

*Religion is of life, and the life of religion is to do what is good  
(Doctrine of Life 8)*

**The New Church** is an international organization of people striving to improve their conscious relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ, the one God who rules heaven and earth.

We extend a warm welcome to everyone, and invite you to take what you like and return it freely. We use the Bible and the Heavenly Doctrine revealed by the Lord and published by Emanuel Swedenborg to guide us in our lives, especially in our relationships. We freely share our love and understanding with each other, and try to give one another support in our spiritual journeys.

Temporarily the Hurstville Society is without a **Pastor**. During this period the Society will be served by lay leaders and visiting preachers.

**Worship Services** are held each Sunday at 10:00 AM except the first Sunday of each month. But please check the calendar for each month in case of changes.

**Young People's Group** is held once a month in conjunction with the Young People's Group at the New Church at 2 Shirley St, Roseville.

**A tea and social** in conjunction with **discussion** meets on one Friday of each month (January excepted) beginning at 7 00 pm. This will be conducted by visiting ministers when available or lay led as appropriate. Please check the calendar for the month for the exact date.

**The Swedenborg Bookroom**, at 22 Dudley Street, Penshurst, contains books by and about Emanuel Swedenborg for sale or loan. It is open by appointment.

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<http://www.newchurch.org.au/hurstville>  
Call or come at anytime.

## The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society August 2011



### Welcome to Rev Glenn and Mary Alden

Who would have thought that Glenn and Mary Alden would become world travellers in their retirement? But here we are, 27 July 2011, standing by the Sydney harbour in Australia! Do we look happy or what! We thank you for making it possible for us to come here and be a part for your church community for the next several months.

I was born in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, USA, the first of twelve children born to John Hyde Alden of Bryn Athyn Pennsylvania and Joan McDonald of Toronto Canada. My grandfather was Karl Richardson Alden, a new church minister, principle of the Boys School of the Academy of the New Church, ardent pastor, and itinerant evangelist.

I met Mary at the Academy schools in Bryn Athyn PA in 1965, and we married in August of 1969. We have five grown children, four grandchildren, three step grandchildren, and one more grandchild expected. Four of our children live in Canada and one son lives with us in Arizona along with his wife and daughter.

Mary graduated from Albert Einstein Medical Center in 1971 with a diploma in Nursing, and was licensed as a Registered Nurse. She returned to school for her Bachelor of Science Nursing at the University of Northern British Columbia. She has practiced nursing in a variety of incarnations, and is currently working part time as a clinical instructor and also quality analyst.

I graduated from the Academy of the New Church Theological School in 1974, and along with Mary and our first two children, took an assignment to serve the New Church society in Miami, Florida. I also made monthly trips around the state of Florida, serving groups and individual families. Two more children were born in Florida. In 1981 we were called to serve the Connecticut Circle, with monthly traveling around New England. Shortly after the move to Connecticut our last child was born.

In 1986 we were called to serve in Northwest Canada. This was a very hard decision for us. We loved Connecticut and felt we had much undone work, but we felt a very strong pull to the Canadian Northwest, having followed the travels of my grandfather Karl Alden in the stories he told in New Church Life magazine about his journeys through western Canada in the 1940s. Having only known a New church which appeals to upper middle educated class of people, we were drawn to serving a congregation that was made up largely of people who had little formal education and worked in farming, truck driving, and other working class occupations, but nevertheless had a deep love and understanding of the teachings of the New Church. I felt called especially to discover how the New Church doctrines could speak to everyman. We lived in Dawson Creek, British Columbia for 15 years. It was a wonderful place to raise our children, and experience rural life. We bought a small farm, raised cattle and horses, and I worked for three winters logging in the Canadian bush. During those years I served much of Western Canada, visiting Regina Saskatchewan, Calgary, Edmonton, and Oyen Alberta, as well Prince George BC and occasionally

bathroom has had a makeover with a new vanity, new paint job and various other bath and shower fittings installed. The ugly toilet has also been replaced and the room repainted. Credit needs to go to many people but special mention to **Ralph Horner** for a superhuman effort. Also credit to **Owen Heldon** and **Huiling Sun** (painting) and **Mike** and **Kerry Lockhart** for project managing and supplying materials at cost.

