



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

25 January 2025

From Anne Threlfo

Australia Day brings with it ongoing discussion about the appropriateness of 26 January as a day of national celebration. What is the history of Australia Day? On 26 January 1788 the First Fleet came ashore and proclaimed British sovereignty over a substantial slice of the continent, considered *Terra Nullius* – “land belonging to no one”, which wasn’t (at least in part) overturned until the Mabo decision of 1992. The First Peoples weren’t counted as people in the National Census until the 1967 referendum, and did not acquire full voting rights until 1984. They remain without formal recognition in the Australian Constitution.

Foundation Day was recognised in the NSW Colony as early as 1818, although it wasn’t until 1935 that all states of Australia celebrated, and it wasn’t universally known as Australia Day. In 1938 the day was declared a Day of Mourning by the Aborigines Progressive Association and others. It wasn’t until 1994 that all states and territories began to celebrate a unified public holiday on 26 January.

Have we moved beyond Australia Day as our National Day? Many celebrations have come and gone. Who remembers Accession Day, or Empire Day? But it’s not a simple matter of exchanging one day of celebration for another. In 2019 Stan Grant, Wiradjuri man, journalist and theologian, contributed to the conversation with his book “Australia Day”. He says:

As an Indigenous Australian I have felt torn between embracing and celebrating all that is great in our nation, living with the all too painful reality that it is not so great for everyone; and that my family, like so many other Indigenous families, has paid a terrible price for the greatness of Australia.

This from an interview with Grant on Radio National in 2019:

Many Indigenous people have been made Australian of the Year, and many are involved in the commemoration and celebration. Thinking in terms of moving the date can be too easy. It doesn’t resolve anything. I think we need to ask ourselves who we are as a nation. It would be pointless to move the date while we have not dealt with the legacy of terra nullius, while we have not dealt with questions of treaties, questions of recognition of Indigenous rights in the Australian Constitution. All of these questions will not be resolved by moving the date. I fear in fact it may be a cop out that takes those things off the agenda. Given the politics of our age, the day would be reclaimed by some, particularly on the far right as a day of white pride. Similarly, there are some Indigenous people who are so wedded to the idea of the unforgiving grievance and vengeance of history, that moving the date would make no difference anyway. I think that we need to look at what it tells us about who we are. The tension is where we live, that is at the heart of our nation.

As people of faith, how do we engage with this tension? We may do so by attending a Day of Mourning worship service today, providing space to reflect on the dispossession and ongoing injustices experienced by Australia’s First Peoples.

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We may do so in our conversations with others, recognising we have much to be thankful for and to celebrate, although our advantages have come at a cost to others. We may do so by listening to our First Nations brothers and sisters at opportunities such as the Invasion Day Event to be held at Civic Park at 9am on Monday 26 January. And most importantly, we follow the example of Jesus to engage with others in forgiveness, love and compassion while providing space for healing and living within the tension of reconciliation.

DIARY

Thursday 22 January

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

Sunday 25 January 2026 – Epiphany 3

9.00am The Divine Worship
Leader and Preacher: Project Reconnect
Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23

Tuesday 27 January

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Thursday 29 January

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

Sunday 1 February 2026 – Epiphany 4

9.00am The Divine Worship
Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom Stuart
Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12

Monday 2 February

10.00am Pastoral Care Visit to Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility

Tuesday 3 February

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Thursday 5 February

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – common seated area at Charlestown Square
1.30-2.30pm Bible Study

Sunday 8 February 2026 – Epiphany 5

9.00am The Divine Worship
Leader: David Chegwidden and Preacher: Rev'd Tom Stuart
Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12); Psalm 112:1-9 (10); 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16); Matthew 5:13-20
2.00pm **SRE Dedication Service held at Cardiff Heights Baptist Church,
33-35 Main Rd Cardiff**

Tuesday 10 February

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Wednesday 11 February

10.00am Ladies Fellowship at Charlestown

Thursday 12 February

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – common seated area at Charlestown Square
10.30am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility

THE PRAYER PAGE



Prayer is the Voice of Faith

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Those who are mourning loved ones
- * The family and friends of Enid Power as her funeral is held on Monday 22nd December
- * Margaret
- * Beryl
- * Rene Kelly
- * Nelda Marshall
- * Lorraine Pepper
- * Glen and Marion
- * Valmai
- * Janice and Don Wright
- * Kelly
- * Tony Sellen
- * Vicki
- * Pam and Ken
- * Lyn Benson
- * Jean
- * June Locker
- * Jacqueline Fenwick
- * Isabella
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Pam and Mert
- * Max
- * Don Humphries

Congregational Prayer Points

- Church Council
- John Lewis and his work with Wesley Mission in Windale and Hamilton South
- Prayer for discernment re ongoing mission for the Milson St Hub into 2026
- Employment of a Communications Coordinator
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Cathy Beeton and SRE classes
- Tom and Kathy
- Worship Committee

Wider Community Prayer Points

- Margaret Jurd College and Darren Twist the Principal
- Orphanage in Kenya and Wilfreda
- Neos ministry
- Those affected by climate change in Australia eg floods, droughts and fires
- Prayer for the situations in Israel, Palestine and Ukraine

Maintained by SFED

Congratulations to Jean Page who turned 95 on Wednesday 21 January



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting Church

BRING A
FRIEND!

MEN'S BREAKFAST



Guest Speaker

Rev Garry
Dodd

from Mission
to Seafarers



8:00 AM
SATURDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2026

Milson St Hub (Charlestown UC), 24 Milson St Charlestown

RSVP Paul at pmraus74@gmail.com or 0411 236 047 by 18 February



Children & Family Worker Update

Well a new year has begun & I am already preparing for Scripture lessons which involves contacting my other teachers, school coordinators & ensuring all necessary materials are ordered.

