



CONTACT

Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

22 October 2023



From Anne Threlfo

As you will recall, last week's gospel passage from Matthew 22 was the rather difficult story of the king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. "The Kingdom of God is like this", says Jesus. Like what? Like guests who refuse to come to a feast? Like a king who burns down a city? Like the son who seems ineffectual and absent from his own wedding? (And by the way, where's the bride?!) Like the people who murder the king's servants? Like those who agree to attend the feast on the terms of the murderous king? Although who can blame them for potentially saving their own skin!

This really is a tricky parable. Diana Butler Bass (who we'll be hearing from in our study starting this week), opted to reflect on the Philippians passage instead. "Yikes", she said, "I don't need a story about exclusion and destruction."

Lutheran minister Nadia Bolz-Weber did tackle this parable, and reminded me that the Kingdom of God is not necessarily present in the most obvious places. Our first instinct might be to see the king in this parable as representing God. I think this is where I came to it at first which is why I had a hard time making sense of the story – not that I'm claiming to have it all sorted now! The God that I know wouldn't put on a banquet and then take vengeance on non-participants and toss someone bound and gagged into the street just because their clothes, their attitude, their words, their allegiance or whatever, didn't fit some narrow criteria of what was "right and proper."

Perhaps we can take a cue from those who refused to turn up for a free feast. Maybe the price was too high. Maybe the quid pro quo left a bad taste despite the delicious food. But there was one guest who refused to play the game. He accepted the invitation, although perhaps there was little choice involved, but refused to kowtow to the powers and principalities. He came just as he was, refusing even to speak in his own defence.

We know that Jesus frequently upended conventional wisdom, so we might consider that this wayward guest who refused to toe the line of the tyrant, is where we find the Kingdom of God in this parable. The Kingdom of God is like one who knows the source of their being. The Kingdom of God is like one who refuses to bow down to evil and suffers as a result. The Kingdom of God is like one who is cast into the darkness for the sake of God, and turns to see that Jesus is already there alongside them.

DIARY

Thursday 19 October

10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Sq
1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Saturday 21 October

8.00am A Men's Breakfast – Trauma, Education and the Margaret Jurd College Vision to Change the World

Sunday 22 October - Pentecost 22

9.00am Holy Communion Service – Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom
Exodus 33: 12-23; Psalm 99; 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-10; Matthew 22: 15-22

Monday 23 October

7.30pm Online Study re Embracing Spiritual Awakening with Rev Tom Stuart (for 5 weeks)

Tuesday 24 October

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie
12.00 Garden Suburb Ladies Fellowship

Thursday 25 October

10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Sq
1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Sunday 29 October - Pentecost 21

9.00am Worship Service – Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom **Celebrating All Saints**
Revelations 7: 9-17; Psalm 34: 1-10, 22; 1 John 3: 1-3; Matthew 5: 1-12

Monday 30 October

7.30pm Online Study re Embracing Spiritual Awakening with Rev Tom Stuart (for 4 weeks)

Tuesday 31 October

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie
3.30pm Worship Team Meeting at The White House

Wednesday 1 November

3.30pm Garden Suburb Property Meeting

Thursday 2 November

10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Sq
1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Sunday 5 November - Pentecost 23

9.00am Worship Service - Leader and Preacher Rev'd Tom
Baptism and Children's Corner

Joshua 3: 7-17; Psalm 107: 1-7, 33-37; 1 Thessalonians 2: 9-13; Matthew 23: 1-12

Monday 6 November

10.00am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visit
7.30pm Online Study re Embracing Spiritual Awakening with Rev Tom Stuart (for 3 weeks)

Tuesday 7 November

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie

Wednesday 8 November

10.00am Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

Thursday 9 November

10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Sq
11.00am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care
1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Friday 10 November

6.00pm Ladies night at Kahibah

Saturday 11 November

TBA Friendship Circle

THE PRAYER PAGE



'Pray for our country as we continue to engage in conversations over the coming weeks.

Pray for truth-filled, gracious and compassionate conversations that are grounded in humility and respect.

May we stand together for love, compassion, inclusion and reconciliation.'

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Kerrieann (Tom's sister)
- * Ryan Walpole – recovering after his operation and pray for Sue as she supports Ryan during his recovery
- * Kathryn Gray
- * Those in our Congregation who have lost loved ones in recent months
- * Anne
- * Mac
- * Jacqueline Fenwick
- * Peter Ferguson
- * Nola
- * Isabella
- * Ashley
- * Janice Wright
- * Glenda O'Donahue who is very ill in hospital
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Mert and Pam
- * Judith and family
- * Lorraine Pepper
- * Enid Power
- * Fred Bryant
- * Max

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

Congregational Prayer Points

- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Lease of Whitebridge property
- Cathy Beeton and SRE classes
- Worship Committee

Wider Community Prayer Points

- The situation in Israel and Gaza
- The victims and families of the earthquake in Afghanistan
- Consequences of climate change around the world
- Please pray for our First Nations People post Referendum that they will be comforted and encouraged to continue to find alternative ways to achieve reconciliation, equality and to be heard
- The situation in Ukraine and other trouble spots
- Fabian, children and Wilfreda suffering heart failure
- Tom and NEOS as he follows ideas and opportunities including connections with Wesley Mission at Windale



Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

Post-Referendum Statement

Let's make sure we care for one another The Uniting Church in Australia and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) acknowledge the deep disappointment for many at the referendum result, especially for First Nations people who supported a Voice.

"We recognise this will be an extremely difficult day for many First Nations people, compounded by what has been a long and divisive conversation leading into the referendum," said Uniting Church President Rev Sharon Hollis.

"I encourage Uniting Church members, and all Australians, in our conversations and our actions, to do whatever we can to show support and care for First Nations people right now."

