



# CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting  
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

**15 September 2024**

## **From Rev Tom**

Last week I referred to how I have been alerted to the recommendation from the Uniting Church Assembly that we say the Acknowledgement at the beginning of our worship. I began writing my personal story as why this has particularly struck a chord with me. Last week I talked about my childhood experiences and my connection with Aboriginal people in Griffith and Menindee. When in Menindee I was a Lay Pastor. While I was in that role the person in charge of the Board of Mission was Rev Robert Smith. He was effectively my boss. He suggested I should train for the Ordained Ministry. I decided I would go that way and while Kathy was pregnant with our first child we headed to Armidale so I would complete a Bachelor's Degree in Social Science. I remember saying to an expert in Indigenous Studies that I would like to learn about Aboriginal Culture, particularly so I could sensitively interact with Aboriginal People. I noticed when in Menindee that, despite my valuing of the cultural differences I experienced, there were some things I found confusing. The response from the said expert was "The best way to understand Aboriginal people is by being with them!" Well, it took some years before that could occur. Next, I went to theological college in Sydney. Then my first placement in ministry was Nyngan. An Aboriginal woman was a member of the congregation. Her name was Kay. She had an effervescent personality and I remember whenever it was time to "Bring a plate" to a function Kay would bring sandwiches. Every time, each sandwich would have white bread on one side and brown bread on the other, and she would turn up with a twinkle in her eye saying, "See, I'm not racist!" Three months in at Nyngan there was the 1990 Nyngan flood and the next three years of ministry was taken up with the consequences of that. Then Kathy and I moved to Gloucester. While in Gloucester I became involved in a reconciliation group. We met monthly. There was a small Aboriginal population at Gloucester and we would have travelling days where we would visit the places where those Aboriginal folks grew up and they would tell us their stories. I loved it! We also managed to paint a large wall in the main street featuring some Aboriginal Dreamtime. We always found it really satisfying that it was never vandalised. It seemed to be highly regarded in the town by young and old. While in Gloucester a man, who I discovered was a retired architect used to knock on my door. At the time it was as if he appeared out of nowhere. I had no idea who he was, save that his name was Mr Walker. I titled him, "The Ghost Who Walks" (You need to be a Phantom comic reader to understand). He gave me a book called "Baal Belbora: The End of the Dancing" (published in 1988), *"The Agony of the British Invasion of the Ancient People of the Three Rivers: The Hastings, the Manning and the Macleay, in New South Wales"*. It was a book of atrocious stories. He also left me books by Henry Reynolds. Reynolds wrote many books like, "The Other Side of the Frontier", which told of the story of the white invasion of Australia from the perspective of Aboriginals, and the horrendous concept of Terra Nullius. That is, the claim that no one lived on Australian land before British settlement. Gradually I became more and more aware of the real Aboriginal story. In 1997, while we were still at Gloucester the report, following a national inquiry, titled "Bringing Them Home: The 'Stolen Children' was released. This inquiry was headed by Sir Ronald Wilson (who at one point was the President of the Uniting Church in Australia).

Continued over .....

It told of what was effectively part of the deliberate effort of Australian governments to end Aboriginal Culture, along with all the Australian assimilation policies. A part of me grieved that this was part of our nations story. But I had just enough personal knowledge of Aboriginal people that I realised that if we embraced our history, and the history of our indigenous community, and welcomed the wisdom that was still available from Aboriginal culture, there was much for us to be proud, proud of the Aboriginal's themselves, and their, up to, 60,000-year inhabitancy of this land. (Next time I will give the final part of my account, however I am on leave next week so it will have to wait till I return. Next week I will be trekking by foot from Hornsby to Brooklyn on the Great North Walk with an 18kg pack on my back full of tent, clothes, water, and food. So, hopefully I will return to finish my tale!)

