



CONTACT

Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

27 November 2022



From Rev Tom

I attended Presbytery along with three members of our congregation last night. Anne Threlfo led a part of the opening worship, and presented a very brief report on our successful application for \$10,000 to research the best use of our two remaining properties as we venture down the road of “Neos”. More about that shortly.

Some big news is the decision by Presbytery to dissolve the Merewether Congregation, according to their request. After the Presbytery accepted the proposal from the Merewether Congregation the Chairperson of the Presbytery, Rev. Greg McConnell asked the gathering if those who were familiar with the congregation 20 years ago would have ever dreamed that this day would be possible. It seemed the resounding reply was, “Unimaginable!” There is a lot of work for the Presbytery now, to respond to the pastoral care of those who were members, and working out what to do with property, given the existing leasing arrangements with groups and organisations. Understandably there is an enormous amount of heartache, even as this was a request by the congregation members themselves. I firmly believe that whatever it looks like, the story of the Merewether Congregation is part of God’s ultimate saving and glorious plan. We know throughout the history of the Judeo-Christian faith God transforms apparent defeat, loss, and death, into glorious victory, and new life. It would just be good if we could see from God’s eternal perspective, but the fact is we don’t and we can’t. So, endings carry so much pain, but no doubt those in the Merewether Congregation will be able to recall the remarkable work of God, in and through the lives of so many along the way. Perhaps this might even increase the sense of grief, that such wonder, joy, and sense of life, realised in the community of the Merewether folk now comes to an end.

It was in that context that, it was so good to hear the story of our “Neos” at presbytery, even though Anne only had about a minute to share it. This congregation has agreed that my ministry, 25% of it in the first year, will be simply to go out and find what God is up to out in the community – beyond the boundaries of our congregation. Neos is Greek for “new”, so we as a congregation have chosen to find out what the new thing is. The focus of the meeting last night was to plan for the future within this presbytery – in the context of an overall trend that all too often looks like the Merewether outcome. I have a feeling that no one quite gets what we are up to, that is, Neos. It seems most prefer to devise plans, say a program for youth, or young mothers, or for refugees. Those programs are so people will somehow join in with the church. But there doesn’t seem to be a prior question – are those people even interested in what we are planning? No doubt eventually someone will hit the jackpot, but I think going out into the community without a predetermined plan is important, at least for someone to do. That way we might discover needs, concerns, passions, that we never dream of.

Continued over



Rev Tom continued

I must confess that I am not sure I am the best person for the job. But I also know that it would be near impossible for this congregation to progress this if I stepped aside at this stage. So, I hope I will be able to help sustain ongoing leadership and coordination of ministry of the existing congregation, while making an initial foray into the community beyond. And as we strengthen the financial foundations, begin to discern the particular skills we need out there in ministry in the community, and as the life of this congregation adapts to its evolving circumstances, we may be able to call someone specifically suited to the task.

It is like as if I am back to the beginning of my ministry. When I was 19 I became the first youth worker in the Griffith UCA (no training for the role). I only filled the role for a bit over 12 months. However, that role and ministry continued beyond me for another 20 years. Perhaps my ministry might end in the manner it began. I hope we all pray so!

DIARY

Thursday 24 November

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

Sunday 27 November – Advent Sunday

9.00am Worship Service – Leader – Beryl Gaul, Preacher – Rev Tom Stuart
Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122, Romans 13:9-14, Matthew 24:36-44

Monday 28 November

9.00am-4.00pm HCA Community Organising Training at Garden Suburb UC – Day 1

Tuesday 29 November

9.00am-4.00pm HCA Community Organising Training at Garden Suburb UC – Day 2
9.30am - 11.00am Grandparents, Carers, Kids at Garden Suburb
3.30pm Worship Team Meeting at 'The White House'

Thursday 1 December

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

Sunday 4 December – Advent 2

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

Isaiah 11:1-10, Psalm 72,1-7,18-19, Romans 15:4-13, Matthew 3:1-12

Monday 5 December

10.00am Visitation at Garden Suburb Aged Care

Tuesday 6 December

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie
3.00pm Church Council meet at Charlestown

