



# CONTACT

Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting  
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

26 March 2023



**From Anne Threlfo**

Today's gospel reading is the story of the raising of Lazarus. My earliest Sunday School awareness of this story is the fact that it contains the shortest verse in the bible, John 11: 35, "Jesus wept." The raising of Lazarus has also come to be known in common vernacular as a metaphor for a spectacular and unexpected return. The most well-known example is John Howard's estimation of his political comeback as being like "Lazarus with a triple by-pass". The rest is history, and Howard called his autobiography "Lazarus Rising."

Lazarus's rising was somewhat more miraculous than that of John Howard's, but was Lazarus resuscitated or resurrected? Lazarus and his sisters were close to Jesus, and as their brother's life was ebbing away, the women sent word to their friend, hoping that Jesus would heal Lazarus. They knew Jesus well enough to know that he loved them, and that anything was possible. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been dead for several days, but even in her grief and sadness, Martha went to meet Jesus knowing that her brother would be resurrected, but Jesus had something more immediate in mind and ordered his friend to come out of the tomb. Lazarus emerged, and was returned to his family and friends to great rejoicing from everyone. Well, everyone but the Pharisees!

Lazarus's life was restored to him. Everyone recognised him, and he carried on his life; a life from which he had to die again. In some ways his circumstances are not unique. Medical advances have seen many people who have been clinically dead brought back to life, to health, and to their former lives: a resuscitation, or restoration.

Let's fast forward a few weeks when we will hear about two of Jesus's disciples walking on the road to Emmaus. They are chatting away about the astonishing happenings of the recent past when a stranger catches up to them and walks alongside. They recount events to this curious stranger and invite him to share a meal and rest with them for the night. As the stranger breaks bread at the table there is a flash of recognition and they realise they have been in the company of Jesus all day without knowing.

Jesus's new life, his transformed and resurrected life looks quite different from his former life. Unlike Lazarus, Jesus didn't get his old life back. He received a new life, a richer life, a life in complete harmony with God, and one from which he would not have to die again.

So, what does this comparison between a resurrected and a resuscitated life have to say to you and I, here and now? Am I living a life that is open to transformation and resurrection? Or a life which is looking for restoration and resuscitation? Or a little of both?

# DIARY

## **Thursday 23 March**

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square  
1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

## **Friday 24 March**

10.00am Ribbon flower assembly at Charlestown Uniting Church



## **Sunday 26 March** – Lent 5

9.00am **Worship Service** – Leader Anne Threlfo, Preacher – PRC  
*Ezekiel 37:1-14, Psalm 130, Romans 8:6-11, John 11:1-45*

## **Tuesday 28 March**

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie  
12.00pm Garden Suburb Ladies Fellowship  
3.30pm Worship Team Meeting at **36 James St, Teralba**

## **Thursday 30 March**

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square  
1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

## **Sunday 2 April** – Palm Sunday

9.00am Worship Service and Baptism  
Leader & Preacher – Rev Tom Stuart  
**with Children's Corner**  
*Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Philippians 2:5-11, Matthew 21:1-11*



## **Monday 3 April**

10.00am Pastoral Care Visit to Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility  
7.00pm Holy Week reflection at Hamilton Uniting Church – led by Rev Tom Stuart & team

## **Tuesday 4 April**

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie  
7.00pm Holy Week reflection at Hamilton Uniting Church – led by Rev Garry Derkenne

## **Wednesday 5 April**

7.00pm Holy Week reflection at Hamilton Uniting Church – led by Rev Rob Hanks

## **Thursday 6 April**

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown  
4.30pm Maundy Thursday Service at Garden Suburb Uniting Church

## **Friday 7 April**

9.00am Good Friday Service at Charlestown Uniting Church



## **Sunday 9 April** – EASTER DAY

9.00am **Worship Service including Holy Communion** – Leader & Preacher – Rev Tom Stuart  
*Acts 10:34-43, Psalm 118:1-2, Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:1-18*

**The Autumn edition of Insights  
available this week**



# THE PRAYER PAGE

*And so I urge you: carry on an ongoing conversation with God about the daily stuff of life, a little like Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof. For now, do not worry about 'proper' praying, just talk to God."*  
*Richard J. Foster*



## Pastoral Prayer Points

- \* Jacqueline's husband Bob
- \* Peter Ferguson, in hospital recovering from surgery
- \* Teegan
- \* Isabella – in hospital following knee operation
- \* Eileen Dunn
- \* Glenn, Donna and girls
- \* Sue and Warren
- \* Cat and Ezra
- \* Enid Gaynor
- \* Gloria and John Booth
- \* Tony and Nan
- \* Mert and Pam
- \* Judith and family
- \* Ashley (in Respite) and Lorraine (DVT)
- \* Ken MacDonald (home from hospital) and Sharon
- \* Rhonda White and family (after death of Bert)
- \* Enid Power
- \* Fred Bryant
- \* Max

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

## Congregational Prayer Points

- Presbytery next week
- Neos and Tom's role week by week
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Lease of Whitebridge property
- Cathy Beeton and SRE classes
- Worship Committee

## Wider Community Prayer Points

- Upcoming State elections
- Victims of floods, earthquakes and fires
- Wilfreda's orphanage
- The situation in Ukraine
- Presbytery as they consider Rev. Dr. Cameron Eccleston's report

## Loud Sky Project - Making compassion visible!



Ribbon flowers will be planted in the grounds of Newcastle Anglican and Catholic Cathedrals to remember people who have been impacted by institutional child sexual abuse.

