



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

23 February 2025

From Anne Threlfo

What times we live in! Anyone who keeps even half an eye on daily news bulletins will be distressingly aware of the dire state of our world. It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the stream of disturbing news informing us of conflict, greed, power grasping, the perversion of Christianity, and contempt for anyone who is labelled by the powerful as "other".

What is my place in the world with all this swirling around? How can I stay informed without giving in to despondency? What response is God inviting me toward? How can I be? What can I do? What do other people of faith have to say about our times? Who are the prophets speaking truth to power?

We tend to think of prophets as those who lived far away and long ago such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and John the Baptist. A prophet is one gifted with more than ordinary spiritual and moral insight, or an effective spokesperson for a cause. I have sought out a couple of women whom I regard as modern prophets. The first is Sister Joan Chittister who has advocated for peace, human rights, women's issues, and monastic and church renewal for over 50 years. In her book "Now is the Time", Sister Joan asserts that as Christians, we all have a role in following the path of the prophets, that is, to speak and live God's love in the world. After all, a spiritual life doesn't provide a means of escape, but a way of being entwined with the world, just as Jesus was and is.

Living a prophetic life asks us to live with our eyes and hearts open, to be curious, to ask questions about why the world is the way it is – and not to believe everything we hear in response, and to love our neighbour and creation, all of which can require great courage.

I will probably never be called upon to act as courageously as the other modern prophet I have listened to; Bishop Mariann Budde. Bishop Mariann recently preached at the Presidential Inauguration Service at Washington Cathedral. The well published section of her sermon concerns mercy, in a direct appeal to the new President to extend mercy and compassion to all people who are fearful for their own and their families lives. Before she spoke these words of truth to power, Bishop Mariann paused, probably prayed, took a deep breath, and spoke the love of God into the world in a gentle and even tone.

What do these examples tell me about being a prophet within the much smaller sphere of my life? Primarily, I allow God to continue God's work in me, and keep exploring the questions I asked above.

Continued over

Next, I take notice of what's happening around me, being informed, involved, and courageous as required, thus turning my face to the world. My first response after reading Sister Joan was to register for the Hunter Community Alliance Assembly, a practical, local turning toward the world alongside many others.

Sister Joan suggests that Mary Oliver (another prophet) sums up what it is to be a prophet in this short poem:

Instructions for living a life:

Pay attention.

Be astonished.

Tell about it.

DIARY

Thursday 20 February

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

1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb Church

Sunday 23 February – The Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

10.00am **Divine Worship**

Leader: David Chegwidan

Preacher: Mr Darren Twist – The Principal of Margaret Jurd College

Genesis 45:3-11, 15; Psalm 37:1-11,39-40; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38; Luke 6:27-38, 42-50

2.00pm SRE Dedication Service at New Vine Beaches, Jewells cnr Ntaba and Dalrymple Sts and Halewood Close, Jewells

Monday 24 February

1.30pm SFED on Zoom

3.30pm Worship Team Meeting at Teralba

Tuesday 25 February

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

12.00 noon Garden Suburb Ladies Fellowship Meeting

Thursday 27 February

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

1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb Church

Sunday 2 March – The Transfiguration of Our Lord, Jesus Christ

9.00am **Divine Worship**

Leader and Preacher: The Rev'd Tom Stuart

Children's Corner with Cathy Beeton

Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12 - 4:2; Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)

Wednesday 5 March – The First Day of Lent

10.00am A Service for Ash Wednesday at **Garden Suburb Church**

Leader and Preacher: The Rev'd Tom Stuart

Thursday 6 March

6.00pm Hunter Community Alliance 2025 Assembly at The Great Hall, Uni of Newcastle

