



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

3 September 2023

From Rev Tom

I have nearly completed a Presbytery Consultation of a congregation in the Hunter. That consultation reminded me again of culture and cultural differences. I had the opportunity to view a congregation whose members likely had an average age of 80, or maybe more. That makes it like our own. However, it has developed a culture that is quite different to ours. It is possible to see some of the influences that are antecedent to those differences. Some of those differences were a shock to me. As I reflect I wonder how I would respond if I was a member of that congregation. It reminds me of my first experience of a family from Africa. It reminds me of a conversation I had with Rev. Raymond Joso when he talked about the cultural characteristics of his Korean family. In my cultural context, I see things as the laws of my culture as real, even God-determined. Then I enter into the context of a different context and discover that those rules are not “real” at all. One example. When I was in Darwin an old friend showed me around the sights. She was very keen to show me the First Nations display that was at the Darwin Museum at the time. As she drove me to the Museum she told me about a conversation she had with an Aboriginal woman. The Aboriginal woman had visited my friend’s home and was marvelling at all the wonderful furnishings in her house. The Aboriginal woman asked my friend how she came to have all these things. In the midst of the conversation, my friend realised that it was impossible for the Aboriginal woman to have what my friend had given the Aboriginal woman had no sense of individual ownership. It was as if ownership was an unknown concept. Having seen how different the congregation I visited was so different to ours, even as our congregations were so similar in our age I began to wonder about the cultural differences there would be if I visited a congregation that also had 40-year-old members and 20-year-old members and 10-year-old members. It made me realise that we probably live in a very small world untouched by the diversity of the world. The things we disagree about amongst ourselves, with all the certitude of the unchangeable Laws of the Medes and Persians, could easily be as unintelligible as private ownership to the Aboriginal woman from Darwin. All this reminds me of the teaching of Karina Kreminski who we invited to come and speak to our congregation in April 2022. Karina argues that it is time that the church forgot about trying to save itself and go out and discover the community in which we live. When we engage with that culture, understand that culture, and are able to speak the language of that culture, then we might have a chance to express the Gospel in a way that makes sense in that context. Just this Monday the SFED group were reading a book called, “Rewilding the Church”. We noted a helpful observation in that book. We don’t engage the existing culture just so we might become like it. The Christian is always called to live a life different to the surrounding culture. Rather, ours is to live in that culture so we discover how the Good News is most genuinely expressed in that environment.

DIARY

Thursday 31 August

- 10.00am Morning tea in the Community – common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Square, just west of the Smelly Cheesecake shop – **more information in Contact.**
1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Sunday 3 September – Forest Sunday

- 9.00am Worship Service – Leader & Preacher Rev Tom Stuart
Children's Corner with Cathy

Genesis 2: 4b-22; Psalm 139: 13-16; Acts 17: 22-28; John 3: 1-16

Monday 4 September

- 10.00am Visitation at Garden Suburb Aged Care

Tuesday 5 September

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

Thursday 7 September

- 10.00am Morning tea in the Community – common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Square, just west of the Smelly Cheesecake shop.
1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb
6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah

Saturday 9 September

- 10.00am Friendship Circle – Murray's Beach Cafe

Sunday 10 September – Land Sunday

- 9.00am Worship Service - Leader Anne Threlfo Preacher Rev Tom Stuart
Genesis 3: 14-19; 4: 8-16; Psalm 139; 7-12; Romans 5: 12-17; Matthew 12: 38-40

Tuesday 12 September

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

Wednesday 13 September

- 10.00am Ladies Fellowship – will be at the Charlestown Church

Thursday 14 September

- 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

Sunday 17 September – Outback Sunday

- 9.00am Holy Communion Worship Service - Leader and Preacher Rev'd. Tom
Joel 1: 8-10, 17-20; Psalm 18: 6-19; Romans 8: 18-27; Matthew 3: 13- 4: 2

Monday 18 September

- 10.00am Visitation at Garden Suburb Aged Care



**HIGHLY
RECOMMENDED**

I watched ABC COMPASS last Sunday night 27th August and I shed a tear or two and was overwhelmed and inspired by the life story of our incoming moderator of the UCA in NSW and ACT

Rev MATA HAVEA HILIAU a proud Tongan woman

She brings generational change, inspiration and hope for the future of our Uniting Church

Worth watching on ABC – IVIEW –

Noel Drinkwater

(BONUS – beautiful Tongan Singing)

THE PRAYER PAGE



"God speaks in the silence of the heart.
Listening is the beginning of prayer."

