



# CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting  
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

**10 March 2024**

## From Rev Tom

I am quoting an American author, war correspondent, speaker, and Presbyterian Minister Chris Hedges. He writes, "Aaron Bushnell, when he placed his cell phone on the ground to set up a livestream and lit himself on fire in front of the Israeli Embassy in Washington D.C., resulting in his death, pitted divine violence against radical evil. As an active duty member of the U.S. Air Force, he was part of the vast machinery that sustains the ongoing genocide in Gaza, no less morally culpable than the German soldiers, technocrats, engineers, scientists and bureaucrats who oiled the apparatus of the Nazi Holocaust. This was a role he could no longer accept. He died for our sins.

"I will no longer be complicit in genocide," he said calmly in his video as he walked to the gate of the embassy. "I am about to engage in an extreme act of protest. But compared to what people have been experiencing in Palestine at the hands of their colonizers, it's not extreme at all. This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal."

Young men and women sign up for the military for many reasons, but starving, bombing and killing women and children is usually not amongst them. Shouldn't, in a just world, the U.S. fleet break the Israeli blockade of Gaza to provide food, shelter and medicine? Shouldn't U.S. warplanes impose a no-fly zone over Gaza to halt the saturation bombing? Shouldn't Israel be issued an ultimatum to withdraw its forces from Gaza? Shouldn't the weapons shipments, billions in military aid and intelligence provided to Israel, be halted? Shouldn't those who commit genocide, as well as those who support genocide, be held accountable?

These simple questions are the ones Bushnell's death forces us to confront.

"Many of us like to ask ourselves," he posted shortly before his suicide, "'What would I do if I was alive during slavery? Or the Jim Crow South? Or apartheid? What would I do if my country was committing genocide?' The answer is, you're doing it. Right now." .....

I note that the ABC has received an enormous number of complaints about their reporting of the conflict in Gaza. 48% have complained that the ABC has been too pro-Israel. 41% have complained the ABC is too pro-Palestine. Out there in the community there is polarisation over who is right and who is wrong. I have developed the view that, certainly as Christians, we should avoid falling into the trap of taking sides when there is conflict. That will fail both sides. Rather, we should support those who seek peace by means of peace. In the Middle East that means we support the Israelis who seek peace by way of peace, and we support the Palestinians who seek peace by way of peace. Secondly, we do everything we can to prevent harm and help those who are suffering. And thirdly, for all those people who take an opposing view, we do as Jesus commanded. We love them.

# DIARY

## Thursday 7 March

10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Square

1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb Church

## Friday 8 March

6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah

## Saturday 9 March

11.00am Friendship Circle at Warners Bay Hotel



## Sunday 10 March – Lent 4

9.00am Worship Service Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom  
*Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3,17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21*

## Tuesday 12 March

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

## Wednesday 13 March

10.00am Ladies Fellowship at Charlestown

## Thursday 14 March

10.00am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care

10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Square

1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb Church

## Sunday 17 March – Lent 5

9.00am Worship Service with Baptism Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom  
*Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33 or Psalm 119:9-16*

## Monday 18 March

10.00am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visitation

## Tuesday 19 March

9.00am Needlework n Natter at Garden Suburb

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

## Thursday 21 March

10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Square

1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb Church

## Sunday 24 March – Palm Sunday

9.00am Worship Service  
*Liturgy of the Palms: Psalm 118:1-2,19-29; Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16*



## Tuesday 26 March

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

12.00pm Garden Suburb Ladies Fellowship

## Thursday 28 March – Maundy Thursday

10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Square

1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb Church

7.30pm Service at Garden Suburb

## Friday 29 March - Good Friday

9.00am Service at Charlestown

# THE PRAYER PAGE



Please join with each other as a congregation, to commit to praying at meal times, for the needs mentioned below.

## Pastoral Prayer Points

- \* Lorraine Pepper and family following Ashley's death
- \* Pam and Ken
- \* Geoff Greaves recovering after a fall
- \* Les as he recovers from heart surgery
- \* Those in our Congregation who have lost loved ones in recent months
- \* Peter
- \* Tony
- \* Graeme
- \* Jean
- \* Fred Bryant
- \* June Locker
- \* Ryan Walpole
- \* Kathryn Gray
- \* Jacqueline Fenwick
- \* Care facility be found for Nola
- \* Isabella
- \* Janice Wright
- \* Eileen Dunn
- \* Mert
- \* Judith and family
- \* Enid Power
- \* Max

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

## Congregational Prayer Points

- pray for each other as we experience the Lenten journey
- pray for the successful sale of the Whitebridge property
- pray for guidance and discernment with regard to property and Mission Plan
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Cathy Beeton and SRE classes
- Worship Committee