## News Notes

A warm welcome to **Rev Glenn** and **Mary Alden** took place on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> July after church with a Pot Luck lunch. Although the welcome was warm Sydney's weather in the first few days tried to drown them in 8 inches of rain. Fortunately the weather, one week later is now back to glorious.

It is a pleasure to be able to report the birth of a couple of babies. **Nick** and **Naomi Smith** are proud parents of a new baby boy **Harper Walid**. Born July 22<sup>nd</sup> he weighed in at a healthy 8.25 pounds and has lots of dark hair.

More good news. A third daughter for **Darren & Kate Macfarlane**, **Amy Sophia** born 20 July. Both mother and bub are doing well.

**Stuart Heldon** has relocated to Melbourne, to manage the water tank business there. His new address is 3/10 Manton Lane, Melbourne 3000.

Hot off the Facebook Press. **Murray Heldon** says "Found out how much a Mercedes E-Class can crumple and still be drive-able - Indonesian Limo driver might be looking for a new job tomorrow though. I was sitting in the back reading the paper and we ran into the vehicle in front with no braking. I was wearing a seatbelt and it was a Mercedes, so no damage to me personally, but the front of the Merc was about 18" shorter afterwards."

## Birthdays

Happy Birthday to **Norm Heldon** (1<sup>st</sup>), **Grace Horner & Emily Kermond** (7<sup>th</sup>), **Rhonda Hall** (12<sup>th</sup>), **Rebekah Horner** (17<sup>th</sup>), **Larah Walsh** (21<sup>st</sup>), **Graeme McLeay** (22<sup>nd</sup>), and **Ralph Horner** (30<sup>th</sup>)

## Living Courageously

Following a discussion at the doctrinal class on 29<sup>th</sup> July it was decided to embark on another of the Journey programs which we have done successfully in the past. To whet your appetite here is a brief description from the New Church website.

"Living Courageously" is a seven (7) week program designed to assist you in applying God's teachings to your everyday life. Living Courageously explores the Elijah story of the Old Testament, an ancient tale of heroism and adventure. Again and again, Elijah stands against evil when his downfall seems certain – and yet again and again, the Lord pulls him through and helps him re-establish the worship of Jehovah in Israel. Elijah's story is our own. His strengths are ours, and so are his weaknesses. Each time the Lord gives Elijah a miracle, it tells of a miracle He performs in our lives, allowing us to turn from selfishness and find the courage to transform our spiritual lives and prepare for heaven.

As with the "Pause" program **Huiling Sun Cooper** has kindly offered to host the program at her place at **15 Rosemont Avenue, Mortdale**. Also as previously the meeting time is **8 pm** and the program will begin on **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August**. Workbooks will be distributed early in the week prior.

## Services for August

Please note that now that we have Rev Glenn Alden with us there will be church each Sunday in August. Starting on 31<sup>st</sup> July and running for 5 weeks Glenn will be delivering a series on **The Lord's Prayer**. When we get to the topic of "Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread" on 14th August there will be a Holy Supper service.

## Renovations in the Manse

The Property Trust went into a flurry of frenzied activity in the two weeks prior to the arrival of Rev Glenn and Mary Alden. The kitchen has been repainted and a new stove, dishwasher, sink and counter tops installed. The

Vancouver and parts of Southern BC.

