



Hornsby Uniting Church - News for May 18, 2025

Our Vision: To grow together in Christ and share His grace with the Hornsby Community

Tipping Point - Acts 11:1-18

Peter has surprised, perhaps even shocked himself into eating with Gentiles and seeing the Spirit of God given to those who were once excluded. God sent a vision of unclean food made clean and Peter experienced a people once excluded and rejected now brought home and welcomed in. **Acts 11:1-18** is the second telling of the story of Peter and Cornelius, but this is the more personal tale as seen through the eyes of Peter. We have read in the previous chapter the narrative of the events but now that the heady experience is past, now that the visions and strange events are behind him, Peter is back in Jerusalem in the company of the circumcised and now is to answer for his breach of the sacred rules by which he has so far lived.



The major points of contention are around circumcision and table fellowship. That Peter ate with the uncircumcised is never spelled out but must be assumed from the fact that he spent days in their company. He tells the story from his perspective, beginning with his own vision. Told by Peter it is a vivid tale of a sheet brought close to him with the most unclean of creatures, even beasts of prey upon it. He defends himself as one appalled by the notion that he would suddenly eat that which is unclean.

Peter's defence includes the fact that he was not alone in the home of the Gentile but was one of seven brothers. He has been invited there because Cornelius had a vision that, through Peter, he and his household might be saved; and just as the Jerusalem Jews had received the Holy Spirit so Peter saw the very same gifts being bestowed upon this household. Peter could see so clearly the hand of God at work and to resist the notion of including the Gentiles would be to resist the work and desires of God and how could he and how could they? Such a good defence; such a well set out and detailed analysis of the events left the circumcised convinced. Not that there wouldn't be further arguments to follow and it would take time for Jew and Gentile converts to live in harmony but a start had been made. God included the Gentiles in the gift of repentance and new life and this process would not be stopped.

Revelation 21:1-6 reveals the new heaven and the new earth and the possibility that things as we know them may change, fade, and pass away. This is the God who does new things, who transforms the world and is able to create life where once there was death and mourning. In leaving his earthly life, Jesus in John 13:31-35, calls on his followers to love one another. It is a universal message, one that is inclusive and life changing. Love one another without restriction and without condition for this is the way in which people will know the disciples of Jesus. The texts for this week point to a message of inclusion, of a God who goes beyond human set boundaries and practice. God has done, and still does, new things in our midst. God seeks individuals and communities willing to cross thresholds so God's way might "spread like wildfire." In what new ways might Jesus' command to love take shape and spread?

The Sydney Senal congregation's **Annual Bazaar** will be held on Saturday 24 May from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. Make a morning of it and drop by the Asquith markets as well !

Tomorrow, May 18, we welcome speaker **Tony Jones** from Normanhurst Christian Education.

The Taverner Consort of Voices

Directed by Julie Blewitt and Bradley Gilchrist
Singing to Celebrate!

Highlights from our 50 years of making music
Favourite works by John Taverner, Thomas Tompkins,
William Byrd, Colin Brumby, Gabriel Faure, Ola Gjeilo,
Paul Jarman, Eric Whitacre, W.A. Mozart, J.C. Bach
New Venue Newington College Chapel
200 Stanmore Road, Stanmore

Sunday 25 May 2025 at 3 pm

After the concert, please join us for afternoon tea!

TICKETS - <https://trybooking.com/1376598>

Adults/Seniors - \$35 / Pensioners/Students - \$25 / Carers and children under 12 - free



IN PRAYER

Loving God, we are in awe
of how you make all things new:
even in the midst of humdrum and everyday,
you bring forth new life.
Even when we think we know the answers,
you bring fresh questions.
Even when we are unsure of tomorrow,
you bring new hope and promises.
May we respond with joy
at the way in which you make all things new.



Easter is a great tipping point, O God,
and nothing will ever be the same again.

As Easter people, may we see, feel, understand, and explore things in new and challenging ways.

Where people are crying, mourning, or in pain, may we offer comfort and support, an understanding heart and a helpful voice.

Where people feel lost and alone, abandoned by people, or even by you, may we find ways to show that you, our loving God, are never far away, that you dwell forever in our very midst.

To those who are uncertain about tomorrow, may we find ways to offer new hope, to shine new light, and to remind a hurting world that your love is so great you sent Jesus to live among us, and despite all we tried to do in anger and misunderstanding you brought Christ back into our world and into our lives.

Help us live as Easter People, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Though we are many,
Christ makes us one.

Though we are broken,
Christ makes us whole.

Though we stand divided,
Christ draws all things together both in heaven and on earth.