Though at this stage most of my time is taken up with serving on the **Hunter Christian SRE committee** as we plan our very first SRE Expo. This Expo will be held at New Vine Church Maryland & is for SRE teachers, coordinators, High School teachers & SRE board members. We have invited Representatives from various SRE organisations as well as The Bible Society and we are so pleased that they have all agreed to be part of this amazing day.

With a big day ahead, there is still much planning to do. As the preparations continue, **I would greatly appreciate your prayers for myself and the Hunter Christian SRE committee**. We hope that all our plans will come together smoothly and that the day will be a great success.

Also, in the first week of February there will be a catch up meeting with Richard Moors & other Family, Youth & Children Workers from the Hunter Presbytery.

Cathy



PROPERTY NEWS

You will have noticed the two big trees have disappeared from our front garden near the footpath. Car park repairs are following by lifting car parks pavers and getting rid of all the roots that have been undermining the car park and creating dangerous trip hazards. Simply cutting enough roots to allow the repair would have killed the trees - and led to ongoing maintenance issues. We are obliged to plant trees to replace them - and we will make sure they can be controlled so we do not have a repeat of the problem.

The paver repairs are being followed by a general refurbishment of all the flower bed surrounds and replacement of the undercover fernery area with rockery. This will reduce water usage. We aim is to minimise the ongoing cost and effort of maintaining our gardens.

A very big thanks to Peter and Anne Ferguson for all the work they have been doing in the gardens - keeping it tidy and presentable.

Church Council has authorised the installation of air-conditioning in the church and hall - quotes are being obtained and we are looking to install systems that have a two hour timer operation to prevent accidental excess usage.



We are getting quotes for a “voluntary upgrade” of our fire protection equipment - most visible will be exit lights and a fire hose reel.

Our building is compliant with the regulations current at the time it was built. Interestingly each tenderer has a different interpretation of the requirements for the upgrade - so we are having fun working out who to go with. It is expected that the Lake Macquarie City Council will eventually make this upgrade (to current standards) mandatory.

You may have noticed the spongy feeling to the lino in the kitchen. We have quotes to remove/replace the dishwasher and sink and to replace the lino - however the underlying cause appears to be that the windows are leaking - with putty falling out and gap around the windows. We are awaiting insurance assessment to see what cover we have and what we will have got pay for ourselves.



Talking about windows - our original church building was opened in 1961 - and when the extension was done in 1988 both outer sets of hall windows were replaced - the windows in the kitchen go back to 1961.

It is over a year now since I obtained initial quotes (to give us an idea of cost) to paint and repair the exterior of the building - it badly needs painting in many places and there is rotting timber that needs replacing. We have already completed remedial structural work on the west end of the north church wall where it was tilting out slightly - the work was to prevent it moving any further.

Most of the work described above is to keep the building up to date and in good shape. Church Council is also looking to obtain advice on ways to make our buildings more useful for our future activities. Funds from the sale of Whitebridge Church are available to cover all these cost - but how far they will stretch is yet to be determined!!

If you have any questions - please ask me. Paul Russell - Chair Charlestown Property Committee



THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF
ST PETER'S EAST MAITLAND
WILLIAM ST, EAST MAITLAND - EST 1834

ORGAN RECITAL SERIES 2026

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF THE 'FATHER' WILLIS ORGAN 1876-2026

**LAST SUNDAYS OF THE MONTH
FEBRUARY - NOVEMBER
AT 2.00PM**

FEATURING ORGANISTS

MARKO FRY	- 22nd FEBRUARY	JAMES BREW	- 26th JULY
PHILIP REICHARDT	- 29th MARCH	TIM LI	- 30th AUGUST
GERARD NICHOLLS	- 26th APRIL	ROBERT EATHER	- 27th SEPTEMBER
SEAN WEATHERLEY	- 31st MAY	DAVID DRURY	- 25th OCTOBER
GAVIN WARD	- 28th JUNE	SUZUKI MUSIC	- 29th NOVEMBER

TO BOOK, SCAN THE QR CODE OR HEAD TO:
www.123tix.com.au/events/profile/organrecitals2026



If you enjoy organ music, you might like to mark these dates for 2026 on your calendar to join St Peter's Anglican church at East Maitland celebrate 150 years of their Willis Organ.

It has been brought to our attention that former member **Dianne Rae Greenwood** has passed away recently.

Dianne was a member of Garden Suburb Church and taught Sunday School there.

Unfortunately, her funeral was held last Friday, but, I'm sure that we remember Dianne very fondly and pray for her family and friends at this time.

Dianne Rae
GREENWOOD

Please join the family at
1pm, Friday 16 January
Lake Macquarie Memorial Park
- 405 Cessnock Rd, Ryhope -





ADAMSTOWN
UNITING CHURCH

TAIZÉ

SANCTUARY

*an evening of prayer, silence and song
from the Taizé Community*



3RD SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH

BEGINNING 15TH FEBRUARY

SINGING WORKSHOP + TWILIGHT SERVICE

4-5pm: Song workshop - Learning the songs of Taizé

5:30pm-6:30pm: Twilight Service

228 BRUNKER RD ADAMSTOWN

TEA & COFFEE AVAILABLE BETWEEN WORKSHOP + SERVICE

NO NEED TO REGISTER, DONATIONS ALWAYS WELCOME

SRE

The 2026 SRE Dedication Service

will be held at Cardiff Heights Baptist Church

33-35 Main Rd Cardiff

at 2.00pm on Sunday 8th February 2026

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>