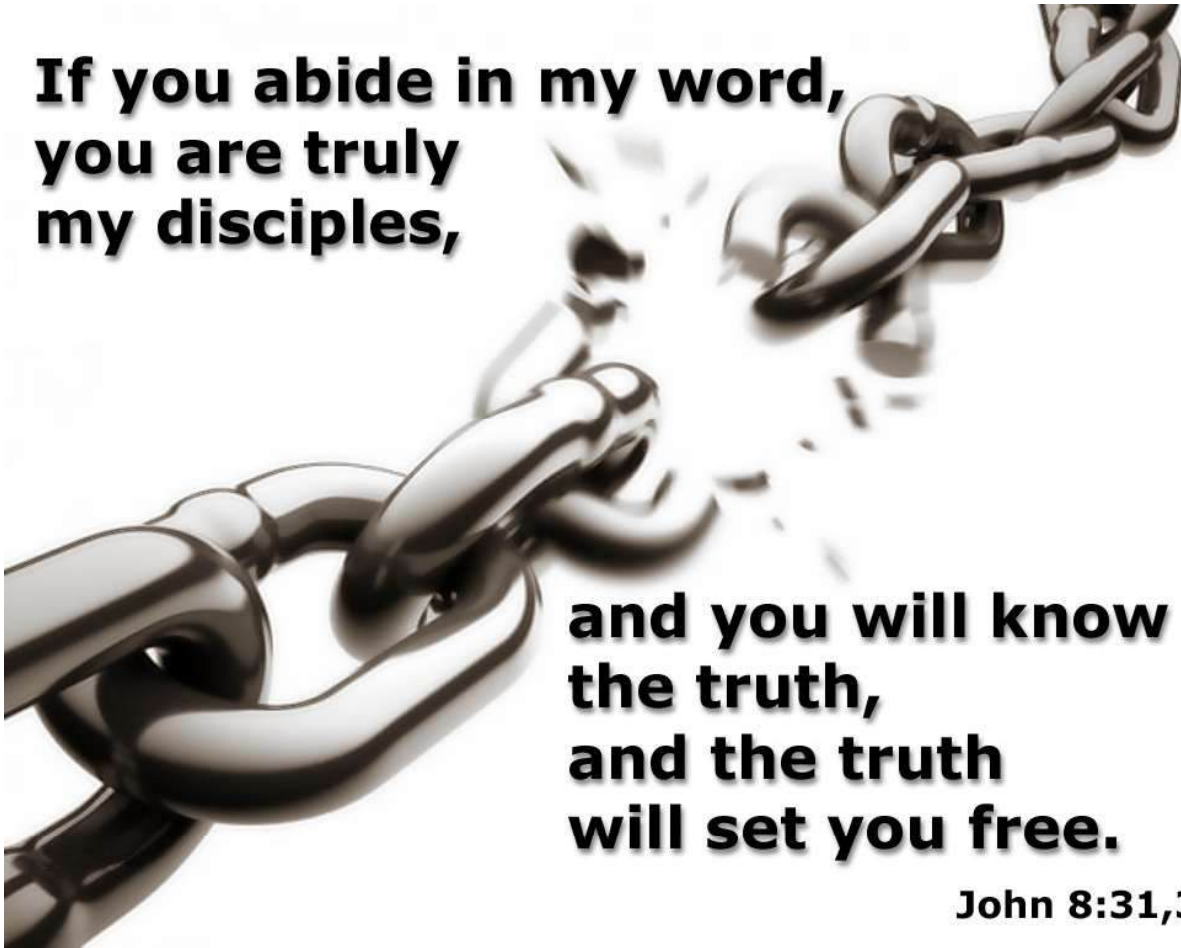


THE WEATHERVANE

Newsletter of the New Church Centre
West Wickham

**If you abide in my word,
you are truly
my disciples,**



**and you will know
the truth,
and the truth
will set you free.**

John 8:31,32



**Autumn Issue
No. 232 September 2026 to November 2026**

True Freedom

Some years ago I came across the following quotation from the Shvetashvatara Upanishads (Hindu sacred writings):

