



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

28 January 2024

From Anne Threlfo

The gospel reading for today is Mark 1:21-28:

The Man with an Unclean Spirit

²¹ They went to Capernaum; and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²² They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

²³ Just then **there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit,** ²⁴ and he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.' ²⁵ **But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!'** ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, 'What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.' ²⁸ At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

This reading led me to consider what an “unclean spirit” or “demon”, as some translations say, might look like today. Jesus cast out unclean spirits on a number of occasions; apparently they are mentioned 14 times in Mark, so I guess we'll be hearing more about them as the year goes on. Given that people in first century Palestine and twenty-first century Australia are probably more alike than we are different, my guess is that we remain subject to similar unhelpful spirits in our lives. We could characterise these spirits in terms of demonic, supernatural forces who overtake us in dramatic fashion, and I guess that could happen, but maybe there's something more subtle and not at all unusual about an unclean spirit.

Words we could apply to unclean spirits today might be: addiction (to drugs, alcohol, shopping, etc), anxiety, debilitating sadness, chronic pain, post-traumatic stress, feelings of worthlessness, greed, or injustice. Perhaps an unclean spirit is anything which pulls us away from the person God constantly reminds us we truly are. It could be anything which makes us feel overwhelmed or weighed down by life. In other words, this type of spirit inhabits all of us at some time in our lives, and is not confined to unpleasant and difficult people on the margins of society.

But! The focus of this scripture passage is not on the unclean spirit. Jesus is not concerned with the nature of this spirit; in questioning or labelling it. He tells the spirit to be quiet. Jesus's concern is for the man and his suffering, leading to his rebuking and driving out of the unclean spirit which brings healing, restoration and transformation.

For us as followers of Jesus then, our task is to love and be alongside people whose lives seem to be captive to things outside their control; to let them know that healing, restoration and transformation are possible. This isn't easy. It is an ongoing struggle to not let anyone other than God tell us who we are, and it's tough to sit alongside another person who loses or never had that insight about the extraordinary love which lives within them. All we can do is our best, amidst the messiness of our life and the lives of all of us, knowing that Jesus sits right there with us.

DIARY

Sunday 28 January – Epiphany 4

9.00am Worship Service Leader: Sue Warren Preacher: Project Reconnect
Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

Tuesday 30 January

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

4.00pm Worship Team Meeting

Thursday 1 February

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

1.30 – 2.30 Bible Study at Garden Suburb (to be confirmed)

Sunday 4 February – Epiphany 5

9.00am Worship Service Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom
Isaiah 40: 21-31; Psalm 147:1-11,20C; 1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

Monday 5 February

10.00am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral care visitation

Tuesday 6 February

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Thursday 8 February

10.00am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care

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

Friday 9 February

6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah

Saturday 10 February

TBA Friendship Circle

Sunday 11 February – Epiphany 6

9.00am Worship Service Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom
2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6 2; Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

2.00pm 2024 SRE Dedication Service at The Willows, Warners Bay Uniting Church

Tuesday 13 February

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Wednesday 14 February

10.00am Ladies Fellowship

4.30pm Ash Wednesday gathering at Garden Suburb

Thursday 15 February

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



THE PRAYER PAGE



Pray that the Australian Church can model today, the example of the early Christians, in making space for all people to flourish in community.

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Vivienne Butcher and family as they mourn the death of her mother
- * Tony's recovery after a fall
- * Graeme at home and organising rehabilitation
- * Jean recovering from Pneumonia
- * Fred Bryant in hospital
- * June Locker
- * Ryan Walpole in rehabilitation
- * Kathryn Gray
- * Those in our Congregation who have lost loved ones in recent months
- * Mac
- * Jacqueline Fenwick
- * Peter Ferguson
- * Nola in hospital
- * Isabella
- * Ashley
- * Janice Wright
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Mert
- * Judith and family
- * Lorraine Pepper
- * Enid Power
- * Max

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

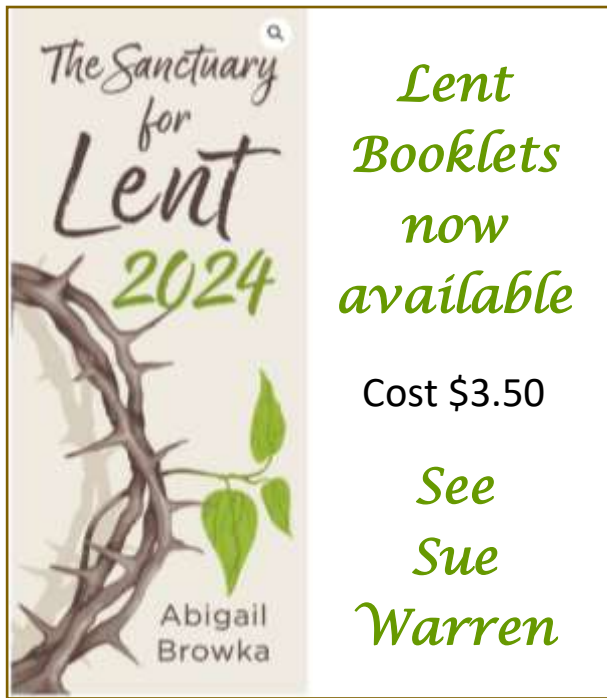
Congregational Prayer Points

- Church Council
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Cathy Beeton and SRE classes
- Worship Committee

