

# Sydney Society Newsletter

Issued by the Sydney Society of the New Church Established in 1875

4 Shirley Road, Roseville, N.S.W. 2069

Church Office phone: (02) 9416 7026

Minister's e-mail : [julian@duckworth.me](mailto:julian@duckworth.me)

On Facebook – Sydney Society of the New Church - Roseville

## *June 2018*

The Faith of the New Church is summarized as follows:

There is one God in whom is the Divine Trinity. He is the Lord God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Saving faith is to believe in Him. Evil actions are not to be done because they are from hell and of hell. Good actions are to be done because they are from God and of God. These are to be done by a person as though they are done by himself, while believing that they are from the Lord working in him and through him.



*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,  
upon them a light has shined.    Isaiah 9:2*

.....  
Our New Church Day Service is on Sunday June 17<sup>th</sup> at 10  
a.m.  
.....

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The Minister of the Sydney Society is Rev. Julian Duckworth and he can be contacted at any time either by telephone (02) 9416 7026/7032 or by a personal visit to 4 Shirley Road, Roseville, for any pastoral help or guidance. Let the Minister know in good time about pastoral concerns with people - including yourself too - so that he can give help where and when it is needed.

## **FROM THE MINISTER**

### **LEAVING OUR CAVE**

We celebrate New Church Day on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Here at Roseville, we will celebrate it on Sunday June 17<sup>th</sup> which happens to be one of our weekends down in Sydney. New Church Day is about us being able to understand our religion, understand its relevance and help to ourselves, about seeing deeper meanings in Bible verses and stories, and about the real nature of heaven and hell as levels of life we choose because we want to be in one or the other. All of these bring more light to us.

Some of our family recently went into some astounding caves in the south of France, full of shapes and forms you never see above ground, and with colourful underground lakes full of mineral deposits. And the way out was through a round opening out into the bright light of day and the lushness of nature. What a relief perhaps.

Whether or not you have ever been into a cave, we can sometimes find ourselves in a cave – in the dark – when we're confused, upset, too self-centred, miserable, afraid, unloving, or however it is for us.

Plato wrote a famous allegory about people in a cave. Here's a short summary: Imagine a cave with three prisoners who are tied up so that all they can look at is the stone wall in front of them. Behind them is a fire and between them and the fire is a raised walkway. People outside the cave walk along this walkway with animals, plants and things on their heads.

When they do this, their shadows are thrown up on the wall in front of the prisoners, who believe the shadows are real things. One of the prisoners escapes and leaves the cave and sees the sun, the trees and the sky. He realises his previous idea of reality was totally wrong, but, when he goes back into the cave and tells the other two prisoners, they do not believe him and they threaten to kill him if he tries to set them free.

It's not hard to get the point of this story. It's about people's differing view of what is real in life. For some it is darkness and fear because that is what it looks like to them. For others it is the discovery of a greater, warmer, brighter, clearer, better reality, even though they have been in the cave so long.

In a word, it is the common appearance of life through which we might trudge, versus the greater world of love, wonder, hope and God, all of which can be our experience or our sense that it is really there. (The prisoners saw the flickering shadows "of something more").

Caves, in several wonderful children's stories, are places where a priceless golden chalice is hidden, or treasure chest waiting to be found. Same idea! In other stories, the cave is an opening to another world by means of which adventurers discover the truths for their lives by overcoming a tyrant king. Same idea!

The Bible uses 'caves' to illustrate quite a few different things: to be places of darkness and ignorance; to be places for refuge and somewhere to hide; and to be places in which to lay loved ones and forefathers to rest. These all have their various meanings for us. It could be as simple as just quietly carrying on with what you have got to do which becomes your refuge when you are not feeling right, and in doing this "cave-like" work, you are brought back to where you need to be.

Isn't it good that God, through geology, has given us caves with their openings which beckon, invite and attract us to go in. But in going in, while we may find treasure beyond imagining, we also need to be able to find our way out again, into the world around us. *Julian*

## ROSEVILLE CHURCH SERVICES IN JUNE (a reminder)

### ANGEL SERVICE (Saturday)

June 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Julian Duckworth
June 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>NO SERVICE</b>
June 16 <sup>th</sup>	Julian Duckworth
June 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>NO SERVICE</b>
June 30 <sup>th</sup>	Julian Duckworth

### SUNDAY SERVICE

\* is the Holy Supper Sunday

*June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Julian Duckworth
June 10 <sup>th</sup>	Michael Chester
June 17 <sup>th</sup>	Julian Duckworth
June 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>NO SERVICE</b>
*July 1 <sup>st</sup>	Julian Duckworth

### FRIENDSHIP GROUP

With Julian and Ruth's move, and their visits back to Roseville, we have decided to change the day the Friendship Group meets, from a Wednesday to a **Friday**. This may make it easier for some others to come and join us!