It was in Dawson Creek that Mary was able to realize her lifelong dream of owning horses. We purchased our first pony for the kids there 25 years ago. From being totally ignorant about the reality of all practical matters equine, we went on to breed and raise Morgan horses. Mary is a student of Natural Horsemanship, the Parelli method, and has retained her love of riding, training, and a small amount of teaching horsemanship although we no longer own a stallion or do any breeding. We still own 5 horses and Mary hopes to find some means of being around horses here in Australia. See her (not very recently updated) website [www.dawnsongmorganranch.com](http://www.dawnsongmorganranch.com).

Our last ten years have been in Tucson Arizona at Sunrise Chapel. I was Rev. Frank Rose's assistant pastor there for two years and then served as pastor for the last eight. My retirement was accomplished on July 17 when Rev. Nathan Gladish was officially installed as pastor of Sunrise Chapel. See [www.sunrisechapel.org](http://www.sunrisechapel.org) for a picture of the event. At Sunrise Chapel I especially enjoyed learning how small groups enrich and strengthen our individual spiritual growth and sense of community; and how the church as both physical property and program centre, can become a centre for spiritual seekers in the community, and provide a sense of home or peace for many who may never become members. I believe we have that potential in Hurstville New Church as well and look forward to the future here with you.

## A Favourite Teaching – People Of All Faiths Can Be Saved!

I have observed over the years as a pastor that one of the teachings of the New Church that people embrace or rejoice about are the teachings of the Writings of the New Church about how the Lord saves people of every religion.

Many people who identify themselves as "searching" or "looking for a church" also describe themselves as "recovering" from their old faith or dogma. They seem to be saying that in their former church they were judged, found wanting, or found themselves unacceptable either to the church or the church's idea of God. Even if they were living an externally

moral or apparently good life; if they had questions or doubts about their faith they were judged as somehow not faithful. These people rejoice when they come to a service in the New Church and are told that God loves everyone, does not judge anyone or condemn them, and in fact cannot even look on them with a frown, as it says in True Christianity # 56:

*“You can see how insane people are who think that God can condemn anyone, curse anyone, throw anyone into hell, predestine anyone's soul to eternal death, avenge wrongs, or rage against or punish anyone. People are even more insane if they actually believe this, let alone teach it. In reality, God cannot turn away from us or even look at us with a frown. To do any such thing would be against his essence, and what is against his essence is against himself.”*

One of the places in the Writings that teaches that all people can be saved, is responding to the attack on God, raised by materialists, that there are so many and varied forms of religion, even what Christians would label as pagan or idolatry. True Christianity states that the materialists just don't understand the secrets of heaven and the way the Lord works to draw people to Himself in freedom. It really doesn't matter the quality of a person's initial beliefs, for as soon as a person opens him or herself up to God and so becomes a willing follower, the Lord can begin to lead them to Himself, and refine their faith as they strive to do His will as they understand it. We read in #254:

*“Once a religion has taken root, the Lord leads its people by the laws and principles of that religion. Further, the Lord makes sure that in every religion there are laws like those of the Ten Commandments.”*

I once heard a Christian say that the problem with the New Church was that we had no incentive to save others, or to reach out and share our faith, because we believe that God saves them anyway, even if they don't know Him as the Lord. He said that because he believes those not of his faith are going to hell he, is strongly motivated to try and save them.

In my experience, however, I am not really less motivated about helping others unless I am complacent about my own spirituality. If I am only intellectually involved with my faith, I might comfortably believe that I am

with the physical world or connecting anything Divine with the universe. Sylvia shows in his book how Swedenborg's ideas makes these connections. Another notable event at the Assembly was the availability of the Kempton Project Bible. This comprises the Old and New Testament Word translated from the original languages by New Church scholars over a period of 20 years. It is a large, heavy book with a red cover and "The Word" printed on its spine. The pages are sturdy and the text is easy to read. It costs \$25 and postage from USA is \$45 to outside USA locations.