"The increase in racism and vitriol against First Nations people over the past six months has been incredibly damaging. Indigenous people have had their cultural identity scrutinised constantly throughout this campaign."

"We must ensure this result does not give way to further harm. We must be emboldened to call out racism wherever it occurs."

The President said Australia must do some deep soul searching before it can move forward.

"Unless we confront the truth of colonisation and its ongoing effects, we won't find freedom."

"We as Second Peoples cannot seek forgiveness without some honesty and deep soul searching that promotes an understanding of our nation's history and the hopes and dreams of First Nations people and a deeper commitment to reconciliation."

"Let us ask ourselves, how will we stand with First Nations people in their sorrow? Where can we show up next alongside First Nations people? How will support Indigenous people's desire for self-determination and justice? How will we engage in seeking God's reconciling love?"

Rev Hollis said the Uniting Church remained committed to the full implementation of the Uluru Statement.

"Our support for the Voice is grounded in our Covenant commitment with UAICC. There is much work to be done and inspired by this national conversation, we must be ready to listen to First Nations voices within the Church."

UAICC National Interim Chair Rev Mark Kickett expressed his profound disappointment at the result on behalf of Congress members.

"This is a missed opportunity in our nation's history," said Rev Kickett. "We may never get an opportunity like this again for generations to come."

"This will be a hard day for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We long for reconciliation and healing."

"As Christians, we draw comfort knowing that Jesus understands our pain and walks with us at this time. We will continue the fight and struggle for recognition and justice."

Revs Kickett and Hollis thanked the many UAICC and Uniting Church people and communities who were part of the campaign, visibly showing support, having conversations and joining in actions.



Margaret Barlow has received a note from the Uniting Church Stamp Committee thanking us for our support.


We don't have so many stamps coming our way these days, but please remember to put aside those that do, so they can be sent on.

Sales to date for 2023 have raised \$5,800.

DIANA BUTLER BASS WITH TIM SCORER

EMBRACING SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Diana Butler Bass on the Dynamics of Experiential Faith



Online Study (Zoom)
5 Monday's 7:30 pm
23rd Oct - 20th Nov

Leader - Rev. Tom Stuart
tom@thestuarts.id.au

Charlestown &
Garden Suburb
Congregation
of the UCA

Contact Tom for
details &
registration:

**A Five-Session
Study**

**Church Council Election will take place after
Worship on 12 November**



The nominations received are

Lesley Clulow - Treasurer

Kerrie Dixon - Passionate Worship

Lorraine Pepper - SFED



ALL SAINTS' MEMORIAL SERVICE

9am Sunday 29th October 2023

CHARLESTOWN UNITING CHURCH

If you are able,

please bring a simple plate of food for Morning Tea

as members of 17 families who have had a bereavement in the last 12 months have been invited to this service.

So, what is this "All Saints' Memorial" gig?! The Church started giving thanks to God for the martyrs and all other Godly women and men in 609AD known as All Saint's Day, 1st November.. Then, 998AD the Church in her 'wisdom' used the 2nd November as All Souls' Day when they prayed for the dead...how blessed are we that, again, the Church in her wisdom, said nah, you can't pray for the dead, but you are able to give thanks for all those who have departed on All Saints' Day, which we now do on the Sunday before, or after, 1st November.



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And so, on the 29th October, the Worship Committee has invited members of 17 families who have witnessed a loved one go from this life, in the preceding 12 months, to be nearer the closer presence of God to this special service. As they arrive, Janice will give them a specially prepared candle which they will keep until the time of the Intercessions, when the Reverend Tom will invite one person of each family, to come forward to light the candle and place it in a prepared bowl in memory, and thanks, for the life their loved one has led.

Other members of the Congregation will be able to do so at the conclusion of the service in memory of those still dear to their hearts.

As this will be a sacred time for so many, other members of the Congregation are respectfully asked to leave the worship area quietly as they go the morning tea, or home.



Cathy Beeton is away for a week from Sunday 22 October, and will be back to work on the 30 October, as she and Sue Pepper are off on a Cruise to Hobart

Enjoy the break ladies!!!

DELEGATES ASSEMBLY

HUNTER COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE

FOR THE COMMON GOOD
OUR STORY, OUR FUTURE

Wed 8 Nov
6:15pm-8:15pm
Newcastle West



RELATIONSHIPS * LISTENING * ACTION * TOGETHER!



You are invited to join others from across the Hunter in deliberation, listening, commitment and action. The goal of the evening is to build momentum towards the *Founding Assembly* in April 2024.

Learn about the Hunter Community Alliance and our agenda for action: affordable & social housing, renewable energy, and a fair energy transition for Hunter communities. Together we will endorse the issues & actions to take public in 2024.

Act: Prepare and take action as we head towards the Founding Assembly in 2024.

Agenda & More Info: Following registration you will receive an agenda pack.

Logistics

- Dinner will be available for purchase outside the hall between 5pm-6pm
- There can be limited street parking, nearest parking station is the Newcastle Interchange an 8-minute walk from the station.
- The car park at the venue will be reserved for accessible parking
- The meeting will start on time at 6:15pm and finish promptly at 8:15pm

Register here: <https://events.humanitix.com/hca-delegates-assembly> or use the QR code on the poster.

Some of our Church Contacts:

Minister

Rev Tom Stuart

M: 0427 625 502

E: tom@thestuarts.id.au

Administration:

P: 4943 4019

E: office@charlestown.unitingchurch.org.au

24 Milson Street, Charlestown NSW 2290

PO Box 449, Charlestown NSW 2290

Children & Families Resource Worker:

Mrs Cathy Beeton

M: 0409 445 933

E: Cath4858@gmail.com

Mrs Cathy Beeton is also our Safe Church Contact Person

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>