The next Friendship Group will be on **Friday June 1<sup>st</sup>** beginning with tea/coffee and cake at 10.45 a.m. Julian will talk with us about "the way spaces work in the spiritual world" which is quite a fascinating and absorbing study.

Afterwards we will enjoy having our shared lunch together.

We look forward to seeing you with us.

Glen Hart

### ABOUT OUR MOVE

Most of you know of course that we are moving but some of you might not know much about where we are moving to. So I thought it would be interesting to put you more in the picture. Nearly four years ago, we realised that our property way high on Tamborine Mountain (Gold Coast hinterland) would be a foolish place to retire to, so we sold that and got a pleasant property in Port Macquarie.

It's within walking distance of the city centre, shops etc., and even closer still is a large shopping plaza. And Ruth's thrilled to bits that Aldi is only a couple of minutes away by car!

Our house (9 Catherine Street, Port Macquarie NSW 2444) is on a quiet street, fairly close to Westport Public School so it's a bit more lively at 8.30 a.m. and 3 p.m. The house was "done up" about seven years ago, with new cladding, new roof and some aluminium windows.



It was built in 1968, a bungalow facing north. That means that the back garden gets a good amount of sun. The front garden has been pleasantly landscaped and has a productive grapefruit tree (already sampled).

The three bedrooms are all at the front. The back of the house is a large single area combining living, study (for me), dining and kitchen. Then there is a covered back deck looking over the back garden.

The smallest bedroom will be Ruth's art studio and the piano will be in the study ... or in the piano room where I will also study. There's a workshop behind the garage with loose floorboards. We got a handyman who came along and said to Ruth, "I know you!" They were both on the P & C at Killara High School!

Port Macquarie has a large waterfront with the Hastings River estuary, and lovely beaches down the coast. We look forward to settling in there and regularly coming back down to Sydney which is 4 and ½ hours drive (with a coffee stop) and the two also have air, train and bus services to link them up, several times a day in either direction.

## **STEWARDS AND FLOWERS FOR JUNE**

**Note, this is based on the revised services schedule**

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Steward</b>	<b>Flowers</b>
June 3rd (Sac.)	John Wilson	Jan Primrose
10th	Wayne Kasmar	Glen Hart
17th	Michael Chester	Ruth Duckworth
24th	<b>NO SERVICES</b>	

## **SOCIETY NEWS**

We're living in quite a state of flux at the moment, for obvious reasons. But everything continues while we get busier with dealing with the transition from the Duckworths to the Thompsons. There is some recent progress on the visa front but we'll say more about that when we are sure about the situation.

The manse will begin to have work done on it from June onwards, in various ways. So will the church vestry. There's also a proposal to look at widening the car access to allow two cars to park side by side, but not definite quite yet.

We had a happy Mothers Day service on May 13<sup>th</sup> and quite a sumptuous morning tea afterwards. It's been good to have Rhonda Hall back with us again after recent illness. And David Duckworth, down for the weekend, and Dave Probert too.

The Bible Study group went out for lunch on the last Tuesday it met before finishing. Hopefully it will be able to get going again later in the year, in different ways, who knows? It has been going since 1992 and we have covered virtually everything in the Bible in that time.

Ruth, mainly helped by William but also Zachary and Amelia, and Henry, have put together a large picture about plants and their correspondences, in the Sunday School room. Go and take a look at what they have been doing.



*Swedenborg Association of Australia*

**FRIDAY June 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7.45pm**

at the New Church, 4 Shirley Road, Roseville  
\$5 members, \$7 non-members/concession.



## **Exploring Spiritual Awakening**

**Facilitated by Michael Chester**

During 1743-44 Swedenborg underwent a major spiritual awakening. We are fortunate that he recorded many of his experiences in his *Journal of Dreams*. This is an amazing book that helps us appreciate some of the transformational changes occurring at this time in his life. Dr Jonathan Rose has studied these experiences and classified the most common into 10 categories. This is an interesting take on Swedenborg's transitional period from a famous scientist to an outstanding explorer of spiritual realms. So what was it like to undergo such a big change? What does it feel like and can we use it to recognize similar experiences and changes in ourselves? Tonight we are going to check it out with the help of the video '**Ten early signs of a spiritual awakening**' hosted by Curtis Childs and special guest Dr Jonathan Rose.

There will be opportunity to share your own experiences, comments, and ask questions throughout the presentation. The evening will be fascinating, amusing and practical so we hope you can join us.

