



CONTACT

Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation



23 July 2023

From Anne Threlfo

After almost five years, I'm in the home stretch of the Listen into Life Spiritual Director formation course, in which I am completing the Personal Transformation stream. There are only four more papers to write, plus a final longer paper reflecting on the entire course. Phew! The paper I'm currently thinking about concerns discernment. Christian discernment is the fostering of our capacity to recognize and respond to the presence and activity of God in our lives. This could equally apply to ordinary and everyday choices as it does to the larger decisions of our lives, as we seek to live a life that reflects the character and nature of God. It's the development, if you like, of our "God" muscle. Will this choice, course of action, state of being, etc draw me toward God or drive me away from God? Where and how is the Kingdom of God revealed in this context? You can see how these types of questions may impact what we buy (Is this coffee ethically grown? Did the company who made my t-shirt pay their workers fair wages?), how we vote (in The Voice referendum for example), or which organisations we support with our resources. These types of questions also apply to us as a congregation, particularly as we continue to explore where God may be leading us in our Neos mission.

Another way of looking at discernment is that of seeking to discover God's will for our lives. Here's a sample of the multitude of scripture passages about discovering God's will:

- "I know the plans I have for you" *Jeremiah 29:11*
- "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother" *Mark 3: 35*
- "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" *1 Thessalonians 5:16*

I don't think for a moment that God has a game plan for me that rivals "Bazball" (topical for cricket fans!), with the consequence that when I made a "wrong" choice as a clueless 18-year-old it was game over, since I had irrevocably and unwittingly wandered away from God's will for my life. Discerning God's will may be more like living a balanced life in a world that tempts me in one direction, while God encourages me toward another way. It might be a process of growth and transformation. It might be recognising that God is present in the discomfort and challenges of life just as much as God is present in the joys and consolations.

Discerning where God is drawing me may also involve becoming more aware and responsive to the desires and yearnings within me, sometimes even (dare I say it!) at the expense of attending to those things for which I believe I am "responsible." My critical self could easily have a field day with such frivolity and irresponsibility, but experience has taught me that God is always in the midst when I listen and act in line with this sense of being drawn. I have engaged in significant conversations, often with people I'll never meet again; I've had opportunities to deepen existing relationships; I've learned how others experience the world; and I've lost track of time in the process of creating - cooking a meal, collaging or journaling for example.

I have learned that discernment or discovering God's will for my life is not only a head-spaced rationalization. It is much more a sense of God speaking through my heart and body, which are also the dwelling places of the Divine.

Continued over.....

It is a means of moving towards a balanced life, with God at the centre, while trusting that I am deeply loved and accompanied in every moment. It is a move towards equanimity and equilibrium. It is to move towards a self that is open, receptive, authentic, and guided by the God who created me.

Where might God be drawing you at this time in your life?

DIARY

Thursday 20 July

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square
NO Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Sunday 23 July – Pentecost 8

9.00am Worship Service – Leader David Chegvidden, Preacher – Andrew Palmer from Wesley Mission

Genesis 28:10-19a; Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24; Romans 8:12-25, Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Tuesday 25 July

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie
12.00pm Ladies Fellowship at Garden Suburb
3.30pm Worship team meet

Thursday 27 July

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

Sunday 30 July – Pentecost 9

9.00am Worship Service – Leader Michael Smith, Preacher – Rev Graham Perry

Genesis 29:15-28; Psalm 105:1-11, 45b; Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Tuesday 1 August

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie
3.30pm Church Council meet on Zoom

Thursday 3 August

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

Sunday 6 August – Pentecost 10

9.00am Worship Service – Leader & Preacher – Rev Tom Stuart

Genesis 32:22-3; Psalm 17:1-7, 15; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:13-21

Monday 7 August

10.00am Visitation at Garden Suburb Aged Care

Tuesday 8 August

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

Wednesday 9 August

10.00am Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

THE PRAYER PAGE



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

Mother Teresa

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Sharon MacDonald and family as they mourn Ken's death
- * Isaak Watson
- * Gloria and family as they mourn John's death
- * Enid Gaynor
- * Tony and family as they mourn Nan's death
- * Anne
- * Mac
- * Jacqueline Fenwick
- * Peter Ferguson
- * Nola
- * Isabella
- * Ashley in hospital
- * Janice Wright
- * Glenda O'Donahue
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Glenn and family following Donna's death,
- * Sue and Warren
- * Mert and Pam
- * Judith and family
- * Lorraine Pepper
- * Enid Power
- * Fred Bryant
- * Max

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

Congregational Prayer Points

- 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 as they pursue property options

Wider Community Prayer Points

- Those suffering from the effects of climate change as the world experiences the hottest week ever recorded
- MissionFest
- Preparations for Voice Referendum
- Bus crash victims' families
- The Congregations of Liverpool Uniting Church and Kincumber Faith Community
- The situation in Ukraine and other trouble spots
- Fabian, children and Wilfreda suffering heart failure
- Tom and NEOS as he follows ideas and opportunities

*Thank
You*

On behalf of the Macdonald family, I wish to thank Tom and everyone else involved in Ken's Memorial Service and Wake. The Service was beautiful, everything the family wished it to be and has helped us to cope with our grief. Your support at this difficult time has been very much appreciated and of great comfort to all of the family.