Wider Community Prayer Points

- those affected by climate change in Australia eg floods, droughts and fires
- Tom and NEOS as he follows ideas and opportunities including with Wesley Mission at Windsor, Hunter Community Alliance, Greater Charlestown Sustainability Group
- Hunter Community Alliance's arrangements towards the Founding Assembly in April 2024 , as approaches are made to encourage politicians to attend and give support to local initiatives to reduce emissions
- The situation in Israel and Gaza
- The situation in Ukraine and other trouble spots
- Fabian, Wilfreda and children for finance to flow in to enable all the eligible children to go to High School





COMMON GRACE

Follow up Aboriginal Sunday with Common Grace

Continue walking with us in friendship to pursue justice, healing, and flourishing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Sign Up with your email at www.commongrace.org.au

Resources include:

- Ways to engage on January 26, 2024
- 2024 Lent Series “Surprising Hope”

You may also wish to support Common Grace financially. Bank details:

Account Name: Christians for Justice Ltd
BSB: 633-000
A/c: 152 835 336

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

The 2024 SRE (Scripture) Dedication Service
will be held at 2.00pm on Sunday 11th February 2023
at The Willows - Warners Bay Uniting Church
342 Hillsborough Road Warners Bay

Bring a
Friend!



With Guest Speaker

John Lewis

Missional Communities Leader

Community Changing Communities

Charlestown Uniting Church - 24 Milson Street

8am 17th February


Cost \$12 RSVP to Paul Russell

0411 236047 pmraus74@gmail.com By 14th February 2024

Come and hear Wesley Mission's John Lewis talk about their new initiative - Missional Communities.

In Newcastle and the Hunter this has meant working within community housing projects in Windale and Hamilton South and alongside the community services team in Newcastle West. They work to build communities promoting well being and resilience whilst giving people appropriate and relevant ways to explore faith.

John has previously remotely supported projects like this in countries around the world. Having lived and worked in Newcastle for 20 years John is enjoying seeing how communities in his own town are experiencing the transformative power of community development to change lives.



Ash
Wednesday

You are invited to a gathering of prayer,
reflection, and renewal beginning your
Lenten journey to Easter
Garden Suburb Uniting Church
Marshall St
4:30pm 14 February 2024

Errors and omissions in the 2023 directory

My apologies – please insert or correct entries as shown in the updated list below.

Please let me know right away of any other errors or omissions

Paul Russell 8 January 2024

Gaul	36 James St Teralba 2285	4041 0263
	Graeme graeme.beryl@icloud.com	0419 599 807
	Beryl graeme.beryl@icloud.com	0429 851 170
Greenwood	Villa 144 178 Lake Rd Elermore Vale 2287	4955 7990
	Dianne	
Joyce	14 Moruya Pde Kotara 2289	0458 766 861
	Glen gj58mrb@gmail.com	
	Marian mrb58gj@gmail.com	
McLean	Unit 8 Rosecourt 78 Dudley Rd Charlestown 2290	4943 1903
	Fay	
Rozek	95 Prospect Rd Garden Suburb 2289	
	Peter	
	Nancye nancyerozek@y7mail.com	0419 986 334


“Be nurtured in nature”




Max & Bronwyn invite you to

*Fosterton Retreat
Open Day 2024*

Saturday February 10th
10am-3pm



It is with great gratitude we want to share our slice of heaven, celebrate 8 years & get a taste of what we like to do here. Come & see what we get so excited about—wildlife—serenity—the views—getting away—the river—our plans—the pool – special deals.




Bring family, friends, lunch, your swimmers, walking shoes & experience Fosterton Retreat. Do a little or do it all.

10am Meet at the Retreat Space,

11am A guided labyrinth walk,

12.00 A reflective creative exercise heading into 2024,

1pm Lunch- bring a picnic lunch, your own or share,



2pm Walk our Bellbird, Lemon tree, cabins &/or Dam trails. Look for our elusive koalas, pull out some lantana.

Let us know you are coming so we can send directions, make plans, pull out the welcome mat & put on the kettle.

Bronwyn and Max

Please RSVP

Ph: 0439 500 909 or 0490 663 228

E-mail: fostertonretreat@outlook.com

**208 Moylans Road,
Fosterton. 2420
NSW.
Only 15 minutes from
Dungog**



FR

Making Space for God

Praying can take many different forms, e.g. breath prayer, contemplation, collage, imagination, lectio divina, nature & labyrinths. All to feed & nourish the soul, as participants go deeper with The Great I AM.



2024 Series starts Saturday 17th February 2024

9:45am - 3pm

Visit fostercoyretreat.com.au/coming-up-next

For those who believe in the Divine Mystery and love to connect.
Join us to make time to focus on what matters most, in the footsteps of the book "Sensible Shoes".
Your investment, \$120ea (includes morning tea).

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>