



CONTACT

Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

26 February 2023



From Anne Threlfo

Steve and I have recently returned from a holiday in Paris and London. Much of our time was spent in art galleries: The Louvre, The Musee d'Orsay, The Musee l'Orangerie, The National Gallery in London, Tate Britain, and the Royal Academy of Arts in London. We looked at a lot of art, although Steve didn't look at quite as much as I did!

What struck me first, particularly when entering The Louvre, is the scale of the building, which itself is a work of art, and the quantity of art displayed, although only about 12% of the total collection is on display at any one time! Secondly, there is soon an awareness that enormous numbers of people are interested in visiting art galleries. Almost 8 million people visited The Louvre in 2022. It seems that there is a deep desire in humans to produce, preserve and interact with art, hardly surprising when you think about it, since we are created in the image and likeness of the creator God.

The subjects depicted vary as much as we humans: from still life to pastoral landscapes, from scenes of daily life to detailed paintings of cities, from great military victories to classical themes and portraits of those who wanted to show their prosperity. However, one theme appears more frequently than any other; art based on Biblical stories. I saw dozens of paintings of Mary and the infant Jesus, and even more depicting the crucifixion and Jesus being removed from the cross. So many of these were moving, showing the raw emotion of the event, and despite their diversity in precise content and their spread over time, they all had one thing in common. Not one painting was an attempt to depict the crucifixion, or Jesus, as they actually may have looked in 33AD. Most works seem to be set in the times they were produced. Why is that? Why have so many artists, and those who financed them, felt the desire to represent Jesus in a contemporary setting?



Two thoughts occurred to me. Firstly, we are all contained within the times in which we live; our experiences, relationships and our own egos, so perhaps it is somewhat unavoidable that we see Jesus in our own image, which in the case of Western art was as a white European. Jesus knew our natures well when he said that we are to die daily to ourselves. It's the work of a life time to put ourselves aside and place Jesus at the centre.

Secondly, every generation, every person must discover Jesus for themselves. Jesus, the man exists in a historical context, but Jesus the Christ exists in every time and place. It is you and I at the foot of the cross just as surely as it is this group of 15th Century folk. All of us, in ages past as well as today are invited to discover who Jesus is for us, to sit at the foot of the cross, or join the party at the wedding in Cana (depicted in the largest painting in the Louvre), or nurture the baby. Who is Jesus for you?

DIARY

Thursday 23 February

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square
1.30 – 2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Sunday 26 February – Lent 1

9.00am Worship Service – Leader and Preacher David Chegidden

Genesis 2: 15-17; 3: 1-7, Psalm 32, Romans 5: 12-19, Matthew 4: 1-11

Tuesday 28 February

9.00am Needlework'n'Natter at Garden Suburb
10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie
12.00 Garden Suburb Ladies Fellowship meeting
3.30pm Worship Team Meeting at 'The White House'



Thursday 2 March

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square
1.30 – 2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Sunday 5 March – Lent 2

9.00am Worship Service – Leader and Preacher – Rev'd Tom **with Children's Corner**

Genesis 12: 1-4a, Psalm 121, Romans 4: 1-5, 13-17, John 3: 1-17

Monday 6 March

10.00am Pastoral Care Visit to Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility

Tuesday 7 March

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

Wednesday 8 March

10.00am Charlestown Ladies Fellowship – details to come
Evening Hunter Community Alliance – Online Zoom Community Forum for Hunter Candidates re NSW State Election in March – Wallsend, Cessnock, Maitland and Port Stephens (See flyer on last page of Contact)

Thursday 9 March

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square
11.00am Garden Suburb Aged Care Communion Service with Pas. Grahame Pricter
1.30 – 2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb
Evening Hunter Community Alliance – Online Zoom Community Forum for Hunter Candidates re NSW State Election in March – Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Charlestown and Swansea (See flyer on last page of Contact)

Friday 10 March

6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah

Saturday 11 March

TBA Charlestown Friendship Circle

Sunday 12th March – Lent 3

9.00am Worship Service – Leader – Kathy Stuart, Preacher – Rev'd Tom

Exodus 17: 1-7, Psalm 95, Romans 5: 1-11, John 4: 5-42

Tuesday 14 March

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

Thursday 16 March

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square
1.30 – 2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

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

- * Peter Ferguson, in hospital recovering from surgery
- * Marie
- * Teagan
- * Isabella
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Glenn, Donna and girls
- * Sue and Warren
- * Cat and Ezra
- * Enid Gaynor
- * Gloria and John Booth
- * Tony and Nan
- * Mert and Pam
- * Judith and family
- * Ashley (in Respite) and Lorraine (going home from Rehab tomorrow)
- * Ken MacDonald (in hospital) and Sharon
- * Rhonda White and family (after death of Bert)
- * Enid Power
- * Fred Bryant
- * Max

Congregational Prayer Points

- Commencement of Neos and Tom's role week by week
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Lease of Whitebridge property
- Cathy Beeton – with commencement of SRE classes in the new term
- Worship Committee

Wider Community Prayer Points

- Victims and families of the earthquake in Turkey and Syria
- Election Forums run by Hunter Community Alliance
- Flood Victims
- Wilfreda's orphanage
- The situation in Ukraine
- Prayer for the nation and particularly our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power



NSW State Election Is 25th March 2023
Here is an opportunity to participate in the 'public square'
For better policies and outcomes for the community
'JOINING GOD IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD'