Wednesday 7 December

4.00pm – 7.00pm Kids Advent Workshop at Charlestown

Thursday 8 December

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square
11.00am Worship at Garden Suburb Aged Care
1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Saturday 10 December

8.00am Men's Breakfast at Charlestown
TBA Friendship Circle

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

- * Cat and Ezra and extended family following the death of Scott
- * Family of Jean Townsend
- * Family of Ron Box, especially Marion
- * Family of Margaret Asplund, especially her daughter, Susan
- * praise for the fact Enid Gaynor is home
- * Anne Hall
- * John Trenholm
- * Nita
- * Gloria and John Booth
- * Vivianne
- * Lillian
- * Jan Russell
- * Tony and Nan
- * Mert and Pam
- * Judith and family
- * Ashley and Lorraine
- * Ken and Sharon MacDonald
- * Wilma Birch
- * Enid Power
- * Fred Bryant
- * Max

Congregational Prayer Points

- Pray that Tom will be supported in his role with families experiencing bereavement
- Community Alliance training at Garden Suburb Church on 28-29th November
- Preparation for Neos
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Lease of Whitebridge property
- Tom and Kathy
- Cathy Beeton
- Worship Committee

Wider Community Prayer Points

- Flood Victims
- Pray for situations in China, Taiwan and North Korea
- Those experiencing drought in the Continent of South Africa
- Wilfreda's orphanage
- Those with financial difficulties in current conditions

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power



Covid Update

Covid-19 hasn't gone away! As you will have heard in news reports, there is currently an increase in Covid-19 cases, hospitalisations and deaths. This has prompted the NSW Synod of the Uniting Church to issue an information update.

What does that mean for us?

- **Wearing face masks**

The NSW Government **strongly recommends** the wearing of face masks in indoor public areas when you can't physically distance from others.



Our Church Council will consider at the December meeting whether we will make the wearing of face masks mandatory. In the meantime, please consider wearing a mask in our buildings, particularly if you are not able to socially distance.

- **Room Ventilation**

Improving ventilation has been proved to minimise the risk of transmission of the Covid virus. Please ensure that as far as practicable, windows and doors are open, and ceiling fans are on when a number of people are in a room.

- **Social Distancing**

Please social distance where possible.

- **Other Covid safe measures**

- Stay at home if you feel unwell
- Continue good hand hygiene practices
- *Stay up to date with vaccinations*

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Anne Threlfo

Ph: 4953 1300 Mob: 0439 754 376

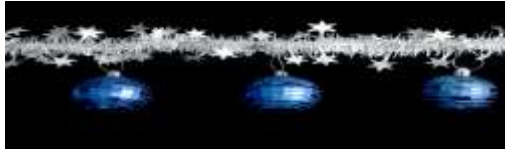
Email: annethrelfo@gmail.com



Advent and Christmas Services



- Our 9am Sunday Morning worship will continue at Charlestown throughout Advent, and will be livestreamed and recorded.
- A Christmas Eve service will take place at Garden Suburb Uniting Church at 6.30pm.
- There will be a Christmas Day service at 9am at Charlestown, which will be livestreamed and recorded.



Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

Wednesday 14th December

Christmas Gathering

All Welcome



Meeting at Poppies Café in Oakdale Road at
10.00am

Please let Sue Warren know if you are coming on
0427 737 793
so that a table can be set aside



Seeing the Poor and Marginalised as part of the solution, not the problem.

Our Speaker will be **Simon Lynch**, who oversees Opportunity International Australia's work in Indonesia that currently serves over 1.4 million families.

Simon has worked in the Development and Micro Enterprise sector for over 25 years, having both established and developed organisations throughout Asia. He will share of his journey from the corporate scene into development, part of which included living in slums and volunteering with Mother Teresa, where he learnt that the key to good development is ensuring you build a person's dignity in the process. Through walking alongside people in poverty he discovered how incredibly hard working they are and when given a chance, they can turn a very small loan and some training into an ongoing income for their families.

A Men's Breakfast

at Charlestown Uniting Church - 24 Milson St

8am Saturday 10th December

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 7th December 2022

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

A PASSING THOUGHT...

