



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

19 November 2023

From Rev Tom

Last week, for Contact, I wrote about 3 forms of hope; hope of feeling, hope of body, and hope of consciousness. Hope of feeling is a hope that everything will turn out okay for me. The hope of body is a hope that if I look after my body then it will be attractive and everything will be ideal for us. The third, hope of consciousness is a finer energy where we sense we are servants to something higher. Our sense of meaning and purpose is embraced into a higher unity – God. With this hope, there is often an abiding awareness that even when things are going badly everything IS okay! My hunch is that the first two forms of hope are part of our ego. Our ego is part of us that is formed by living in our earthly bodies. Our ego is formed to cope with the world around us. Our ego is essential for dealing with life. We have all sorts of learned patterns to respond to different roles in life. Our ego is that part of us that goes through everything from learning how to do up shoe laces, to mastering the fine art of marriage. So, ego is a function of our survival. It is therefore highly tuned to keeping us alive. It can find unhelpful expressions in keeping us alive, like wanting to be at the top of the pile, the most important, having the most money, the most beautiful. These are all desires that at their foundation are about keeping us alive. Most humans most of the time are solely identified with their ego. I took some time off again this week and spent Monday and some of Tuesday with my sister Kerriean. As my sister's life moves closer to its end I experienced conversations about the afterlife. There is consolation in assuring each other that our life will go beyond our physical body, into eternal life. There is indeed potential for us to enter eternal life, and this is part of the good news formed in the understanding of the Christian faith. But I am conscious that often this aspiration arises as much from the hope of feeling, a hope that is just our ego, endeavouring to project itself beyond the inevitability of our death. My hunch is that when we die, and the ego designed for this world falls away, this need for individuated survival will disappear. We will simply be caught up in a unifying realm of love. You might wonder why I would have the temerity to make such a claim. Well, my hunch comes from the fact that I believe I see it happening this side of heaven. Quite often when I go visit people very near death I see moments when the person dying is already free from the constraints of their ego. What I observe is a person free to know, "All is well!" They have lost the need for their survival, and all the fears and worries that are involved, and seem to completely identify with a goodness that just IS! I believe this is what the Christian life is so much about. It is to become more and more conscious of who we are as spirit so we are less constrained by the boundaries of identification with ego. It is to live just as Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand!" This is the realm for us to experience today that is of a finer energy, the hope of consciousness. It is to know I am part of something vastly more wonderful, and toward whom our lives are entirely in service – God. We then live in the world, but not of the world.



DIARY

Thursday 16 November

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

Sunday 19 November - Pentecost 25

9.00am Holy Communion Service – Leader and Preacher Rev'd Tom
Judges 4: 1- 7; Psalm 123; 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11; Matthew 25: 14-30



Monday 20 November

10.00am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visit
7.30pm Online Study re Embracing Spiritual Awakening with Rev Tom Stuart (for 1 weeks)

Tuesday 21 November

9.00am Needlework n Natter
10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie

Thursday 23 November

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

Sunday 26 November – Christ the King

9.00am Worship Service – Leader: Margaret White Preacher: Ben Waters
Ezekiel 34: 11-16, 20-24; Psalm 100; Ephesians 1: 15-23; Matthew 25: 31-46

Tuesday 28 November

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie
12.00pm Garden Suburb Ladies Fellowship – Christmas celebration
4.00pm Worship Team Meeting at The White House

Thursday 30 November

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

Sunday 3 December – Advent 1

9.00am Worship Service – Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom
Children's Corner
Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; Mark 13:24-37

Monday 4 December

10.00am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visit

Tuesday 5 December

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

Wednesday 6 December

4.00pm to 7.30pm Advent Workshop

Thursday 7 December

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

Friday 8 December

6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah

Sunday 10 December – Advent 2

9.00am Worship Service – Leader: Sue Pepper Preacher: Rev'd Tom
Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8



THE PRAYER PAGE



Pray that the Australian Church can model today, the example of the early Christians, in making space for all people to flourish in community.

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Family and friends of Glenda O'Donahue who passed away Tuesday 14th November
- * June Locker
- * Tom's family as they support Kerrieann during her last days
- * Ryan and Sue Walpole are back in Newcastle with Ryan now in rehab.
- * 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
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Mert
- * Judith and family
- * Lorraine Pepper
- * Enid Power
- * Fred Bryant
- * Max

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

Congregational Prayer Points

- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- 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
- 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



At last Sunday's meeting the nominated councillors were elected:

Lesley Clulow (Treasurer)

Kerrie Dixon (Passionate Worship)

Lorraine Pepper (Spiritual Direction and Education)

Presbytery Representative - Les Butchers.

We thank you all for your willingness to serve in this way



Children & Family Worker Update

SRE Christmas Assemblies are almost here! My first will be Thursday the 23rd at Charlestown, then Monday the 27th at Valentine, Wednesday the 29th Teralba, Tuesday the 5th December Charlestown East & last will be Redhead on the 8th of December.



Please pray for all the assemblies, that all will run smoothly & the children will respond to the message about the Birth of Jesus.

Our Advent workshop is on Wednesday the 6th December at Charlestown 4pm to 7.30pm, if you have family, friends or neighbours with school age children who would love to come along for an evening of Christmas craft, games, activities, stories and a Christmas meal. Please let the families know about our Advent workshop, registration forms will be available in the church foyer from Sunday or give me a call I am happy to email the form out.

Cathy

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS REGARDING WHITEBRIDGE

The Charlestown/Garden Suburb Church Council has been looking at ways to fund the NEOS mission since 2021. Since the Whitebridge property was surplus to our congregation's needs, the Whitebridge property was deconsecrated early 2022 with the intention of selling it, hoping the invested funds would be available for a number of years to fund the NEOS mission. A detailed application to Presbytery for funding of the NEOS mission was declined, so Church Council looked to leasing the property. Despite some interest, the costs to the potential tenants of development approval (for change of use from a worship centre), renovations, or traffic studies, discouraged many. More recently we discovered that for any use by a tenant, a paved carpark would be required with suitable water retention/diversion and landscaping to be paid for by us, the owners. We would need a loan to pay for the carpark, and the loan repayments would negate the benefits of leasing the property for many years.

So once again we are looking to sell the Whitebridge property as Sale Proceeds Investment Options have changed since 2022. There are now options for investing the proceeds of the sale and receiving a portion of the investment returns as income while the principal remains available when needed (subject to assessment by Synod) for building renovations.

Church Council is committed to reaching out to our community with the good news of God's love, and releasing our custody and management of the Whitebridge property, seems the way forward for partly funding our NEOS mission.



HCA FOUNDING ASSEMBLY

Wednesday evening April 10

At the

**University of Newcastle Great
Hall**

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>