# DIARY

## Thursday 12 September

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

1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb – James and Hebrews

## Friday 13 September

6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah

## Saturday 14 September

11.30am Friendship Circle – lunch at Lena's 11.30 then MUSIC @ The Bay 24 for 2pm start

## 15<sup>th</sup> September – Pentecost 17

9.00am **The Holy Communion** incorporated in Divine Worship  
Leader and Preacher; Rev'd Tom  
*Proverbs 1:20-33; Psalm 19; James 3:1-12; Mark 8:27-38*

## Monday 16 September

10.30am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visitation

1.30pm SFED

## Tuesday 17 September

9.00am Needlework n Natter at Garden Suburb

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

## Thursday 19 September

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

1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb – James and Hebrews

## 22<sup>nd</sup> September – Pentecost 18

9.00am Divine Worship  
Leader: Kerrie and **Guest Preacher: John Lewis** (Wesley Mission)  
*Proverbs 31:10-31; Psalm 1; James 3:13-4:3,7-8a; Mark 9:30-37*

## Monday 23 September

1.30pm SFED

## Tuesday 24 September

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

12.00 noon Ladies Fellowship at Garden Suburb

## Thursday 26 September

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

1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb – James and Hebrews

# THE PRAYER PAGE



Prayer is the Voice of Faith

## Pastoral Prayer Points

\* those in our congregation whose loved ones have died, especially the Threlfo's and Stuart's

\* Janice and Don Wright

\* Cathy Beeton

\* Kelly

\* Laraine Chegwiddden

\* Tony Sellen

\* Nelda Marshall

\* Vivianne

\* Shirley Elkin

\* Lorraine Pepper

\* Vicki

\* Family of Judith Fuller following Judith's death (Warren Pepper's sister)

\* Pam and Ken

\* Lyn Benson

\* Jean

\* Fred Bryant

\* June Locker

\* Ryan Walpole

\* Kathryn Gray

\* Jacqueline Fenwick

\* Isabella

\* Janice Wright

\* Eileen Dunn

\* Pam and Mert

\* Enid Power

- Max
- Tom and Kathy
- Don Humphries

## Congregational Prayer Points

- Church Council
- 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

- Children in the orphanage as MPox is spreading rapidly in Kenya. Pray for vaccines to arrive soon.
- Tom and Neos
- Kahibah Fair
- Local Government elections
- Those affected by climate change in Australia eg floods, droughts and fires
- Pray that a cease fire agreement will be negotiated between Israel and Hamas and that there will be relief from all the suffering
- The situation in Ukraine and other trouble spots





# The Hunter Presbytery Prayer Diary



This diary provides an opportunity to pray each week for congregations in the Presbytery. By praying together, we can encourage one another in mission, as we grow in faith and unity and develop understanding and relationships across the region. Each week there will be information and a prayer for each of the congregations in the Hunter Presbytery. This week we pray for:

## 15<sup>th</sup> September 2024 – Tarro Uniting Church

Tarro Uniting Church meets weekly at 9am with an average attendance of 12. Fellowship meets monthly and arranges many activities which include the community. A Men's Coffee Morning and a Games Morning, both held monthly, are also avenues of witness and outreach. We are a friendly and welcoming community with an average of late 70's.

**Prayer: We pray for the members of Tarro Uniting Church as they witness and reach out to the local community and that those who attend our events and programs will begin to join us in worship. Amen.**

## Spiritual Practice of the Week

**Visio Divina:** In the practice of *visio divina* we intentionally seek God by praying with images, icons, created media and creation itself.

### The Visio Divina process:

1. Let your inside noise quieten, and put yourself in God's presence. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your prayer.
2. Gaze at an image with openness, and seek to see with God's eyes.
3. Notice what stirs within you. What responses, memories and feelings does the image evoke? What connection does the image make with your life? Take your time.
4. Respond to God about what you are seeing and sensing. What do you want to take with you and remember about this time of prayer. Let the image continue to remind you to see God.

