

## January 2017 News & Notes

### Passing of Bill Hall

Regular readers of this newsletter will if nothing else know Bill Hall's name, as he was a regular contributor. In fact, I still have a few short articles of his on file that I haven't published yet. However, before Bill retired and relocated up to Rockhampton Queensland, he was a regular here in Hurstville. He loved the New Church, and you could see the strong respect he had for various other New Church authors.

His passing was sudden and unexpected, for better or for worse. Apparently there is still work to be done to determine the exact cause of death, but likely a heart attack. He was into his 80's so he lived a full life, and so while we'll miss hearing from him and reading his newsletter articles, overall it is a time to rejoice for Bill and his new life. I suspect he's enjoying seeing all the things of the next life that he spent so much time studying.

### Open House with Bishop Brian Keith

Brian and his wife Gretchen will be landing in Sydney on the 30<sup>th</sup> of December, and attending camp with us on 1-7 January. They depart for Queensland on the 10<sup>th</sup>, so while those of us who are going to camp will have plenty of opportunity to meet with them, there isn't as much for the non-campers. As such we're going to have an open house on the evening of **Monday 9 January**. **The plan is to have a dinner at 7pm**, but this is a social event and a time to ask any questions of the Bishop that may be on your mind. Catering for this event has yet to be finalized, but it would be helpful if you could **RSVP to Todd** – [todd@hurstvillenewchurch.com](mailto:todd@hurstvillenewchurch.com) – if you plan to attend.

### More Donated to Kogarah Store House

This Christmas season we had asked that people bring donations that we would give to the Exodus Foundation. Thankfully, a lot of you did bring donations and so we had a pretty strong collection of items to give away. However, as it turns out the Exodus Foundation has changed their rules as to what they are willing to accept, and have also stopped doing pick ups of donations. This made it rather impractical for us to donate to them this year, so we decided to give once again to one of our favourite local charities: Kogarah Store House. While it would have been nice in a way to spread the giving around, at the end of the day there's something also nice about continuing to support the needs of the local community. We all know it is expensive to live around here, so giving a local person a hand is a good thing.

### Mindful Communication Challenge

The *Mindful Communication Challenge* is the latest spiritual growth program offered by the General Church. It's a five-week program that we'll be starting on 5 February, with our usual Monday night discussion group. There may be a Sunday option offered as well if there's enough interest. Here's the description of the program:

Is it true? Kind? Useful?

Sometimes it's hard to know how to share ourselves authentically. The *Mindful Communication Challenge* offers structure to help us improve how we connect with each other. Paying attention to how our words, tone, and actions affect others, and asking ourselves "Is this true? Kind? Useful?" can help us speak from the heart. These tools help us weed out any thoughts and feelings not grounded in reality or love, and helps us dig beneath words to see our common humanity, with our deeper, universal needs.

Since true connection feels heavenly, *Mindful Communication Challenge* is grounded in symbolism from various Parables found in the New Testament that explore "The kingdom of heaven" as well as descriptions of what a heavenly community looks like from the works by philosopher and theologian Emanuel Swedenborg.

Join us as we support each other on a journey of true self-expression, and help nourish connections with those we love in our lives. *Because what could be more beneficial in the long run?*

**Birthdays** – Margaret Heldon (9<sup>th</sup>), Thomas O'Brien (15<sup>th</sup>), Kerry Lockhart (24<sup>th</sup>), Bronwynn O'Brien (25<sup>th</sup>), Kaye Macfarlane (30<sup>th</sup>)