Friday 7 March

10.00am World Day of Prayer at Charlestown Church

THE PRAYER PAGE



Prayer is the Voice of Faith

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Those who are mourning loved ones
- * Ange
- * Kim
- * Janice and Don Wright
- * Kelly
- * Laraine Chegwiddden
- * Tony Sellen
- * Vivianne
- * Vicki
- * Pam and Ken
- * Lyn Benson
- * Jean
- * Fred Bryant
- * June Locker
- * Ryan Walpole
- * Kathryn Gray
- * Jacqueline Fenwick
- * Isabella
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Pam and Mert
- * Enid Power
- * Max
- * Don Humphries

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

Congregational Prayer Points

- Church Council
- John Lewis and his work with Wesley Mission in Windale and Hamilton South
- pray for guidance and discernment
missional use of buildings into the future
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Cathy Beeton and SRE classes
- Worship Committee

Wider Community Prayer Points

- World Day of Prayer on 7 March at Charlestown Church
- Orphanage in Kenya and Wilfreda
- Neos ministry
- Those affected by climate change in Australia eg floods, droughts and fires
- The situation in Israel and Palestine
- The situation in Ukraine and other trouble spots





In response to the flooding in North Queensland, the Moderator's Disaster Appeal has been activated to provide people the opportunity to donate to the front-line efforts of our congregations and agencies in the affected areas.

Please note: donations are not tax-deductible.

Donate here" <https://ucaqld.com.au/give-online/disaster-relief/>

Fixing the Housing Crisis for folk in the Hunter

What about the state and federal government deliver social, affordable and other housing projects in the Hunter, including transitional housing for people fleeing domestic and family violence. Also, what about the federal government, rather than just saving money in the Social Housing Accelerator Fund, they spend the money on housing. And what about the federal and state governments spending at least \$3 million dollars a year on homelessness services in the Hunter? Well, this is what will be put to the politicians who attend the Hunter Community Alliance Assembly on

Thursday 6:30pm March 6

The challenge is to ensure enough people are attending the event to let the politicians know we are serious about getting this crisis fixed! One of the things we need is empathy. Empathy means to feel in your own being what it is like to have the price of houses skyrocket so it is impossible to buy a home. Or to not be able to put food on your plate just so to pay the rent. Or not be able to escape domestic violence because there is nowhere to go. If you can attend please check the registration details that are given elsewhere in this newsletter, or contact Tom.



Children & Family Worker Update



This week I delivered 30 pencil cases filled with, textas, colouring pencils, lead pencils, erasers, sharpeners, rulers, glue sticks for older children pens, coloured pens & highlighters to Wiripaang School where the school liaison person, Aaron, was delighted with our packs & told me the children love receiving them. I am hoping he will send through some photos soon & I will include in next week's contact.

I have started back with my first Scripture Class this week & next week will be 2 classes, don't forget the **SRE Dedication Service is this Sunday** at New Vine Beaches Jewells at 2pm, I hope you can join me as we show our support to all SRE teachers.

Cathy

Spiritual Practice of the Week

Mindfulness/Attentiveness: Mindfulness is a state of active, open, nonjudgmental attention to what is unfolding now in the moment in the presence of God.

Practice: Keep a record of your positive and negative judgments throughout the day. What do your judgments reveal? Talk to God about what you see.

These resources come from Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us (Transforming Resources). InterVarsity Press

2025

HUNTER COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

“ASSEMBLY”



Coming together as civil society for the common good
Celebrating commitments, change and hope

6th March 2025

6pm inside for briefing

6.30pm to 8.30pm Assembly

The Great Hall, University of Newcastle

TIME FOR THE UNITING CHURCH TO SHOW UP AGAIN!
SIGN UP TO ATTEND BY BOOKING YOUR FREE TICKET/S
HUMANITIX [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/2VD6D5MS](https://tinyurl.com/2VD6D5MS)



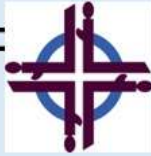
Energy Transition, Affordable Housing,
Stretched Services and more....