## Wider Community Prayer Points

- pray that HCA will be able to obtain attendance from political leaders to the Founding Assembly at the great Hall in April
- pray for Tom as he engages with other leaders from the community and other denominations, in his NEOS work.
- those affected by climate change in Australia eg floods, droughts and fires
- pray that a cease fire agreement will be negotiated between Israel and Hamas and that there will be relief from all the suffering
- The situation in Ukraine and other trouble spots
- Thanksgiving for all orphanage children at school thanks to generous donations
- Rohingya people in Bangladesh where 7000 people homeless





## Notes from Church Council Chairperson

The Church Council met this week with another full agenda. There are many “balls in the air” at the moment as we continue to discern and work towards where God may be leading us in the months and years ahead. The Council is grateful for the continued support and prayers of the congregation as we attempt to prioritise and untangle the many tasks and considerations we are holding.

The meeting began with a devotion using a video and discussion questions from “Bible Project”, a free resource available on YouTube, a phone app and a website: <https://bibleproject.com/> We watched a video titled “What is the Bible?”, and considered questions about why God choose to reveal Godself through one particular people, and whether the story begun in the Bible carries on with us today.

The discussion at the meeting included:

- Regional Mission conversations with neighbouring congregations: we have had some responses and will move towards gatherings which will initially prioritise building relationships.
- The Vital Mission Consultation for Tom has been postponed, so will proceed later in the year.
- The SFED group are exploring a number of resources (including Bible Project), and looking at how they may be used to support the formation, education and spiritual growth of the congregation.
- An appraisal of the future direction of our Children and Family (C&F) work has been held, which raised a number of questions which we continue to hold: Is it our intention to continue to support the C&F work this year? What does “support” look like? Is the C&F worker employed for sufficient hours to complete designated tasks? How long can we afford to supplement the C&F position from general funds? Will this existing ministry be a priority for funding from Whitebridge sale proceeds and in our ongoing mission plan?
- The pastors from Reach Church have looked at the Garden Suburb property and remain interested in exploring the possibility of leasing the property. After lengthy conversation, the Council decided to meet with the pastors, the Director of Church Planting for Australian Christian Churches, a representative of Uniting Property, and members of our congregation. The aim is to exchange information, and determine if this is a financially viable option for everyone. This will allow our Council and the congregation to engage in an informed discussion about if or how we proceed.
- A maintenance walk through has been completed on the manse, revealing many issues requiring attention, several of which are high priority including a leaking roof and a stone chimney which is parting company with the house. Options will be explored in coming months, including the implications of selling the manse property and purchasing another manse.
- A small team is working on an updated mission plan. This will include opportunities for the congregation to be engaged in the process.
- There will be transport organised for those who are attending The Hunter Community Alliance Founding Assembly on 10 April. Prior to that date, the congregation will host a Community Organising Table Talk. More information to come.

Please contact myself, or any member of the Church Council if you have any questions, or would like to provide comments or suggestions.

*Anne Threlfo*

Ph: 0439 754 376

Email: [annethrelfo@gmail.com](mailto:annethrelfo@gmail.com)

*May the Lord Bless You and  
Keep You  
Today and Always*



# The Hunter Presbytery Prayer Diary



This diary provides an opportunity to pray each week for congregations in the Presbytery. By praying together, we can encourage one another in mission, as we grow in faith and unity and develop understanding and relationships across the region. Each week there will be information and a prayer for each of the congregations in the Hunter Presbytery.

This week we pray for:

## 10 March 2024 - St Luke's Uniting Church Belmont

St Luke's Uniting Church Belmont is a congregation that has two morning services each Sunday and a fairly new venture of Dinner Church on Sunday evening. Dinner Church is all ages and is informal and meets over an evening meal. This group is also an outreach to people in the community. It has also allowed some of our families who cannot come in the morning because of sport to attend. As well as all the usual groups and activities St Luke's has two major community groups where both church members and community members attend. A Monday morning Activity Centre and a Tuesday quilting group.

**Prayer:** We pray for the community outreach activities at Belmont. For the Monday morning Activity Centre and the Quilting group on Tuesdays. We pray also for the Sunday evening Dinner Church. That people from the community will continue to attend and to feel welcome. Amen.



Uniting Church in Australia  
Sugarloaf Multi-Centre Congregation



You are invited to the

**Final worship service at West Wallsend Uniting Church**

Brown St, West Wallsend

*Sunday 17 March 2024 at 10am*

As part of the service, people will be invited to display photographs on a Wall of Memories, so please bring your photos and memories with you.