You are invited to join with others to assemble ribbon flowers. No special skill required. Refreshments are provided.

**Charlestown Uniting Church**

**Friday 24 March from 10am**

All welcome

Contact Anne Threlfo for more information.

# Children & Family Worker Update

Hi Everyone

**Our Holiday Kid's Club** will be on Wednesday the 19<sup>th</sup> of April and forms are available in the foyer.



Cathy



## Bullet Proofing Yourself Against Depression

**Depression is a serious and tricky illness**

**Unfortunately, it can also go unrecognized for a long period of time – often especially true for men.**

People suffering with depression can become really good at covering the symptoms or making excuses. Some may not even realise that there's a problem. But 1 in 8 men will experience depression, and blokes make up an average seven out of every nine suicides every single day in Australia.

Learn about ways to “bullet-proof” yourself against depression: recognise the signs, get in early and make a difference, keep yourself staying more mentally healthy.

Gwenda Brownell (almost-retired psychologist) will help us understand how depression shows up differently in men, and present strategies that help with keeping the “black dog” away.

### **A Men's Breakfast**

at *Charlestown Uniting Church - 24 Milson St*

**8am Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April**

Cost \$12    RSVP: Paul Russell

[pmraus74@gmail.com](mailto:pmraus74@gmail.com), or 0411 236 047

or sign-up sheet in the foyer.

*Please advise of any special dietary requirements*

**By Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

*Please do not attend if you are unwell or have been to a Covid-19 hotspot in the previous 14 days.*

## A PASSING THOUGHT...



The very first word a newborn babe utters, let alone the first tottering step they attempt, brings great joy to the parents. The joyful news soon spreads to grandparents, sundry aunts and uncles and friends...as the first on anything holds a fantastically special significance.

Today we are looking at the very first I AM saying of Jesus as found in John 6:35 (attached) where Jesus says, quite definitely: "I AM the Bread of Life", which I believe, is most significant. (Not, that I hasten to add, the rest are any less so.) OK, so let's try and unpack that a bit.

The universal Christian Church holds only two Sacraments that are necessary for salvation; Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. (John 3:5-6 and John 6:52-59).

Further specific references may be found in Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23 -26.

I've got that...please explain! Well, here goes...! In early years in my Christian journey, I asked "What is a Sacrament?" which, to me had been very puzzling. The answer, well remembered, was : "A Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace."

Meaning when the Celebrant blesses the water in the font, the Holy Spirit the prayer so that the water that is now being used is not just water, as it it has been made holy. Then the Celebrant Baptises the (usually) infant with Holy Water, three times after which the sign of the Cross is placed on the forehead. The water is the outward and visible sign; the inward bit is when Spirit ignites the soul of the newly baptised in Jesus' Name.



answers  
was, but  
the now,  
the Holy



Similarly, at Holy Communion during the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving, the Celebrant takes the elements of everyday bread and wine (in the case of the UCA, grape juice) offers it to Almighty God who then, by the Holy Spirit, blesses the elements so that they become Spiritually the Body and Blood of Christ. That means that as we ingest the now, Holy Elements, they have become for us the outward and visible sign of what is going on inside! The Holy Elements feed not the body...but inwardly the soul, to keep it alive and active so as to give us the Strength and Power of the Holy Spirit to Minister in Jesus' Mighty Name. Dear folk, what we do here is nothing simple, every day, but the most holy and significant thing that a believer may ever do!



It is not 'just' baptism or communion that we are about, rather it is Baptism and Holy Communion, as Jesus commanded us to do for our eternal life...how dare we approach either in a carefree manner, for this is an especially holy time, make no mistake about that!

During the distribution of the Elements, the Server says to you:

**"The body (or blood) of Christ, given (shed) for you." To which you respond in an affirmative voice: Amen"** (Uniting in Worship page 128)

We know that we become what we eat, so let's draw our security, our destiny and our eternal life from Jesus.