You're invited to turn out and participate in God's mission

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/2nua9cb2>

WORLD DAY OF
PRAYER
SERVICE 2025

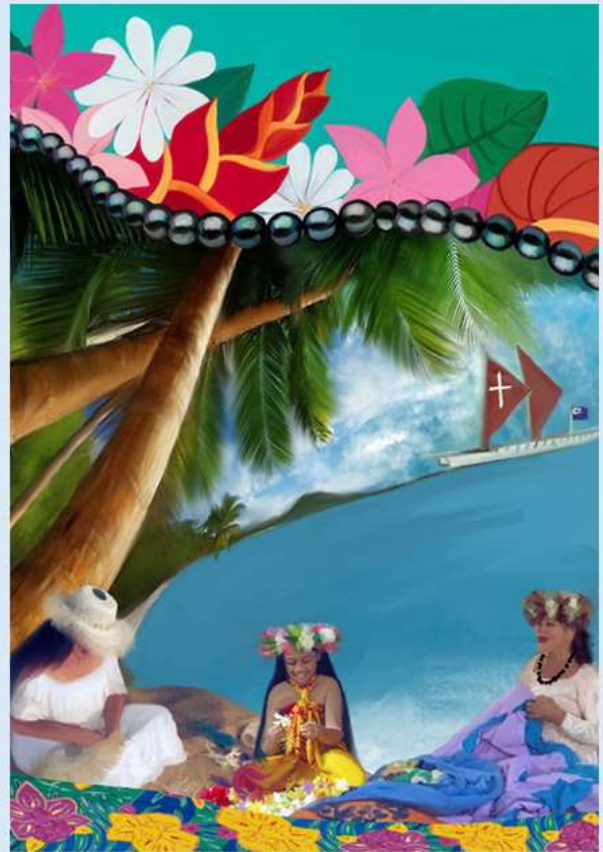


The Cook Islands

‘I made you
wonderful’

www.worlddayofprayeraustralia.org

**10am 7th March at Charlestown
Uniting Church**



Girls Night Out

Placing value on friendship

Café Night

Monday 3 March 2025 at Garden Suburb Uniting Church from 7.00pm (for catch up)

Then 7.30 – 9.15pm with Guest Speaker: Julie Parsons from Ronald McDonald House

And Soloist: Caitlin Russell

Donation \$15

Ph. Sue 0425 375 528 or Cathy 0409 445 933



PAINTING THE STARS

Science, Religion and an Evolving Faith

Join us for Painting the Stars, a seven-part DVD series that celebrates the communion of science and faith through the lens of evolutionary Christian spirituality.

Each session features insights from leading theologians and progressive thinkers, followed by a guided group discussion.

More Information

Di. 0402 107 772
Charmaine. 0414 386 145

**Commencing
Tuesday 11/03
from 7pm**

Session 1: 11/03 | Session 2: 25/03
Session 3: 08/04
Holiday Break
Session 4: 06/05 | Session 5: 20/05
Session 6: 03/06 | Session 7: 17/06

EFTPOS
available

€30 for all 7 sessions

\$5
per session

The Bridge
MIND BODY SPIRIT



Hamilton
Uniting Church

TV Screen in Foyer!

A conversation began late last year about attaching a TV screen to the church foyer wall above where the sign "Uniting Church" is located. This is then attached to an internet connection with a feed that streams information to the screen. That information would include all of the activities that are taking place on the church property. As to what else goes on there is limited only by our imaginations. The idea is to support a sense of community as people who come for their activity will see all the other groups that make up the life of the building.

This will also help the church move beyond a merely transactional relationship with these groups. We will be engaging with them to help support and grow their organisations, groups, and activities. At the same time, we will communicate what is happening in the congregation's life, along with information about those organisations we support. We could include messages faith and life that arise out of our Christian tradition. We had only got as far as discussing ideas about this, however, a very large TV more than adequate for the task has been made available to the congregation. We will collect the TV sometime this week. For the moment it will be stored but rest assured you will hear more about it soon!



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>