## A Few Thoughts on The Assembly

by Angela Heldon

I would like to thank Grandpa, **Norman Heldon**, with all my heart for giving me the incredibly special, invaluable experience of attending the 2011 General Church Assembly in Bryn Athyn. Also thanks to my Uncle and Aunt, **Brian and Claudia Horner**, for being such generous hosts.

Four days of being filled up with the Lord's love through His Word, instrumented by a wonderful variety of presenters, whether it was giving worship, helping together in the College Garden or discussing the nature of correspondences, the different presenters from all around the world facilitated the space for coming together in the name of the Lord, creating unity in our hearts and minds.

I loved spending time with everyone, meeting new friends and catching up with ones I already knew.

I got so much out of my time in Bryn Athyn I can't even start to express it. Two things I gained and keep coming back to, which I will leave with you:

Awareness – using the Lord's truths to understand the nature of my mind

Gratitude – loving life is loving the Lord.

I was very impressed with the new buildings that have appeared on campus since our last visit in 2005. Students now have a Swedenborg Library, the Mitchell Performing Arts Centre, ANC Dining Hall facility, the Doering Science Centre, Brickman Student Life Centre and several others. Together with ample playing ovals the whole campus makes a very good impression. For the period of the Assembly the organisers had brought in a number of golf buggies and small buses to carry people around to the various venues if needed and take people home at the end of the day.

Before this report gets too long let me mention the book that I stumbled on at the cathedral book room titled "Proving God" by Edward F. Sylvia and which I found difficult to put down. Its sub-title is "Swedenborg's Remarkable Quest for the Quantum Fingerprints of Love". It is a remarkable book because the author starts with the premise that Love is the primal substance in the sense that it is the fundamental law-giving and ultimate creative, formative substance of the universe.

He draws on hitherto neglected areas of Swedenborg's scientific works and most notably his Doctrine of Forms and shows how Swedenborg's reflections on God's creative process gave him an understanding of how the universe works that put Swedenborg far, far in advance of the thinking of his day and puts his ideas up there with today's world class physicists and cosmologists. In short Sylvia starts from a spiritual premise and derives from it, using Swedenborg's Word, compatible scientific ideas, a better understanding of the laws of nature and physical processes. Along the way he points out some flaws in the thinking of some modern day scientists, such as the inability of the two pillars of modern physics, general relativity theory and quantum mechanics, to support a unified universe.

The plane flight home passed relatively quickly because I was absorbed in reading this book. There are some difficult passages but it is quite a readable book. Reuben Bell says it is an important book and George Dole says that it engages with the "improbable symbiosis of complexity and coherence that is characteristic of both our universe and our minds". Physicist Dr Ian J. Thompson says Swedenborg's ideas as related by Sylvia certainly appear to be relevant to contemporary problems such as connecting general relativity with quantum mechanics, connecting minds

better than others because I have the truth. But as soon as I start to actually follow the Lords leading, and try to identify and repent of my evils and especially when I try to make amends or undo harm that I have done, I begin to become aware of the Lord's grace or mercy toward me. I stop feeling better than, and I begin to want to share the liberating truths that I have found with others. To the degree that I am coming from this place of humility, I become able to reach others in a way that is not shaming or judgmental. I suspect that is why along the way I have found people who rejoice that the New Church does not judge them and instead invites them to begin a spiritual journey that is really between themselves and the Lord.

In the coming months I hope to present some other "Favourite Teachings" of mine. If you have a favourite teaching to share I am sure we can find room to print it. Send it to me at [glenn@sunrisechapel.org](mailto:glenn@sunrisechapel.org).

## **The Other Half**

from Mary Alden

One of the ways my journey in life has been different than I expected it to be is that my life has been "out in the world". The culture of expectation in Bryn Athyn for the wife of a theologian in the 1970s was that we would be living in a New Church society and we would have New Church neighbours, that our children would go to New Church schools, that all or most of our social life would be with New Church people. I also assumed that I would be a full time mother and minister's wife and that I would not return to my profession of nursing which I had been practicing with a real sense of usefulness for three years.