*For further information contact Mark Anderson Ph: 0467 491 793*



## Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March

Will be held at Charlestown Church  
from 10.00am

For Morning Tea and a chat

**ALL WELCOME**

You are invited  
to join with the



## Friendship Circle

Saturday 9 March

Meeting at Warners Bay Hotel at

11.00am for Fellowship and Brunch

Let Sue Warren know if you are attending

0427 737 793

**All Welcome**

The Church Office will be closed on Wednesday the 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of March  
as Jenny will be on holidays!

**There will be a 'Contact lite' for Sunday 17 March,**

**so send any notices to [annethelfo@gmail.com](mailto:annethelfo@gmail.com)**

**No Contact on Sunday 24 March**



HUNTER COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

# FOUNDING ASSEMBLY

6pm Wednesday  
10th April 2024  
The Great Hall,  
University of Newcastle

**YOU ARE INVITED**

Everyone in the Uniting Church across the Hunter is invited to participate in engaging National and State leaders to take action on these issues:

"Just" Energy Transition in communities  
Housing and Homelessness

Registration/Event details soon!!!

"This is the world as it is.  
This is where you start" Saul Alinsky



**REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!**

<https://events.humanitix.com/hca-founding-assembly>

If you wish to attend, and do not have internet access, please speak to Rev Tom Stuart, Kerrie Dixon or Anne Threlfo

## Attendance and Transport Arrangements

Please add your name to the sheet in the Charlestown foyer and indicate if you are able to offer a lift to the Assembly, or if you would like a lift from someone

The **Uniting Church** Hunter Community Alliance “Turnout Team” have calculated we are likely to have at least 150 Uniting Church members attend the Founding Assembly on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April. We know that will be by far the biggest turnout by any single organisation. We want to give opportunity to show that whole community of our commitment to building a better community in the Hunter. The best way to achieve that at such an event is to put that on display and the display board on the night is our bodies. So, while there is no requirement to wear a T-Shirt we are hoping lots of Uniting Church Members wear one on the night ... and it is such a great design ... to wear on other occasions!



### Order Form

#### ‘Uniting For the Common Good in the Hunter’ T shirt

We hope everyone who plans to attend HCA Founding Assembly April 10th at the University of Newcastle, will buy a t shirt to wear!

We know they will be useful at any gathering, rally, workshop or network where UCA people want to show ‘turnout’

#### Bank Details

**Account Name** Robert J Hanks  
**BSB** 637000  
**Account Number** 726784574

Unisex T shirt Size	SML	MED	LRG	XLG	2XL	3XL	4XL
Body width cm	47	52	56.5	61	64	68	75

Select size by laying a shirt you already own on a flat surface, measure it side to side and pick the next size up if you are in between

#### Your Order Details \$25 per T shirt

**Name**

**Tshirt size:**

**ph:**

**email:**

**UCA Congregation:**

**Address:**

T shirt collection will be before 10th April  
 Details to be advised via the email you put on this form



## Invitation from NSW Synod to attend Hunter Community Alliance Founding Assembly

Greetings

I am looking at UCA people who can be interested to attend the Hunter Community Alliance Founding Assembly.

Our Synod, as member of Sydney Alliance, we wish to show our support for the HCA.

Would there be churches in the Presbytery who are active in Social Justice who would be interested in supporting this initiative please.

I would appreciate if you can promote the email below and invite UCA members to register as UCA members of their church.

The Moderator will be there with some of us from Sydney.

We are looking forward to a good turnout from UCA members.

Thanks, Moni.

**Alimoni (Moni) Taumoepeau**

Team Leader Intercultural Ministry and Climate Action

Uniting Mission and Education

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and ACT

# JOIN US FOR

## Holy Week - Church Crawl 7.00 - 7.30pm

**Monday 25th March  
Hamilton Uniting Church**

**Tuesday 26th March  
Adamstown Uniting Church**

**Wednesday 27th March  
Charlestown Uniting Church**



## Holy Week at CHaGS

Palm Sunday

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March  
9.00am at Charlestown

Maundy Thursday

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March  
7.30pm at Garden Suburb

Good Friday

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March  
9.00am at Charlestown

We mourn the passing of our dear friend

*Ashley Pepper*

And hold Lorraine and family in our hearts and prayers in  
this sad time.

Details of Ashley's Memorial service will be advised

**PICNIC AT NEWCASTLE PEACE PARK  
CLIMATE ACTION - NOT NUCLEAR SUBS**



**PEACE not WAR**

**2pm Sunday 24th March 2024**

**Maitland Rd opp Tighes Hill Tafe**

**scan QR for locatiom**

**Speakers \* Music \* Kids games \***

**Bring blankets, chairs**

**details- events on fb [hunterasylumseekeradvocacy](#)**



**Some of our Church Contacts:**

**Minister**

Rev Tom Stuart

M: 0427 625 502

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

**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

**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

**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>