*The Lord of Love holds in his hand the world,
Composed of the changing and the changeless,
The manifest and the unmanifest.
The separate self, not yet aware of the Lord,
Goes after pleasure, only to become
Bound more and more. When it sees the Lord,
There comes an end to its bondage.*

To me this seems to express a common experience we all have when we become so wrapped up in ourselves and our own needs that we lose sight of the Lord in our lives. Our pursuit of our own ambitions and pleasures becomes all demanding and we are 'bound more and more' to this separate and selfish way of life, only aware of 'the separate self'. And yet if we just turn back to the Lord we can find true freedom in following his way and not ours.

Emanuel Swedenborg provides many insights into this aspect of our spiritual growth, showing that true freedom comes not from being apart from the Lord but by seeking to come close to him and follow his way.

The condition however of one who serves the Lord by doing according to His commandments, and by being obedient in that kind of way, is not that of a slave; rather, it is that of one who is free. For perfect freedom consists for a person in being led by the Lord. The Lord breathes the good into the person's will from which his actions spring; and although that good comes from the Lord, the person nevertheless has the feeling that his actions are from himself, that is, he does them in freedom. This freedom exists with all who abide in the Lord; and coupled with it there is indescribable happiness.

Arcana Caelestia 8988

To many people the idea that following the Lord's way brings freedom is incomprehensible because it is contrary to their idea

that freedom involves doing just what they want to do! But we need to see that this is not so. True freedom comes from aligning our lives with the Lord's way, not going off in our own directions. It is the freedom that ultimately allows us to become angels in heaven.

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 8:31-32

The truth will set us free:

- Free from selfish ambition
- Free from jealousy
- Free from the limitations of our past
- Free from bitterness
- Free from the deadening effects of sin
- Free from putting ourselves before others
- Free to put others first

Alan

For instance, if we use our freedom wrongly to think and do evil, we call it freedom; and the opposite, which is thinking what is intrinsically good, we call slavery. Yet this latter is true freedom, and the former is slavery. Again, people who love adultery call adultery freedom, and they call it slavery to be restrained from adultery. They find delight in lasciviousness and discomfort in chastity. People who love power for selfish reasons feel a living delight in that love, a delight that surpasses any other kind of delight. So they call everything associated with that love good and everything that conflicts with it bad, when in fact the opposite is true.

Divine Love and Wisdom 271 extract

Calendar for September

Sun	6	11.00	Worship led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'Thanksgiving and Praise'</i>
Sun	13	11.00	Worship led by David Brooks with the Sacrament of the Holy Supper
Sun	20	11.00	Harvest Celebration led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'The Mustard Seed'</i> Followed by a shared lunch
Sun	27		No Service

Calendar for October

Sun	4	11.00	Worship led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'The Wedding at Cana in Galilee'</i>
Sun	11	11.00	Worship led by David Brooks
Sun	18	11.00	Worship led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'The Father judges no one'</i>
Sun	26		No Service

Psalm 100

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!
Serve the Lord with gladness!
Come into his presence with singing!
Know that the Lord, he is God!
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!
For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures for ever, and
his faithfulness to all generations.*

Calendar for November

Sun	1	11.00	Worship led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'The Seven Churches - Laodicea'</i> [see Revelation 3:14-22]
Sun	8	10.55	Remembrance Sunday Worship led by Alan Misson on the theme <i>'Swords into Ploughshares'</i>
Sun	15	11.00	Worship led by David Brooks Followed by the Quarterly Meeting
Sun	22		No Service

Advanced Notice for December

Sun	6	11.00	Worship led by Alan Misson for Advent on the theme <i>'Morning comes'</i> with the Sacrament of the Holy Supper
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*He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide disputes for many
peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into
ploughshares, and their spears into
pruning-hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against
nation, neither shall they learn war
any more.*

Isaiah 2:4



*One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a
distant goal we seek, but that it is a means by which we
arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through
peaceful means.*

Martin Luther King

In Memory

Hilda Johnson 1934 - 2026

On Wednesday 22nd July, in a Funeral Service and then in a Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving we said farewell to the bodily presence of Hilda Johnson who had passed into full consciousness of the spiritual world on 27th June.