Author John Piper puts it this way in his book "A Hunger for God:"

*"If you don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because you have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because you have nibbled for so long at the table of the world. Your soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great. God did not create you for this. There is an appetite for God. And it can be awakened. I invite you to turn from the dulling effects of food and the dangers of idolatry, and to say with some simple fast: This much, O God, I want you."*

**(John Stephen Piper** (born January 11, 1946) is an American New Testament scholar, Baptist theologian, pastor, and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Piper taught biblical studies at Bethel University for six years (1974–1980), before serving as pastor for preaching and vision of Bethlehem Baptist Church (Converge) in Minneapolis for 33 years (1980–2013)

If there are omissions, or obstacles, not covered by this article sufficiently for you, or it has raised any concerns at all, **please** don't hesitate to contact me with your valued concerns, through Tom, Anne or David, who will pass them on to me so I may be of help for your own personal clarification.

See you at Church!

### **John 6:35-40**

<sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. <sup>36</sup> But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup> Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; <sup>38</sup> for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.'

### **John 6:52-59**

<sup>52</sup> The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' <sup>53</sup> So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; <sup>55</sup> for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.' <sup>59</sup> He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

### **John 3:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup> What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.

### **Luke 22:19-20**

<sup>19</sup> Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' <sup>20</sup> And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

### **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

#### ***The Institution of the Lord's Supper***

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' <sup>25</sup> In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.



In last Sunday's message, we heard about the AUKUS agreement in the context of Jesus's healing of the blind man, contrasted with the blindness of the Pharisees. The invitation was to consider human blindness and our own blindness.

This week, the Uniting Church in Australia Assembly expressed its grave concerns about the \$368 billion AUKUS security agreement and the plan by Australia to acquire nuclear-powered submarines.

Perhaps our response can be to pray for peace, or attend the "Picnic for Peace" on Palm Sunday.

*Anne Threlkoff*



20 March 2023

The Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) Assembly expresses its grave concerns with recently announced details of the \$368 billion AUKUS security agreement and the plan by Australia to acquire nuclear-powered

"In the Uniting Church, we believe Jesus is our peace and so we are committed to being a peace-making community. True security and peace come from seeking to build relationships of trust and understanding, not through bigger military spending," said Uniting Church in Australia President Rev Sharon Hollis.

The UCA has [since its inception](#) called on Australia to be guided by concern for the entire human race rather than self-interest, and as such has regularly called for actions which prioritise peace. In its 2003 Statement [Uniting for Peace](#), the Uniting Church declared "reliance on weapons for peace and security can never achieve a just and lasting peace".

"What we recognised then is also true now. Security cannot be achieved through armament. When security relies on fear of the enemy, we will never see the world reconciled," said Rev Hollis.

"The huge cost of the AUKUS submarines will put further pressure on a budget already in structural deficit."

"Spending on the AUKUS agreement, including the purchase and building of the AUKUS submarines, must not come at the expense of spending on overseas aid, action on the environment, education, health and social security and welfare — things we believe build long term peace and security."

The UCA further expresses concern that the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines amplifies the risk of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and further degradation of the environment. It is unclear whether this venture will result in the creation of nuclear facilities in Australia, or where nuclear material from the submarines will be disposed at such times as they reach end-of-life.

"We have long opposed nuclear weapons and join the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) in calling on the Government to immediately sign and ratify the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#)."

The Uniting Church further echoes [the World Council of Churches](#) in denouncing the military industrial complex which profits from the economics of war and violence and the proliferation and export of weapons.

"As followers of Jesus, we will continue to work and pray for peace and invest in relationships and programs that build peace through justice and community development," said Rev Hollis.



# Palm Sunday *Picnic for Peace*

speakers... music... solidarity... protest...

**1pm Sunday 2nd April 2023**  
**Civic Park, Newcastle**  
King and Auckland St - bring a chair or blanket  
*All Welcome*

acting for peace justice for refugees



further information email: [lekaniko@gmail.com](mailto:lekaniko@gmail.com)

## Some of our Church Contacts:

### Minister

Rev Tom Stuart

M: 0427 625 502

E: [tom@thestuarts.id.au](mailto:tom@thestuarts.id.au)

### Children & Families Resource Worker:

Mrs Cathy Beeton

M: 0409 445 933

E: [Cath4858@gmail.com](mailto:Cath4858@gmail.com)

Mrs Cathy Beeton is also our Safe Church Contact Person

### Administration:

P: 4943 4019

E: [office@charlestown.unitingchurch.org.au](mailto:office@charlestown.unitingchurch.org.au)

24 Milson Street, Charlestown NSW 2290

PO Box 449, Charlestown NSW 2290

### Bank Account Details for the Charlestown Garden Suburb Multi-Centre Congregation:

Bank Account held with: Uniting Financial Services

Account Name: Charlestown Congregation General Account

BSB: 634 634 Account No.: 100030837

**For Offering please put Ref: Offering**

### Keep up to date with happenings and info:

Webpage: <http://www.chagsuca.org.au>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/CharlestownUnitingChurch>

Project Reconnect: <http://www.projectreconnect.com.au>

Worship Services: <https://tinyurl.com/CHaGS-YouTube-Link>