



# CONTACT

Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting  
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

15 January 2023



## From Rev Tom

In 2001 I started what was called the “Elvis Presley Gospel Celebration”. I was at Parkes at the time and it was all part of the Parkes Elvis Festival. That first gospel service was attended by 80 people. It was a nervous start. Quite a few in the congregation, even in the leadership, thought it was a crazy idea. Well, I was asked back for the gospel service last Sunday, this the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the gospel services, to recollect old times. This time 4,000 people were in attendance. It was wonderful to see that something I started so long ago has developed so much, and that the local people have continued to make it grow. The marvellous thing is that each year the “gospel” is communicated to people who otherwise would never step inside a church. On this occasion too, I had opportunity of inviting people to choose God, to choose love, whatever their circumstances. I remember the way I got into ministry in the first place was when I became a youthworker. It was 1980, and I lived in Griffith. I asked the Minister if we could have one of the Elders of the congregation given the job of simply look after the youth ministry. Effectively his reply was, “Do it yourself! (and we will pay you).” Well, it turned out that I only did that job a little over twelve months, but the ministry that I began lasted 20 years. Another venture that began 20 years ago was Project Reconnect. I remember being told by a woman at the church in Gunningbland that Project Reconnect was a crazy idea and that it wouldn’t work. That same woman became one of its greatest advocates. I am not one for statistics but I am pretty sure that Project Reconnect has supported about 100 congregations over the 20-year period. It seems that I am back there again, starting something new – “Neos”. This Sunday I will be commissioned to venture out into the community to simply discover what God is doing out there. My task is to make new connections with those people who don’t come near the church. Just like when the church in Griffith decided to create a youthworker role, just like when we started Project Reconnect, and just like when we started the Elvis Gospel Service, not everyone thought it was a good idea. In fact, I wasn’t sure myself if they were good ideas. But there was only one way to find out. The name of the new ministry I will be doing is “Neos”. That is simply “New” in Greek. Hopefully this ministry will last long enough that a new name will be required. It involves going outside of my traditional ministry role for 25% of my time. Hopefully the Whitebridge Church will be leased out soon to help pay for this new form of ministry. My intention is to write in the Contact Newsletter what I discover as I explore all the groups that are out there in the community, simply starting conversations with people



while walking around the street. As I write what I discover in Contact I hope it will mean you participate with me in this journey, and that you might pray for the people and groups. So, this Sunday Raymond Josso from Synod, and Rod Pattendon from the Presbytery, will attend our service of worship. They will represent the Synod and Presbytery in supporting us embark in what I believe is a pretty unique venture. Let us pray that this is another beginning of something that just continues to grow.



# DIARY

## **Sunday 15 January** – Epiphany 2

9.00am Holy Communion Service – Leader Rev Tom Stuart, Preacher Anne Threlfo  
Rev Dr Raymond Josso from Synod and Rev Dr Rod Pattendon from  
Presbytery will be in attendance

*Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42*

## **Tuesday 17 January**

10.00am Funeral service for Nita Thomas at Charlestown Uniting Church

## **Thursday 19 January**

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square

## **Sunday 22 January** – Epiphany 3 – **Aboriginal Sunday**

9.00am Worship Service – Leader Beryl Gaul, Preacher – Rev Tom Stuart

*Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23*

## **Tuesday 23 January**

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

## **Thursday 25 January**

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square

## **Sunday 29 January** – Epiphany 4

9.00am **Closing Worship service at Whitebridge Uniting Church**

Leader & Preacher – Rev Tom Stuart

*Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12*

## **Tuesday 31 January**

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

## **Thursday 2 February**

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square

## **Sunday 5 February** – Presentation of the Lord

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

*Malachi 3: 1-4; Psalm 84, Hebrews 2: 14-18; Luke 2: 22-40*

## **Tuesday 7 February**

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

## **Thursday 9 February**

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Cha

## **Sunday 12 February** – Epiphany 6

9.00am Worship Service – Leader and Preacher – TBA

2.30pm SRE Dedication Service at Charlestown Uniting Church

*Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Psalm 119:1-8; 1 Corinthians 3:1-9; Matthew 5:21-37*

