



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

16 March 2025

From Rev Tom

Yesterday a quarter of the front page of the Newcastle Herald was given to an advertisement by the Clive Palmer party "Trumpet of Patriots". The advert was an attack on a minority group in our community (I will give no more detail than that). The Herald editor has since apologised for the advertisement claiming they were not aware of the content of the advert at the time of printing. That is all very fine, but Palmer and the Newcastle Herald have caused much pain. The issue attacked is one that causes great challenges within our community in many ways and will do no one any good to be dealt with so insensitively. Today I will ring the Newcastle Herald and say I am cancelling my subscription. I will say, that if they announce that they will donate the proceeds from the advert to an organisation that promotes inclusive community and participatory democracy, then I will renew my subscription. It needs to be made clear. Clive Palmer and the super-wealthy like him do not care one bit about the issue raised in the advertisement. Palmer knows there is a lot of unhappiness in the community. That unhappiness is caused by issues like rising costs, the housing crisis, low wages, and job uncertainty. These problems always arise in a society where inequality increases. The wealthy become very sensitive to unrest in the community. So, what do they do? They create a diversion. They find a target where members of the community can vent their spleen ... a scapegoat. The issues they pick are issues that cause division, that divide people. A divided community cannot build power against unjust social and economic systems. We have witnessed it for years. A favourite is "boat people". Even while we live in such a remote area of the world politicians and media convince us we are to be afraid of boat people, even while increasing immigration. The wealthy love immigration, it pushes up competition for jobs, and competition for jobs holds wages low. Hi immigration increases demand for products therefore elevating prices. Our Indigenous community is another target where politicians and the like claim a huge waste of government funds. Yet in 2021 the International Monetary Fund estimated that Australia's fossil fuel subsidies were about \$44.49 billion. On the other hand, in the same period, housing and infrastructure projects for Indigenous communities were \$647 million. I am sure Clive Palmer will never complain about the huge generosity of governments toward his mining exploits that help sustain his wealth, money coming out of our taxes. The Newcastle Herald claimed they did not know the nature of the advert. I believe that to be true. However, it is an example of the increasing power of big finance and the collapse of civil society where a robust media was once a bulwark against injustice and inequality. There is no doubt that Clive Palmer is emboldened by what is happening in the US. He has seen how a restless population can be manipulated. On Ash Wednesday, Transfiguration Sunday, and the first Sunday of Lent encouraged us all to consider the world about us. I invite everyone to consider how we are influenced by that *world*. Then, let us observe Jesus' priorities, his commitment to the poor, the dispossessed, the *unclean*, and the alien, and stand against inequality, injustice, and wealth. Then, even as our human instincts recoil let us renew our resolve to live according to the way of Jesus.

DIARY

Thursday 13 March

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

10.30am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care

1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb Church

Friday 14 March

6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah

Sunday 16 March – The Second Sunday of Lent

9.00am **The Holy Communion**

Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom Stuart

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27; Philipians 3:17 - 4:1; Luke 13:31-35 or Luke 9:28-36 (37-43a)

Monday 17 March

10.00am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visitation

Tuesday 18 March

9.00am **Needlework n Natter**

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Thursday 20 March

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 March – The Third Sunday of Lent

9.00am The Divine Worship

Leader: Margaret White Preacher: Project Reconnect, Ms Carolyn Sharp

Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

Tuesday 25 March

10.00am **Garden Suburb Ladies Fellowship visit to Ronald McDonald House**

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

3.30pm Worship Committee Meeting at Teralba

Thursday 27 March

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

LOOKING AHEAD

Saturday 5 April – Family Fun Trivia Night & Auction – CCEA SRE Fundraiser 7.00pm

Saturday 12 April – A Men's Breakfast – Give me the Mountain - With Guest Speaker David Stephenson Managing Director of YWAM

THE PRAYER PAGE



Prayer is the Voice of Faith

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Those who are mourning loved ones
- * Mike Warren
- * 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

- Margaret Jurd College and Darren Twist
the Principal
- Young people who struggle to participate
in our school system
- 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



An observation by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle about the Hunter Community Alliance Assembly

The following comments were made by Dr Ross Kerridge on his Facebook page on Monday 10 March.

On Thursday night (6th), I attended the assembly of the Hunter Community Alliance at the University's Great Hall. It was an extraordinarily impressive gathering of over 800 people. The Alliance brings together local community groups, unions and faith organisations, focusing on fairness and justice, particularly with regard to housing/homelessness, social inclusion, and climate change.

Among the aspects of the assembly that I found really impressive was the clear ground rules that emphasised respectful interaction (no booing, heckling, etc.), punctuality and timelines, and an emphasis on listening to voices from the community. The assembly aimed to speak to the politicians rather than the other way around.

The assembly started with a roll-call of representatives from the various participating groups. Each spoke very briefly (about 30 seconds!) outlining who they were and why they were there. This display of commitment and discipline by so many was powerful in itself.

