this coming year.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us at ypc@generalconference.org.uk

Thanks,
Jack Ramsay (Chairperson).

Upcoming Events

Sunday 25 th August	Zoom service of worship led by Gwendolen Rowe
Friday 30 th August	Seaburn Dene Poppy Paint Along
Saturday 31 st August	Adventure into Lower Earth
Sunday 8 th September	Zoom service of worship led by Rvd Brian Talbot
Saturday 14 th September	Divine Providence and the way of the spiritual bracelet
21-22 nd September	Kearsley Scarecrow Festival & Harvest Festival
Sunday 22 nd September	Zoom service of worship led by Rvd Becky Jarratt
Sunday 6 th October	Harvest Service-Keithley
Saturday 2 nd November	Experiencing Awe and Wonder
Saturday 16 th November	Where am I headed after I die?
Saturday 16 th November	Christmas Fair-Keithley
Saturday 14 th December	Seaburn Dene-A Candle for Christmas

Full details <https://www.generalconference.org.uk/new-church-events/>