## **Tuesday 14 February**

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

## **Thursday 16 February**

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square

## **Saturday 18 February**

8.00am Men's Breakfast at Charlestown



## **Holiday Arrangements for “Contact” and Mail Outs**

- There will be a mail out on Wednesday 11 January.
- The office will be closed on 18 January.
- Emailing of the weekly booklet will continue.
- Contact and mail outs will resume on 25 January – office opening 12pm, just for this day

# THE PRAYER PAGE

*And so I urge you: carry on an ongoing conversation with God about the daily stuff of life, a little like Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof. For now, do not worry about 'proper' praying, just talk to God."*  
Richard J. Foster



## Pastoral Prayer Points

- \* Family of Nita Thomas
- \* Family of Wilma Birch
- \* Family of Brian Doherty
- \* Family of Eric Hancock
- \* Family of Molly Wilson
- \* Elaine Ross
- \* Donna and family
- \* Sue and Warren
- \* Mac and family
- \* Cat and Ezra
- \* Family of Jean Townsend
- \* Marion Box
- \* Susan Asplund
- \* Enid Gaynor
- \* Gloria and John Booth
- \* Vivianne
- \* Lillian
- \* Tony and Nan
- \* Mert and Pam
- \* Judith and family
- \* Ashley and Lorraine
- \* Ken and Sharon MacDonald
- \* Enid Power
- \* Fred Bryant
- \* Max

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

## Congregational Prayer Points

- Preparation for Neos and commissioning of Tom this Sunday
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Lease of Whitebridge property
- Tom and Kathy
- Cathy Beeton
- Worship Committee

## Wider Community Prayer Points

- Flood Victims
- Wilfreda's orphanage
- Families of those who have drowned and those who have been killed in road accidents these holidays
- Situation in Brazil



# Special Service of Closure

At

## Whitebridge Uniting Church

**Sunday 29 January at 9.00am**

The service will not be live streamed, but will be recorded for viewing a few days afterwards.

Please pass on an invitation to attend to anyone who has had a connection with Whitebridge.

*(Note that there will be no service at Charlestown on this morning)*



## 2023 SRE Dedication

**Sunday 12 February**

**2.30pm**

**Charlestown Uniting Church**

**All Welcome to come and support SRE teachers and students**



*Tom and Kathy are on holiday!*

From Sunday 5  
February to Saturday  
11 February  
(inclusive)

Please direct all questions and concerns to Julie Fenwick, or speak with your Elder.

A service to celebrate the life of our dear friend

*Nita Thomas*

will be held at  
Charlestown Uniting Church  
Then to Whitebridge Cemetery on

Tuesday 17 January  
At 10am

## Advocating for Child Protection and Anti Violence campaigning

**Astrid Hocking** will be our speaker. Astrid has always shown a passion for the protection of children and the vulnerable in many roles over the years - working, volunteering and in advocacy.

She was a teacher in early years, then a foster carer for 24 years for 90 children. She is involved in issues relating to homelessness, domestic violence and food poverty, and has shone a light for others, and encouraged them to follow their own journeys in helping others.

At the time Astrid and her husband Frank decided to stop fostering, she had a chance encounter which changed her life's direction that means she is now the chairperson of a registered charity (Hearts and Hands Community Development). You will hear about a variety of programmes which the charity conducts.

### **A Men's Breakfast**

at *Charlestown Uniting Church - 24  
Milson St*

**8am Saturday 18th February**

Cost \$12 RSVP: Paul Russell  
pmraus74@gmail.com, or 0411 236 047  
or sign-up sheet in the foyer.

*Please advise of any special dietary requirements*

**By Wednesday 15th February 2023**

*Please do not attend if you are unwell or have  
been to a Covid-19 hotspot in the previous 14  
days.*

### **Some of our Church Contacts:**

#### **Minister**

Rev Tom Stuart

M: 0427 625 502

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

#### **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

#### **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

#### **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>