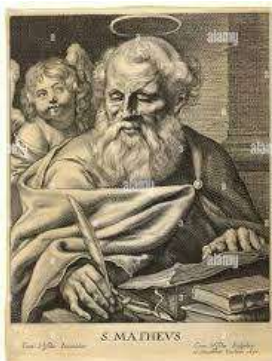


Julie Andrews sang a song in “The Sound of Music”

**“Let’s start at the very beginning,
a very good place to start.”**

And so it is for us come this Sunday, The First Sunday of Advent, which is also the start of the Churches’ New Liturgical Year. (Last Sunday was exactly that, the last Sunday of the old Liturgical Year, in most Churches, across God’s wonderful globe.)

The ‘years’ run in three year cycles, A B & C, covering all of the New Testament and huge chunks of the Old Testament...even slipping into the Apocrypha, once or twice. Last Year, C, we studied Luke’s Gospel, the year before, B, Mark’s Gospel with this year being Year A, Matthew’s Gospel – with each of them including many sojourns into John’s Gospel, just to ‘balance the books’ so to speak!



To get back to my opening quotation, Matthew is a very good place to start the Gospel readings for it connects the Old and New Testaments superbly! For Matthew is the only writer in the New Testament who wrote exclusively in Hebrew (Aramaic) as he only meant it to be read by the Jews who were Christian, connecting the OT prophecies with just ‘who’ this Jesus was! (The other authors wrote their efforts in Greek, which could be understood by the world at large.)

So, who is this dude Matthew?! Well...he has two names – Levi, who was the son of Alphaeus and Matthew, as Jesus renamed him once he had accepted Jesus as his Saviour. Ain’t that a bit queer, you ask? Well, no. One of his ‘comrades in arms’ also had a name change with his change of heart...Simon became Peter, remember? Not to mention Abram in the OT becoming Abraham.... not forgetting Saul to Paul.

Matthew knew his community, and history, probably better than your average member of the Jewish folk as he was a notorious tax collector (read, ‘crook’!) someone reviled and rejected by the other members of the Jewish Nation. You will remember that Rome was the cruel and terrifying occupying force in all of Palestine, and to Caesar and Rome did all monies go...oh, except the ‘extra’ tax that the tax collectors charged with which to line their very own pockets...grrrrh...nasty, nasty men! They were the lowest of the low, ripping off their friends (if they had any!) and the community – in Matthew’s case, those living in Capernaum.

His main gift to Jesus’ collection of ‘merry men’, (the 12 Apostles), was his pen and ink for, as we see, he was a great recorder good enough for the A.T.O.!! Even offer, is most precious to “our King of Princes”. Whatever we offer is we must never either forget that though we may not think of them smallest of ‘gifts’, for He knows it comes from our heart!



and writer, previously making details the most insignificant gift we have to of Kings, Lord of Lords, the only Ruler truly treasured by Jesus – and blest – fact...not hide our ‘talents’, for even as much, Jesus values even the

May our gracious God continue to bless you in your pilgrimage with Jesus!



*Charlestown
Friendship
Circle
Christmas Party*



*Will be held at Robyn and Geoff
Greaves house on
Saturday 10th December at
6.00pm*

All Welcome



*Please bring a plate of food and
let Robyn and Geoff know that
you will be attending*



**Hamilton Wesley Uniting Church
& Bill's Place**



**TREES & ART
for CHARITY**

**Come and see 14 beautiful Christmas Trees that have been decorated
by local organisations.**

**Admire the trees, donate and vote for your favourite!
Your donation will help make a real difference
this Christmas to the charities these trees represent.**



**Affordable, quality artwork by local, well known
and talented artists priced from as little as \$50
A great way to buy original art for Christmas
while supporting those in need.**

**15TH NOV TO 17TH DEC MONDAY TO FRIDAY 9.30AM TO 2.30PM
SATURDAY 9.30AM TO 1PM**

150 Beaumont Street, Hamilton

Toronto Uniting Church
118 The Boulevard Toronto 2283

Nativity Display

All ages welcome!
Activities for children!
Refreshments!



Thursday 1 December 10.00am to 4.00pm
Friday 2 December 10.00am to 4.00pm
Saturday 3 December 10.00am to 5.00pm (including Market Stalls)
Sunday 4 December 10.30am to 12.00noon

Come to see the Christmas story!
Experience the joy of this special time of year!

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
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>