**Practice:** Choose a work of art and follow the steps for *visio divina*. Share your experience with a friend.

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

# Church Council Elections

Election

Three Church Council members are coming to the end of their three year term. Their positions to be filled are:-

**SFED** (currently Sue Warren)

**Extravagant Generosity** (currently Paul Russell)

**Secretary** (currently Julie Fenwick)

**Chairperson** – Anne Threlfo is standing down from this position from the date of the election and is not available for nomination to any of the vacancies.

Vacancies remain for **Radical Hospitality** and **Risk Taking Mission and Service**.

There are descriptions of the focus of each of these responsibilities on our website. Please consider who you might nominate for these positions or if you would like to be nominated to serve in one of these roles.

Nomination forms are available and can be returned to the box in the foyer.

The election is proposed for 27 October.



## THE FIVE PRACTICES OF FRUITFUL CONGREGATIONS

These practices reveal the love of God to us, and to the world through us. We strive to live these practices into each moment of our individual and corporate lives.

## Children & Family Worker Update



**Just an update** on our new venture at Garden Suburb, '**Uniting in Books**', yesterday we had 9 people come along & bought some books & took some books, stayed for some good conversations & a coffee. They are looking forward to returning next month for another chance to exchange books & a catch up with friends.

**Please let your family & friends** know about our Uniting in Books group at Garden Suburb on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 9.30am to 11am.

We have a fabulous range of books, fact, fiction & children's books.

**Our Holiday Kids Club** will be held on the **9<sup>th</sup> of October at Charlestown Church**, our theme is 'come to the party' Registration forms are in the foyer.

Cathy



*Save the Date* *Quiet Day*

# "A Quiet Christmas"

Saturday 7 December  
9am – 12.30am

Garden Suburb Uniting Church  
158 Marshall Street

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

For information and registrations contact Anne Threlfo: [annethrelfo@gmail.com](mailto:annethrelfo@gmail.com)



## Charlestown Friendship Circle

**Saturday 14 September**

11.30am - Beginning with Lunch at Lena's,  
Warners Bay then

2.00pm - The Willows Uniting Church for MUSIC  
@ The Bay 24

**All Welcome**

**Empowering Newcastle**

Community Information Session

**Thursday 19 September**  
**6pm – 8pm**  
**Newcastle City Hall**

The future is us.

City of Newcastle

City of Newcastle invites you to City Hall to hear about its community climate action program, Empowering Newcastle.

Learn about the range of community projects being delivered to empower the community to switch to renewable energy, electrify and reduce emissions to achieve a net zero Newcastle by 2040.

