



# CONTACT

Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting  
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

5 March 2023



## From Rev Tom

Today's message is a reminder that if at all possible you join the Hunter Community Alliance "Candidate Forums 2023". We are running up to the State Elections. This gives ordinary citizens a short period to really get would-be local state members to promise to do things that we really care about. We can do this through the Hunter Community Alliance. I am on the Steering Committee for the Hunter Community Alliance. I am not so involved in the preparation for the forums this time. Last time was the Lake Macquarie Mayoral Forum and I was a co-chair. Gladly someone else has the task this time and I can have a breather! However, I am really committed to invite as many people as I can to the State Government election Forums. The importance of people being a part of this is firstly, to pressure each of the candidates to commit to our "asks". The second reason is to show the politicians that the Hunter Community Alliance, as a gathering of organisations across the Hunter Valley, is a force to be reckoned with. The Alliance is about getting democracy back to the ordinary people, rather than just the conversation going on between politicians and lobbyists. The Uniting Church and its previous denominations of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational each have long histories of being involved in politics, particularly in relation to giving voice to those who are the most downtrodden and least powerful in our community. One of my strongest memories was Rev Alan Walker making a stand against the Vietnam war. Another is of Sir Ronald Wilson, who was a President of the Uniting Church, was the commissioner for the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families. Well, we have learned that we can do a great deal more when community organisations band together. So, the Hunter Community Alliance includes churches, unions, environmental groups, disability groups, and social support organisations. Together we (that includes you and me) plan on asking the State Government election candidates to commit to these proposals –

1. Restore the social housing safety net of all local government areas within the Hunter to 5% of total housing stock by 2027, and increase social housing stock at least every three years once social housing reaches the 5% target.
2. Replace 'No Grounds Evictions' provisions with 'Reasonable Grounds Evictions'.

And for the Newcastle electorate there will be a third ask of, "We ask that you commit to at least 50% social and affordable housing at any future residential development at the proposed Hunter Park." As for the issue of Climate Change our ask is, "If the party you support forms government, will you commit to the establishment of a Hunter Valley Transition Authority, by no later than mid 2024, with an initial recurrent annual budget of at least \$65 million, for a period of 10 years?" All these proposals are thoroughly researched and we will have experts in both fields explaining why these proposals can work, and are fundamentally important for the good of our community. The invitation is for you, if you are able, to join one or both of the forums. Both Forums are by Zoom, and there is nothing expected of you other than joining, adding to the numbers, and being blown away by how great these events are! The Forum for those in the Wallsend, Cessnock, Maitland, and Port Stephens area is on Wednesday 6:30, 8<sup>th</sup> March. If you would like to be part of that one click [HERE](#) to register! The forum for Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Charlestown, and Swansea is at 6:30pm, 9<sup>th</sup> March. If you can be a part of that one click [HERE](#) to register. If those links don't work type this link in and find the links on that page: <https://tinyurl.com/3cnsjzwj>

# DIARY

## **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

## **Friday 3 March**

**10.30am** **World Day of Prayer at St Paul's Church, Felton St, Gateshead**

## **Sunday 5 March** – Lent 2

**9.00am Worship Service** – Leader and Preacher – Rev 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  
3.30pm Church Council meet on Zoom

## **Wednesday 8 March**

10.00am Charlestown Ladies Fellowship – details to come  
6.30pm – 8.30pm **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  
6.30pm – 8.30pm **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 – talk from Steven Threlfo

## **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March** – Lent 3

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

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

## **Monday 13 March**

10.00am Worship Service at Woodlands

## **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

## **Sunday 19 March** – Lent 4

9.00am **Holy Communion Service.** Leader & Preacher – Rev Tom Stuart

*1 Samuel 16:1-13, Psalm 23, Ephesians 5: 8-14, John 9: 1-41*

## **Monday 20 March**

10.00am Pastoral Care Visit to Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility

## **Tuesday 21 March**

9.00 – 11.30am Needlework'n'Natter  
10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie



# 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
- \* 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
- \* Ken MacDonald (in hospital) and Sharon
- \* Rhonda White and family (after death of Bert)
- \* Enid Power
- \* Fred Bryant
- \* Max

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

## 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



World Day of Prayer 2023

**TAIWAN**

'I have heard about your faith'

Friday 3 March 2023  
St Paul's Church  
Felton St, Gateshead  
10.30am



**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/mwcpmwbj>

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](mailto:robhanks@bigpond.net.au) m: 0407401833



*All Welcome*

**Charlestown Friendship Circle**

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2.00pm

at the Church

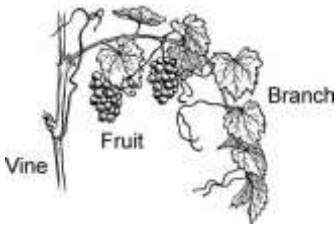
for afternoon tea and a presentation by Steve Threlfo on  
the history of Anaesthetics

Please  
bring a plate



## *A PASSING THOUGHT...*

Last week I mentioned that during Lent, we would look at the “I AM” sayings of Jesus and, quite contrary to my instincts, let’s start at the last one – why? Well, as Jesus said it to his disciples on their way over the Kidron Valley after the Last Supper, I think it possibly was to mean something more to us. The Bible passage is printed at the end of this reflection; John 15:1-17.