There were then succinct and clear summaries of the results from the founding assembly in April last year. This was followed by testimonies making the case for further progress.

The meeting then proceeded with multiple representatives presenting the case for the Alliance's 'Asks' - firstly with regard to housing and homelessness and then with regard to energy and climate change.

The 'Asks', as well as the agenda and script for the entire evening were based on pre-organised consensus.

These 'Asks' were then presented to the political representatives in attendance: Sharon Claydon MP (on behalf of The Hon Clare O'Neill, Minister for Housing and Homelessness), and the Hon Chris Bowen, Minister for Climate Change and Energy.

The 'Asks' were specific, measurable, achievable and realistic. They focused on maintaining increased funding for social housing over the next term of parliament; funding for crisis/transitional accommodation and homelessness services; support for energy programs for social and low income housing; and a commitment to establish 'local energy hubs' in the Hunter region.

The politicians did not give an unequivocal 'yes' to all the 'Asks', but were able to make a positive commitment to work towards them. This response from the politicians was partly a reflection on how well-organised the Alliance has been.

The evening ended exactly on time, and there was a very positive feeling from the room that things of value had been achieved.

Apart from the very important issues that were the focus of the evening, there were some very important lessons for me from the evening with regard to community organisation and politics.

Firstly, the evening was such a contrast to so many public meetings that I have attended. Meetings that get derailed by rambling and undisciplined speeches from the floor, arguments about minor points of wording of motions, and unrealistic calls for action. The HCA's assembly

shows the importance of being well-organised, structured, and consensus-based. Calls for action or change need to be realistic and achievable. They are then difficult for politicians to say no to, even if they can't say yes. These are lessons for anyone wishing to be involved in grassroots community action.

Secondly, there was the size, diversity and enthusiasm of the audience. It is clear that many people in the community wish to be heard, and wish to participate in community advocacy. That said, it is clear that the conventional political party structures, and bureaucratic power structures, are letting them down. There are lessons in this for us all.

Congratulations to the organisers of the Hunter Community Alliance. By providing a platform for so many of the community to be listened to, you are empowering us all.



Holy Week and Easter Services



Palm Sunday 13 April

9am at Charlestown Church

Maundy Thursday 17 April

7.30pm at Garden Suburb Church

Good Friday 18 April

9am at Charlestown Church

Easter Day 20 April

9am at Charlestown Church

Children & Family Worker Update



Just a quick update on SRE in schools.

All my schools have returned to SRE, I teach approximately 110 children weekly over 3 schools:

Teralba

Valentine &

Redhead Schools

& as of next term I will do an SRE Assembly at **Charlestown East School** twice a term for approximately 150 children.

Thank you to all who supported SRE at the SRE Dedication Service & also to those who have supported SRE financially towards the cost of teachers' manuals & workbooks.

If you would like to support SRE in our area please consider attending the **Charlestown SRE Board Trivia Night on the 5th April**, see Paul about tickets or consider a donation if you are unable to attend.

Cathy

FAMILY FUN TRIVIA NIGHT & AUCTION CCEA SRE FUNDRAISER

LET THE
GAMES
BEGIN!



BYO Snacks
(Nut free zone),
Drinks, Tea & coffee
for Sale

SATURDAY 5TH APRIL 2025

7PM AT

HUNTER CHRISTIAN CHURCH

20A HILLSCREST PRD, HIGHFIELDS

TABLES OF 8 OR INDIVIDUAL TICKETS AVAILABLE
(\$20 PERSON - UNDER 16 FREE)

Enquiries & booking
Contact Hunter Christian Church
02 4942 1351
info@hcc.org.au

Come and take part in a
silent auction to raise money
for SRE at
Whitebridge High

Spiritual Practice of the Week

Sobriety: Healthy babies are born sober. They don't crave what is not good for them. Sobriety is living in a state of independence from unhealthy mind and body altering substances and attachments.

Practice: Consider what soft addictions you rely on to get through the week. Let them go for a season and turn to God instead.

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



Bring a
Friend!

With Guest Speaker

David Stephenson

Give me the Mountain

Stories of reaching Ukrainians and Syrians

Charlestown Uniting Church – 24 Milson Street

8am Saturday 12th April

Cost \$12 RSVP to Paul Russell

0411 236047 pmraus74@gmail.com By 9th April 2025

David Stephenson is the Managing Director of Youth With A Mission (YWAM's) operations in the Hunter.

YWAM locally have trained over 3000 missionaries since inception, and have provided over 600,000 Volunteer contact hours over the last ten years. They have been given the keys to the city, and were recently recognised by the City of Newcastle for their contribution to the people of Ukraine.



Plant Propagation Workshop

March 22nd 2pm to 4pm

Glenrock Anglican Hall Kahibah

Tickets: \$10 via Humanitix



Special rates available
greatercharlestownsng@gmail.com

Some of our Church Contacts:

Minister

Rev Tom Stuart
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Administration:

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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>