*Michael enjoys viewing the videos that Curtis Childs presents on the offthellefteye YouTube channel as they present Swedenborg's insights in a very creative and enjoyable way. This one on **Signs of Spiritual Awakening** is highly rated by him for the excellent coverage of Swedenborg's spiritual experiences between mid-1743 to 1744, benefiting the listener in many ways.*

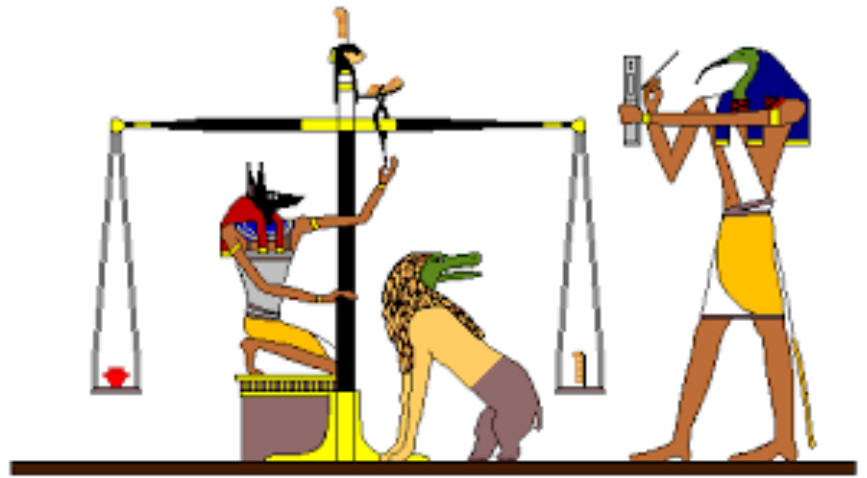
*More SAA events info at [www.swedenborg.com.au/meetings](http://www.swedenborg.com.au/meetings)*



## Swedenborg Centre News Overlap between Swedenborg and Ancient Egypt?

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This Friday night (25th May) will take the Swedenborg Association to visit a special room at Masonic Complex in Petersham (Sydney) to view depictions of Ancient Egypt exquisitely painted on its walls. The



astute masons who designed this room seem to have felt the spiritual significance of the symbols used by the Ancient Egyptians

to remind themselves of potent realities known about our role in the spiritual world. The depicted images are taken from the Scroll of Ani, which was a document found in Thebes in 1888, two hundred years after Swedenborg was born. Ani was a Royal Scribe from the 18th Dynasty (1500—1400 BCE). He was an important and well to do man, being Governor at the Granary at Abydos. The Scroll contained declarations to help him and his wife in their transition to the spiritual world. The spells are guides on how to conduct their natural lives so that they might be well prepared for a successful outcome



in the important transition ceremony that faces everyone on first passing into the spiritual world, namely the ceremony of their heart being 'weighed' against the feather of truth.

In depictions of that important ceremony on which our spiritual fate depends shortly after arrival in that world, we are met by



**Anubis**, master of ceremonies who takes us into the Hall of Double Justice. Anubis is depicted as a jackal-headed creature whose job it is to protect the deceased during their passage into the spirit world. It is Anubis who embalms and thus preserves their remains for safe passage. The Jackal is an expert at burying food so that it stays fresh and when needed is able to expertly sniff out its presence underground and bring it to the surface. He takes care with his sensitivity that the dead person's spirit is fairly judged and so he conducts the process of weighing the heart of the deceased person very carefully, watching it with his highly attuned senses to ensure nothing goes wrong with the process.

Standing by is **Thoth**, who is the Egyptian Ibis-headed representation of wisdom. He sifts through all the material available about a person's life, deeds, thoughts, words and motivations, and carefully sums up and accurately records the result as a measure of the heart's quality. Ibis birds wade through murky waters and with its long curved beak expertly sifts out small morsels of nutritional food from the muddy waters in which the good things are not obvious to plain sight. The Ibis rescues what is useful, what is nourishing and good from that which appears at first obscured. The Ibis-headed god Thoth is the impartial recorder, the Divine scribe, who makes an accurate record of the outcome reached by weighing the heart of the deceased. The heart represents the quality of our love as indicated by the way we have chosen to live our life, when that quality is assessed against the spiritual truth and wisdom which we came to know during our life, to see how well we have lived up to the potential changes we could have brought about by making good use of all that knowledge.

The monster **Ammut** (the devourer of the dead) sits by and carefully awaits Thoth's assessment. Ammut is a concoction of fierce Egyptian creatures with the head of a crocodile, the body of a leopard and the backside of a hippopotamus. A diabolical creature of mixed states, a creature of disorder.