Jesus said in verse 5: “I AM the vine, you are the branches.” If you have a peak at the last verse of the previous chapter, Jesus says to his disciples: “Rise, let us be on our way.” So, the setting is the walk from the Last Supper, via the valley, to the Garden of Gethsemane where, though it was night, it was a full Passover moon, the vineyards would be clearly visible as they toddled along. As with most of Jesus’ simple sayings, usually there is a perfectly natural comparison at

hand. This case, the vines. Verse 2...“He (God) removes every branch in me that bears no fruit.” Whoops, for we all know that if God sets his mind to it “behold it was very good”...imagine how sharp his pruning knife would be...you certainly wouldn’t find a better one at “Bunnings”! God does this if we become unproductive in our mission to assist other folk in a belief in Jesus. Once a friend said to a group of us (and she was 96) “There is no retirement in the Kingdom of God!” (Rene died at 104.) Mind you, none of escape the normal pruning as we are being ‘cut back’ to simply ‘bear more fruit’.

You see, Jesus wants to make us part of his ministry. Notice in verse 15 a subtle, but hugely important, ‘change’. Jesus calls his disciples (us, dear folk) “friends”...no longer “slaves” – we have become ‘partners’ in Christ’s ministry!

Now, take a good look at verse 5. Quite often, there are two mistakes we can make when we attempt to ‘work for Jesus’. We can succumb to pride, and believe that our own talents are enough to get the job done, or we fall into the trap of despair, when we find that things aren’t really going the way we thought they would! From past experience, I would suggest that we have all fallen into that scenario! The question we should then ask is the old chestnut: “is it a God idea...or just a good idea?” The last phrase in verse 5 says it quite clearly: “without Me you can do nothing” Earlier, Jesus said; “I can do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.” It surely stands to reason that if Jesus can’t, then neither can we! Of course, there is yet another hitch. Have a good look at verse 16...for there we find some more clues to our Spiritual journey. Two I would emphasise – “Jesus chose you”, not the other way around and “go”, for many, we haven’t left the starting blocks yet!

We should all be happy after reading this passage of Scripture -look at verse 11! For if I can truly achieve nothing, nada, zip, zilch, zero without him, then surely the pressure is off! If our calling is not to produce fruit, but to simply bear fruit, then the burden is on him, not us...all we have to do is to stay connected to Jesus through our faith, prayer, Bible reading and loving obedience in order to find what God can do through ordinary partners, like us, in ministry.

See you in Church!

**I am the vine, and you are branches.**

- John 15:5



**John 15:1-17**

**Jesus the True Vine**

‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. <sup>2</sup> He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes<sup>Ⓜ</sup> to make it bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> You have already been cleansed<sup>Ⓜ</sup> by the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in

me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup> If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become<sup>Ⓜ</sup> my disciples. <sup>9</sup> As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

<sup>12</sup> 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> I do not call you servants<sup>Ⓜ</sup> any longer, because the servant<sup>Ⓜ</sup> does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. <sup>17</sup> I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.



## Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March

Table 1 at Speers Point Park for  
morning tea

Leaving the Church at 9.30am

*All Welcome*



# Children & Family Worker Update



## Hi Everyone

Last Friday I delivered 30 stationery packs to Wiripaang School. Aaron Carter the Assistant Principal was delighted with what we were able to provide the children & very thankful for our ongoing support. I have added some photos with permission from the school, you can see how happy some of the children are with their very own packs.

Thank you to all those who supported the Stationery Pack your kindness is so appreciated not only by me but the children themselves.

Officeworks Warners Bay also supported me, though this year was a little different, as they provided items & didn't give a discount on what I bought, so, as I already had some of the items they gave I approached Teralba School where I teach SRE & asked if they would like to have them for any child that needed them at their school & of course they were only too happy to do so, I also bought a few extra things for them as I still had some cash left.

One last thing, when speaking with Aaron I asked, was there any other way in which we could help, he mentioned that they are aiming to have every child with their own drink bottles this year, so the children are not using the same bubblers. He doesn't expect us to provide them but I thought if anyone missed out on giving to the stationery packs & would like to, we could also aim at providing a few drink bottles, see me if you are interested in supporting drink bottles at Wiripaang.

Blessings & have a good week.

Cathy



# Sisters in Faith Dinner



The Diocesan Ecumenical and Interfaith Council would like you to join us for our Sisters in Faith Dinner to mark *International Women's Day*.

It's an opportunity for all women of faith to come together to form friendships.

**Wednesday 8 March 2023**

**Time: 6pm - 9pm**

**Location: Victor Peters Suite**  
841 Hunter St, Newcastle West

**Cost: \$30 per person\***

**RSVP by: 1 March**

Registration now open scan the QR code or use the link  
[www.eventbrite.com.au/e/sisters-of-faith-dinner-tickets-613511306137](http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/sisters-of-faith-dinner-tickets-613511306137)

**Our theme:**

*"How important is spirituality and equality to humanity?"*

**Guest Speaker:**

Cannon Auntie Dianne Langham,  
Anglican Diocese of Newcastle/Director of Reconciliation

*\*Dinner cost helps to support CatholicCare's Social Enterprise Program.*



  
[mn.catholic.org.au](http://mn.catholic.org.au)

## Some of our Church Contacts:

### **Minister**

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

### **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

### **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

### **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>