Mother Teresa

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Ryan Walpole
- * Kathryn Gray
- * Glenn Pepper and family
- * Sharon MacDonald and family
- * Gloria Booth and family
- * Tony Sellen and family
- * Anne
- * Mac
- * Jacqueline Fenwick
- * Peter Ferguson
- * Nola
- * Isabella
- * Ashley in hospital with pneumonia
- * Janice Wright
- * Glenda O'Donahue
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Mert and Pam
- * Judith and family
- * Lorraine Pepper
- * Enid Power
- * Fred Bryant
- * Max

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

Congregational Prayer Points

- Tom and Kathy
- Pray for congregational members participating in the spirituality of Age exercises each week
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Lease of Whitebridge property
- Cathy Beeton and SRE classes
- Worship Committee
- Church Council to meet next week

Wider Community Prayer Points

- Consequences of climate change around the world
- Preparations for Voice Referendum – truth telling will be an important priority
- 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



Children & Family Worker Update

Hi Everyone

I won't be at church next Sunday the 10th of September as I will be taking part in 'The Bloody Long Walk' a 35km walk supporting The Mito Foundation who support people affected by mitochondrial disease, now I don't kid myself I

know I won't do the 35kms but I will go as far as my body will allow me to. It starts at Belmont follows the Fernleigh track to Adamstown then continues on in & around Merewether & Newcastle.



The reason I have chosen to do this walk is because my good friend's granddaughter Audrey was diagnosed with Leigh Syndrome this year. Which is a form of Mitochondrial disease, Audrey is now 14 months old has a life expectancy of 2 to 3 years & will never crawl, walk or make any of those milestones that grandparents look forward to but Audrey is a happy, cuddly little girl who loves watching the magpies out of the window at her Poppy's house.

If you would like to know more please chat with me after church this week or give me a call anytime.

Cathy

Walking Together Training

Hosted by The Hunter Community Alliance

At Toronto Uniting Church, 118 The Boulevard, Toronto

Thursday 21 September – 5.30pm to 8.45pm

Cost: \$15 including dinner OR FREE

In this half-day workshop, participants gain a deeper understanding of who we are as a nation and how to take meaningful action towards reconciliation. The content covers the importance of a Voice to Parliament, how individuals and organisations can play a role in ensuring it is established, and why reconciliation is an ongoing journey that requires action from us all.

You'll learn about:

- The invitation to all Australians in the Uluru Statement from the Heart
- The importance of Voice, Treaty and Truth
- A Voice to Parliament – to the referendum and beyond
- The concept of 'Makarrata'
- Accepting the invitation in the Uluru Statement with purposeful advocacy that advances reconciliation in Australia

Tickets and more information here:

<https://events.humanitix.com/walking-together-training-hunter-sep-21st-toronto-uniting-church>



Conversation About The Voice Referendum

You are invited to an informed and respectful “Kitchen Table Conversation – Part 2”

At 7pm on Tuesday 5 September

At the home of Kerrie and Warren Dixon

You are welcome to attend, even if you were not at the first conversation.

Please RSVP to Anne Threlfo to ensure there are sufficient resources for all participants.

annethrelfo@gmail.com

Ph: 0439 754 376

MORNING TEA IN THE COMMUNITY – THURSDAYS AT CHARLESTOWN SQUARE



Will now be held in the common seated area opposite the butcher and just west of where Smelly Cheesecake shop was.

Grab a take- away coffee from your cafe of choice and join us at this site at 10am or just sit and chat.



Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

Wednesday 13th September

Will be held at the Church from
10.00am

Please bring refreshments and if possible invite a friend for a morning of fun and fellowship

ALL WELCOME

Charlestown Friendship Circle



Saturday 9th September at
Murray's Beach café at 10.00am for morning tea
and a wander around the area

If transport is needed contact
Sue Warren on 0437 737 793

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>



Making Amends

In *The Gift of Years*, author Joan Chittister writes,

One of the functions – one of the gifts – of aging is to become comfortable with the self we are, rather than to mourn what we are not. It is a moment of enlightenment when we realize that the years have grown us as well as sustained us. We are of more substance now than we were when we were young, whatever we did in the past, wherever we were when we did it. The fact is that twinges of regret are a step-over point in life. They invite us to revisit the ideals and motives that brought us to where we are now.

It is at this point, at last, that you have made amends for everything of the past that is rectifiable and have become firmly committed to addressing new causes for remorse in the present moment as you encounter them and as they occur. As the twelve-step programs teach us, you come to accept that there are things you cannot change; you have the courage to change the things you can; and you have growing wisdom that enhances your ability to recognize the difference. At this point you stop living your life by looking only in the rear-view mirror and point your nose back into the heat of life. In the present moment, as we wrote earlier, you can find it is serious and constructive enough to sometimes or even often ponder the mystery of the stars and planets, the birth of a child, the love radiating from the eyes of a favourite pet. You become, in fact, not only a person who takes his or her spiritual and psychological growth seriously, but you become a mystic.

This is a four-step exercise. Do one step at a time and resist the urge to read ahead.

1. Write down ten of your biggest regrets, occasions for guilt or shame that you still carry with you. After you've written them down, return for step 2.
2. Circle every item on the list that you are able to do something about; offer an apology, make amends, or rectify in some way or other. When you are done with this list, make a commitment to yourself to do so as courageously, sensitively, and quickly as possible.
3. Underline everything else on the list.
4. Release each of the underlined items in whatever way you deem appropriate. You may want to write them down on a separate list and burn them. You may want to bless and release every item by imaging each one growing wings and flying off into the distance. Bring creativity and compassion to yourself, with equal amounts of forgiveness and acceptance, as you release all that no longer serves you.