Hilda was born in August 1934 and grew up in Mauritius. Her mother, Hilda-Marie was the daughter of an Irish priest, who renounced the priesthood so that he could marry the beautiful French woman that lived opposite him. He then joined the New Church and Hilda-Marie attended church with him and married the Swiss New Church minister, Charles Nussbaum. She had 4 children with him, Lucienne, Edmund, Alix and Charles. Sadly he died shortly after the birth of Charles. Later Hilda-Marie married Thomas Williams, a Welsh electrical engineer engaged by the government to reorganise the Mauritian phone and electricity networks. They had 5 children - David, Rosemary, Tom, Hilda and Allan.

When Hilda was about 13 the family moved to England. Her father had sadly left them, taking his oldest boy David, so Hilda-Marie and the 4 younger children travelled to England, the children from the earlier marriage already being elsewhere in Europe.

Hilda married Patrick Johnson in August 1959 at the Willesden New Church and lived initially in St. John's Wood with Hilda teaching at a school in Hornsea. Zoe was born in 1963 and although Hilda really wanted lots of children none came along so she and Patrick happily adopted Mandy, Ben and Daniel. Some may find four children rather a handful; but not Hilda. She worked as a part time PE teacher at Zoe's primary school and then started running a playgroup in Finchley New Church.

Hilda loved to be part of a community, the church community and the local community. At the children's schools she joined the PTA and wherever she lived she'd invite the neighbours round and get to know them. She was always reaching out to people, building relationships.

Hilda had a strong faith and the church was always an important part of her life. And throughout her life she attended New Church schools, always eager to learn more about God and about how we can grow spiritually to support and love one another. She often helped look after the children at Conference and Purley Chase schools and she was involved in running the New Church Children's society. And with Patrick she was a committed supporter of the Swedenborg Society.

Once she retired she started to re-engage with her love of movement and dance. She discovered Circle Dancing and attended local classes and the Purley Chase weekends at which she would help lead some of the dances and she ran a Circle Dance group at West Wickham for many years.

Hilda was a wonderful hostess combining excellent cooking skills with a strong desire that all visitors to their house would come away having thoroughly enjoyed their visit. For a number of years she and Patrick hosted a church barbecue at their house in Sanderstead where there seemed to be a constant flow of food for all tastes. Meanwhile Patrick could be seen sitting meditatively in the garden stirring onions in a pot as they gently cooked over some sort of heat.

With Patrick's departure in 2019 and now Hilda's in 2026 the New Church both locally and nationally has lost the physical presence of two remarkable people and they are both greatly missed.

I can positively declare that as soon as a person dies they are in the next life, living as a spirit among spirits, and that then they seem to themselves and to all others there to be altogether like a person in the world, endowed with all the senses, internal and external. I can say too that therefore death of the body is merely a laying aside of such things as had enabled the person to serve and function in the world, and in addition that death itself is a continuation of life, though in another world which is not visible to the eyes of the earthly body but is visible there in light a thousand times brighter than midday light in the world.

Heavenly Secrets 8939

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Looking Forward

After a long hot sunny summer we may well look forward to the cooler and less burnt out shades of autumn with all its colours and changing scenery.

Joel is one of the 12 minor prophets in the Old Testament. It contains no datable references to people or events and as a result it is very uncertain when it was first written down. But within its three chapters you can find these words about autumn at least in some translations:

Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains in righteousness. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before. The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.

Joel 2:23 NIV

As autumn starts to come along we will celebrate Harvest on September 20 and the service will be followed by a shared lunch. The theme for the service will be 'The Mustard Seed'.