Sincerely

Sharon Macdonald

Children & Family Worker Update

Hi Everyone

Another great Holiday Kids last Wednesday!!

We celebrated winter with a Snow Day, snow craft items, snowball fights, snowball & spoon races, ice hockey & a great story called Moon Owl, where a child went out into the dark snowy night in search of the moon owl with his Dad. He had to be patient & quiet but eventually he was rewarded with a moon owl. I reminded the children that the snow is pure & clean but can become dirty & muddied. We can be like that too! We start out trying to be good, but sometimes do something wrong which muddies us, but God will always forgive if we ask.

Have a good week.



Uniting Church
SYDNEY OF NSW & ACT



Partnership with the ACT

**SAT.
12 AUG
2023**

**NEWTOWN
MISSION**
9.30 AM -
12.30PM

WALKING TOGETHER 2023 *A VOICE TO PARLIAMENT*



THOMAS MAYO
National Indigenous Officer
of the Maritime Union of
Australia



REV. BILL CREWS
Radio Broadcaster and
Founder The Rev. Bill Crews
Foundation



NATHAN TYSON
Director, First Peoples
Strategy and Engagement,
Synod of NSW & ACT

The Synod of NSW and the ACT, in collaboration with Newtown Mission, is hosting a Forum about the proposed Voice to Parliament, the Synod's second annual Walking Together conference.

KEYNOTE: Thomas Mayo **Q&A PANELLISTS:** Rev. Bill Crews, Nathan Tyson and Thomas Mayo

TICKETS ON SALE NOW! GO TO:
tinyurl.com/RegisterWalkingTogether2023

\$25 In Person | \$10 Online Acces



More information here: <https://www.nswact.uca.org.au/calendar/walking-together-a-voice-to-parliament/>

In person and online tickets here: https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/walking-together-2023-a-voice-to-parliament-tickets-646690457567?aff=erelexpmlt&mc_cid=ea50040115&mc_eid=f838a72f3b

A MEN'S BREAKFAST

Listening to the Heart – Understanding the Voice

This year will be a momentous one for Australia and its relationship with its First Nations people. We're set to vote later in the year on an amendment to the constitution, 'the Voice'.

When the Uluru Statement from the Heart called for a constitutionally enshrined Voice, what was it calling for and why? In this talk we'll learn the context of the Uluru Statement, all about the Voice, and think through what insights does our faith give us on how we should engage with it. We'll also discuss together what the Voice is and what it isn't. Our speaker will be Newcastle man Gershon Nimbalker, the National Director of Common Grace – a movement of tens of thousands of Christians following Jesus to pursue justice together.

at *Charlestown Uniting Church*
24 Milson St

8am Saturday 19th August

Cost \$12 RSVP: Paul Russell
pmraus74@gmail.com, or
0411 236 047

or sign-up sheet in the foyer.
**By Wednesday 16th August
2023**

He is delighted to be led by the voices of Aboriginal Christian leaders in this role as we think through restoration and reconciliation together.



ENTRY: \$20 DONATION

MUSIC @ The Bay

Featuring Performances from:
Waratah Girls' Choir
Easy Voices Choir
Waratah Male Voice Choir
Soloists - Esther Junker and Ekaterina Martin

2pm Saturday August 12, 2023

Location :
The Willows Uniting Church, 342
Hillsborough Road, Warners Bay

Includes a delicious afternoon Tea at the
conclusion of performance.

Supporting Local High School SRE (Scripture) provided
by Charlestown & Warners Bay Christian Education
Associations

More Information :
Contact Paul : 0411 236 047





Some of our Church Contacts:

Minister

Rev Tom Stuart

M: 0427 625 502

E: tom@thestuarts.id.au

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

Administration:

P: 4943 4019

E: office@charlestown.unitingchurch.org.au

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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>



Image of the Divine

This is a two part exercise.

Part One

Recall your earliest images of the Divine, and focus on the one image that predominated for you.

What was the fruit of this image – fear, dread, shame, guilt – or peace, relief, comfort, freedom?

How did this representation of the Divine come into being for you? What people, institutions, and experiences contributed to this image?

Part Two

At this time of your life, now what is your image of the Divine? Does this image help you to live more fully and to deal more peacefully with the circumstances of your life, regardless of what they are?

Can you identify what experiences and people gave rise to this new image?