**Hunter
Community
Alliance**

**Community
Forums
with
Hunter
Candidates**

**REGISTER
NOW**

Online ZOOM Community Forums

Wednesday 8th March

Wallsend | Cessnock | Maitland | Port Stephens

Register for free ticket and Zoom link

Eventbrite <https://tinyurl.com/5a3a5jab>

Facebook Event <https://tinyurl.com/4aaz6ry9>

Thursday 9th March

Newcastle | Lake Macquarie | Charlestown | Swansea

Register for free ticket and Zoom link

Eventbrite <https://tinyurl.com/mwcpmwbf>

Facebook Event <https://tinyurl.com/ymx3fsrd>

**Hear how Hunter Candidates will address community concerns
about climate change & housing**

Stories of lived experience about housing and climate change will be shared
Policy Proposals developed to solve and alleviate the pressures will be presented
Then we'll negotiate commitment with Hunter Candidates for the NSW Election

***For those that would like to view the forum on the big screen, with others,
the following venues will be hosting a group Zoom**

Thursday 9 March Lower Hunter Forum screening 6:30 to 8:00

Jesmond Park Uniting Church doors open 6:00 17 Robert St Jesmond

Toronto Uniting Church offering a light meal from 5:30 118 The Boulevard Toronto

(no need to RSVP, just come along having registered your involvement as above)
(questions and chat will be facilitated)

**THIS IS AN OPEN INVITATION FOR ANY ALLIANCE PARTICIPANTS OR ORGANISATIONS
TO COME ALONG AND PARTICIPATE TOGETHER
ALL WELCOME...**

YOU are invited to join in AND we hope for a big roll up on each night!

Get involved in seeking a better future on both these core issues!

More Information Rob Hanks e: robhanks@bigpond.net.au m: 0407401833



A PASSING THOUGHT...

This Sunday is the First Sunday in Lent. You may find these planned weekly reflections helpful.

They will be based on the eight emphatic statements of Jesus : **"I AM"** as found in John's Gospel - but – before we launch into them, from where did Jesus dig up this 'verb first person singular' expression...I am – what, exactly?! It was God speaking when He first used it in Exodus 3:14 "God said to Moses 'I AM WHO I AM.'" (You will find the text of 3:1 through to 15 at end of this reflection.) In Hebrew, the text of the Old Testament, is 'ehyeh asher ehyeh' (Oh dear! This computer does not like those words for they are all underlined in red!). 'ehyeh' is, as above, the verb 'to be' as in "I am watching the sheep" or "I am walking down the street" yet again "I am his father"...you get the drift?

...but, as it is in 3:14, it is the ultimate statement of 'self-sufficiency; self-existence; immediate presence', or as another translator puts it 'I am he that is, and now, and that shall be'.

You may remember that Moses had to nick out of Egypt in a huge hurry and, after a while, finds himself tending sheep for a priest of Midian and is given his daughter, Zipporah, to be his wife. Then, many moons later, while Moses is tending his sheep at Mount Horeb (called Mount Sinai in another translation)...you



see, it was when Moses was going about his daily chores that he heard the summons from God. This was quite common occurrence in the Old Testament together with Jesus and the Apostles in the New Testament. We must be always aware that God may speak to **us** at any time...just as we are going about our daily chores!

We all have family and friends with who we will have a yarn or two and, as we get to know Jesus, this is something that may experience right now! You may well say – get a grip, I ain't 'eard nuffin' yet...

A few clues. Remember the Reverend Tom's wonderful Message of a couple of week's ago when he spoke of "forgive us our debtors as we forgive our debtors"? Step one: get right with God by confessing our sins...in the same way as we have forgiven **anyone** who has caused us grief!

Sadly, we don't, as the great hymn suggests, "Come into His presence singing Hallelujah!" Too often we seem to be in a hurry, expecting God to be 'right there', on demand, so to speak. One aspect of our Christian journey on which we may ponder this Lent, is holiness – to spend time in quiet reflection, before we launch into 'our needs' remembering first what God has placed on our hearts. (Here, a check on the Ten Commandments wouldn't go astray!) Even in the Lord's Prayer, what comes first, as in the Commandments?! First, before anything else, give glory and thanks to God, for He is holy – and daren't we forget that most important aspect of our prayers.

Usually rushed at breakneck speed as an express train zooming through the Adamstown railway gates, during our services there is the expressive and wonderful acclamation;

"Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest."



One suggestion I would make, is to let that acclamation sink into your very being, contemplate it, savour it, mediate upon it. **Then** you may be well and truly ready to listen for the Voice of God.

An ancient, but profound, prayer that you may find helpful during Lent:

“Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made,
and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent:
create and make in us new and contrite hearts,
that we, worthily lamenting of our sins,
may acknowledge our wretchedness,
and may obtain of you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”
(a quote straight from “Uniting in Worship” ...true!)

Catch you next week...

Exodus 3: 1-15

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. ³ Then Moses said, ‘I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.’ ⁴ When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ ⁵ Then he said, ‘Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’ ⁶ He said further, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. ⁷ Then the LORD said, ‘I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹ The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.’ ¹¹ But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ ¹² He said, ‘I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.’ ¹³ But Moses said to God, ‘If I come to the Israelites and say to them, “The God of your ancestors has sent me to you”, and they ask me, “What is his name?” what shall I say to them?’ ¹⁴ God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ He said further, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “I AM has sent me to you.”’ ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you”:
This is my name for ever,
and this my title for all generations.

hOLY is the LORD

"SAVE THE DATE"
PRESBYTERY CELEBRATION
ALL WELCOME

3PM TO 5PM SATURDAY 6TH MAY 2023
ADAMSTOWN UNITING CHURCH 228 BRUNKER RD, ADAMSTOWN

FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES WHO BELONG TO UNITING CHURCHES
ACROSS THE HUNTER (PRESBYTERY) REGION



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An Activity of The Hunter Presbytery, The Uniting Church in Australia 🌍

Some of our Church Contacts:

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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>