The reality: The only time I had a New Church neighbour was for several years in Canada when our lands adjoined but the walk from my driveway to theirs was over a kilometre. My oldest son and daughter went to the Academy for a year each, one in high school and one in college, but they were several thousand miles from home and in a culture that felt alien to them. Unfortunately, neither found that it was a positive experience for them. I have enjoyed a social life both with New Church people and those

not of the New Church, but mostly because of circumstances with those not of the New Church. After two years of not working outside the home, I returned to nursing practice being led all along to different and varied types of useful service that I have truly enjoyed.

The teachings lead me to conclude nothing less than that this has all been in providence. The Lord has surprised me throughout all of this to learn that there is so much good “out in the world”. I will share two examples.

My current job supervisor is not a person who is easy to get to know. She readily admits that she is not “touchy feely” so I have no idea if she has a religion or belief in God or not. I have found it difficult at times to work with some of my co workers whom she also supervises. One has had a difficult past and is quite rigid in her style. I was discouraged and frankly disparaging of her due to my attempts to mentor her in a certain project. My supervisor asked me to be more open minded and look at her abilities more positively. She told me she felt it was important to value this other woman’s talents for what they were, that she was making a positive contribution. Which one of us was living the angelic example of only seeing the good in others? My supervisor has also encouraged me when I felt I was failing and wanted to quit, and has most recently helped me to see that I have value and she would like me to continue working for her in any way that I am able.

I knew a man in Dawson Creek BC for many years and he became a friend. As a visiting nurse I took care of his father when he was recovering from serious surgery. My friend’s daughter was severely mentally and physically handicapped and she was also often on our case load. I only got to know my friend shortly after his daughter died. I learned from him how much of a blow this had been to him and how much he truly loved her even though her existence was at a vegetative level. He talked about how sad he was about the fact that he had not been a good father and that his marriage had broken up due to his drinking. Sober now and making amends for his past wrongs, he wished he could believe in God. I watched my friend nurture and love others and perform his life sincerely, justly, and faithfully. I am happy to say that when I visited Dawson Creek a few years ago, my friend had found God and was baptized and active in the Baptist church. Even though he is

in what we would consider a “faith alone” religion, I see him practice the life of self examination, repentance, turning to the Lord, and living a life of useful service.

I am so grateful for this life that has been different than the one I expected. It has helped me to see the Lord’s hand working in my life and the life of people everywhere.

## **General Church Assembly, Bryn Athyn 23 - 26 June 2011**

by Philip Richards

Eleanor and I arrived back in Canberra at 9.30 am Wed 29 June and a neighbour met us at the airport and brought us home. The General Church Assembly is held every 5 years or so, and this year it was held at Bryn Athyn college campus about 17 miles from Philadelphia. It is an opportunity for attendees from all over the world to hear what is happening in the General Church from the Bishop and others, to receive teaching from New Church scholars on a range of religious subjects and to enjoy worship services, workshops and social events. Six hundred plus people attended the Assembly and at the registration desk I was told that there were 111 ministers and 70 minister's wives in attendance. Other attendees from Australia/NZ were Brian and Gaye Heldon, Angela Heldon [Barry and Edith Rabone with their son Duncan] and Rev Dick Keyworth. It was marvellous to catch up again with old friends.

The Assembly itself was overall a success from my point of view with the highlights of the Assembly being the chance to ask questions at the coffee with the bishops session, the "conversation" session hosted by Rev Grant Schnarr, Rev Ray Silverman and Rev Dr Thane Glenn relating their experiences in teaching religion 101, the two Peter Buss sessions, the "Healing the Nations" plenary session, and "the Changing face of the Lord" by Rev Dr Andrew Dibb. Andrew Dibb stole the show for me with a tour de force presentation which went through the whole Book of Revelation explaining the spiritual sense of John's visions, closely followed by the Healing of the Nations.