The 'feather of truth' (against which the heart of the dead person is compared) is a symbol of **Ma'at**, who is the goddess or representation of truth, justice, order and harmony. This is a reminder that all creation is governed by the Divine order. At one point in the ceremony the

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trembling soul cries out to his heart not to witness against him: "O heart that was mine, permit me not to be wronged in presence of Osiris."

If Thoth, who is the consort of Ma'at, can record that the two pans of the scales balance, he will say to Osiris that "his heart is true and just." So if the heart (quality of the life lived) 'weighs' the same as the feather, this indicates the person pursued their uses in accordance with the opportunity that was provided for them to live according to Divine order and in accordance with spiritual teachings. Then that spirit is free to enter the Field of Reeds, place of eternal bliss. They are led to it by the redeemer god **Horus** who holds an Ankh (symbol of life). They then live happily among the blessed individuals in this kingdom of **Osiris** who was lord of the dead, lord of the underworld and of rebirth, and the father of Horus. Incidentally, a reed leaf was also the Egyptian hieroglyph for the pronoun 'I, me, my'. The green skin of Osiris symbolizes his association with re-birth and resurrection. If the heart of the person is heavy with sin and darkness because that person refused to examine their life and struggle against those things which are in disharmony with Divine order, then their heart is thrown to the daemon Ammut, who gobbles it up and destroys their spirit a blessed heavenly afterlife. Food for thought?

The showpiece of the Masonic Order, the Egyptian Room, was originally incorporated in 1927 in the Royal Arch Temple built in College Street in Sydney. When that building was sold in the 1960's, before it was demolished, the focal point of that building, the Egyptian Room and its frieze was dismantled and stored until re-erected in 1977 at the present site, the new Royal Arch centre at Petersham. We thank the masons for conducting this tour especially for us.

If you wish to join us, please advise Joe Vandermeer beforehand on (02) 9888 1066 or via [joe@swedenborg.com.au](mailto:joe@swedenborg.com.au) and then meet us at 25 New Canterbury Road, Petersham at 7:15pm ready for our expert tour guide to take us inside at 7:30pm.

## SNIPPETS FROM THE SCRAPBOOK

*Your talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God.* - Leo Buscaglia

I love you the more in that I believe you had liked me for my own sake and for nothing else. - John Keats, poet

*Tell me, and I forget. Teach me, and I remember. Involve me, and then I learn.* - Benjamin Franklin

Wine is bottled poetry. - Robert Louis Stevenson

*If you love somebody, let them go, for if they return, they were always yours. And if they don't, they never were.* - Khalil Gibran

I've never wanted to be a lady who lunches; I've always wanted to be a woman who works. - Meghan Markle

## WORDS ABOUT DEMENTIA by Rachael Wonderlin

Found in Rochester (UK) Aged Care Newsletter



**If I get dementia,** I want my friends and family to embrace my reality

**If I get dementia,** I don't want to be treated like a child. Talk to me like the adult that I am.

**If I get dementia,** I still want to enjoy the things that I've always

enjoyed. Help me find a way to exercise, read, and visit with friends.

**If I get dementia,** ask me to tell you a story from my past. If I get dementia, and I become agitated, take the time to figure out what is bothering me.

**If I get dementia,** treat me the way that you would want to be treated.

**If I get dementia,** make sure that there are plenty of snacks for me in the house. Even now if I don't eat I get angry, and if I have dementia, I

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may have trouble explaining what I need.

**If I get dementia,** don't talk about me as if I'm not in the room.

**If I get dementia,** don't feel guilty if you cannot care for me 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It's not your fault, and you've done your best. Find someone who can help you, or choose a great new place for me to live.

**If I get dementia,** and I live in a dementia care community, please visit me often.

**If I get dementia,** don't act frustrated if I mix up names, events, or places. Take a deep breath. It's not my fault.

**If I get dementia,** make sure I always have my favourite music playing within earshot.

**If I get dementia,** and I like to pick up items and carry them around, help me return those items to their original places.

**If I get dementia,** don't exclude me from parties and family gatherings.

**If I get dementia,** know that I still like receiving hugs or handshakes.

**If I get dementia,** remember that I am still the person you know and love.

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### FINAL FABLE

In the Sultan's city all the bells are ringing. One cries, "Invasion! Flee for your life!" Parents grab their children and run. The shopkeepers close up and leave. The beggars all hobble away as fast as they can. The street cleaner throws down his broom and disappears. A nun finds a hill to climb up. The peanut seller makes himself scarce. So when the Sultan appears on the palace balcony holding his new-born royal son and heir, there is no crowd to celebrate the happy event.