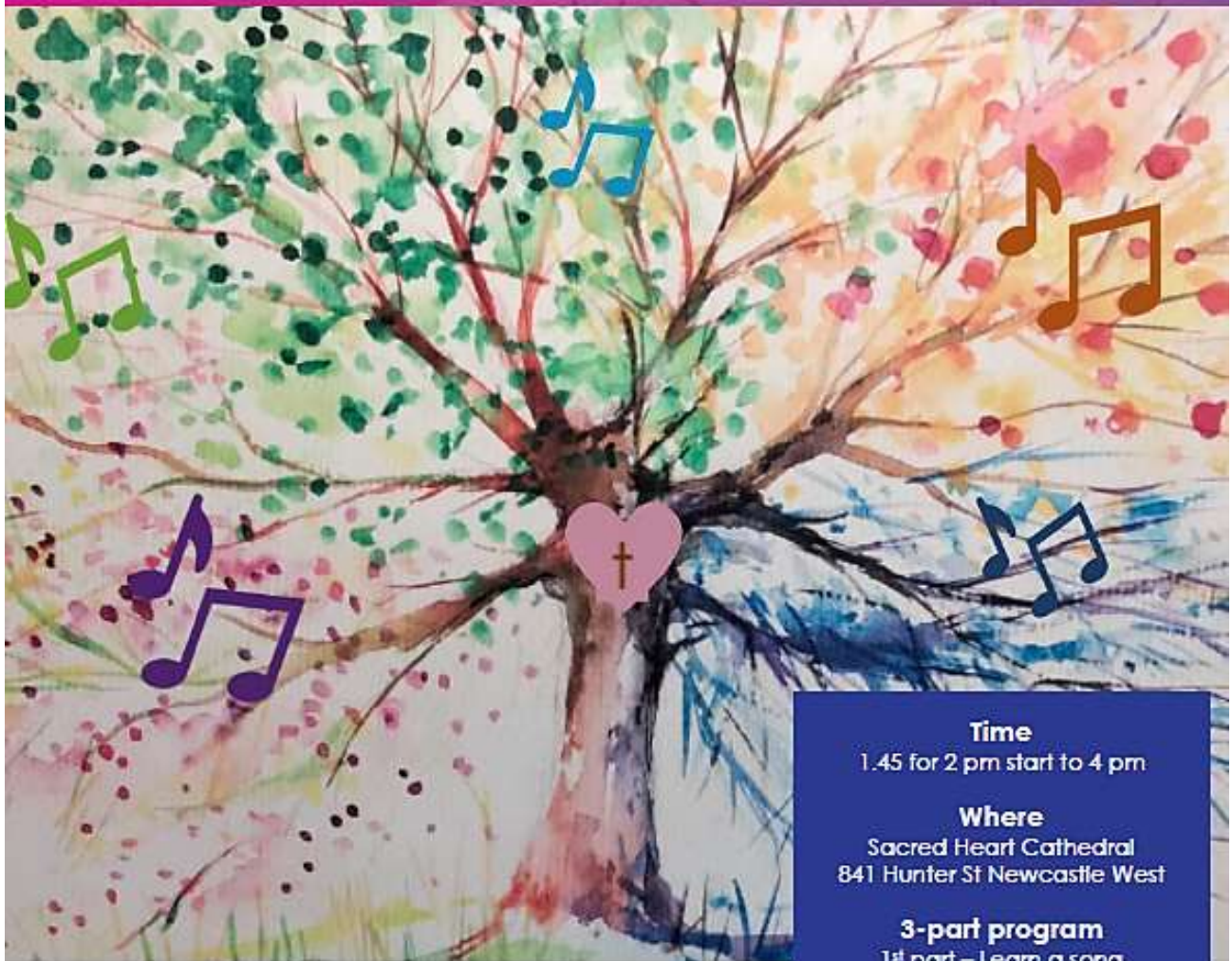
Hear inspiring stories from our **keynote speaker and Renew CEO, Helen Oakey**, who will share how Aussie communities are tackling climate change through innovative projects like community batteries, solar gardens and more.

You'll learn about City of Newcastle's new net zero training program 'Empowering Climate Champions'. The program will equip community members with the knowledge and skills to deliver electrification projects in their own neighbourhoods, based on the Rewiring Australia model.

Free admission, book here: <https://tinyurl.com/2xj6hamn>

# Creation Sings

SATURDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2024



The Diocesan Liturgy Council will be hosting Creation Sings.

The afternoon will be an opportunity to come together for the whole of the Newcastle, Hunter and Manning community to sing in support of creation.

Let us then come together and sing for creation and stir in our hearts, through song and one voice, a reconnection and love of the gift that has been given to us from God.

## Time

1.45 for 2 pm start to 4 pm

## Where

Sacred Heart Cathedral  
841 Hunter St Newcastle West

## 3-part program

1<sup>st</sup> part – Learn a song  
2<sup>nd</sup> part – Time of prayer  
3<sup>rd</sup> part – Afternoon tea

## Bring

A plant cutting for someone to propagate in their garden

## RSVP

by 6 September via  
[forms.office.com/r/xKCr907ew6](https://forms.office.com/r/xKCr907ew6)





## Some of our Church Contacts:

### **Minister**

Rev Tom Stuart  
M: 0427 625 502  
E: [tom@thestuarts.id.au](mailto:tom@thestuarts.id.au)

### **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

### **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

### **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>