



# CONTACT

Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting  
Church Multi-Centre Congregation



**9 June 2024**

## **From Rev Tom**

Adele Calhoun writes in her book, "A woman who reads the Bible every day asks, 'Why don't I get something out of all that reading? Isn't it supposed to help me when my husband is verbally abusive?' An overtired, busy bank office asks, 'Is spiritual dryness a permanent stage?' ... In the midst of busy, scattered, exhausted and hurting lives they want to experience a great love with God. Desire and desperation gnaw at their hungry souls, and they want to know if God will show up for them" (P. 14-15). Calhoun points out that our response is a deep desire for something more. She claims this is no accident. Blaise Pascal says, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ." Jesus was fully aware of the desire and was careful to discern in each person how that desire was expressed. For one it was healing, another forgiveness, another eternal life, another to drink the water of life, for another to be free of inner demons. Again, Adele Calhoun writes, "From its beginning the church linked the desire for more of God to intentional practices, relationships and experiences that gave people space in their lives to "keep company" with Jesus. These intentional practices, relationships and experiences we know as *spiritual disciplines*" (Page 17). The earliest are described in Acts 2:42, "They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching [a practice] and to the fellowship [relationships], to the breaking of bread [an experience] and to prayer [another practice]." Over the millennia those *spiritual disciplines* have expanded according to the unique needs of varieties of personalities and the ever-changing circumstances of history. Spiritual disciplines are our response to the desire placed by God in our heart. They open us to God. We need to be careful however about our expectations of spiritual disciplines. First, spiritual disciplines typically don't change our circumstances. If we have a chronic illness then we will still have a chronic illness. However Spiritual Disciplines will help change the way we respond to that illness. Further, spiritual disciplines don't necessarily make us feel better about ourselves. Spiritual disciplines often help us to see a little more like God sees, and then we start to see all the more failure in our life. It can be uncomfortable, but two things happen. We find that the long for God in Jesus increases all the more, and we also discover a peace that increases deep below the dislike we have for our behaviours as we begin to see things with greater clarity. Oddly practicing spiritual disciplines don't always help us feel closer to God. Sometimes spiritual disciplines cause us to realise all the more our separation from God. Again, this only increases our desire for God, and there is a sense of journey we experience, where we realise that we are on a journey with God. In our service next Sunday, I will be talking more about spiritual disciplines, as the beginning of a series. That series will involve a member of our congregation practising a spiritual discipline and reporting their experience in the service after the announcements time. There will be other spiritual disciplines listed in the Contact newsletter and you will be invited to pick one, and try out during the week. This series was prepared by the Spiritual Formation, Education, and Discipleship (SFED) Team, drawing on the resources in the book *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*, written by Adele Colhoun. We hope that this will be an enriching time that assists in your response to the desire in you! There is such a variety of disciplines there is a good chance you will find at least a few that are like a key opening a doorway to your sense of the presence of God.



# DIARY

## **Thursday 6 June**

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

## **Saturday 8 June**

- 11.45am **Charlestown Friendship Circle to Lake Cinema to see The Teacher's Lounge**  
**All Welcome**

## **Sunday 9 June – Pentecost 3**

- 9.00am Worship Service. Leader: Kerrie Dixon and Preacher: Rev Tom Stuart  
*1 Samuel 8:4-11; Psalm 138; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35*

## **Monday 10 June**

- 1.30pm SFED

## **Tuesday 11 June**

- 10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

## **Wednesday 12 June**

- 10.45am **Charlestown Ladies Fellowship to Hoyts Theatre to see Unsung Hero**  
**All Welcome**

## **Thursday 13 June**

- 10.00am Morning tea in the Community – common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Square  
10.30am Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility  
1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb Church

## **Friday 14 June**

- 6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah

## **Saturday 15 June**

- 8.00am **A Men's Breakfast – A life at Sea with Senior Chaplain Murray Lund**

## **Sunday 16 June – Pentecost 4**

- 9.00am Service of Holy Communion. Leader and Preacher Rev Tom Stuart  
*1 Samuel 15:34-16:13; Psalm 20; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10; Mark 4:26-34*

## **Monday 17 June**

- 10.00am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visitation  
1.30pm SFED

## **Tuesday 18 June**

- 9.00am Needlework n Natter at Garden Suburb  
10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

## **Offering Envelopes**

If you would like a set of offering envelopes for the coming financial year please contact Julie Fenwick in the next couple of weeks.



# THE PRAYER PAGE



As part of the Uniting Church 35 days of Prayer pray for Luga Brae Bronte Uniting Church and access the prayers available each day on line, by joining Uniting in Prayer 2024.

## Pastoral Prayer Points

\* those in our congregation whose loved ones have died in recent times

\* Elaine Ross

\* Vivianne

\* Shirley Elkin

\* Lorraine Pepper

\* Vicki

\* Lesley

\* Judith Fuller battling cancer

\* Pam and Ken

\* Lyn Benson

\* Graeme

\* Jean

\* Fred Bryant

\* June Locker

\* Ryan Walpole

\* Kathryn Gray

\* Jacqueline Fenwick in Lingard Hospital for a couple of weeks

\* Isabella

\* Janice Wright

\* Eileen Dunn

\* Mert

\* Judith and family

\* Enid Power

\* Max

\* Tom and Kathy

\* Don Humphries

## Congregational Prayer Points

- Give thanks for the sale of Whitebridge property
- 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

- pray for orphanage as they deal with the aftermath of floods
- Tom and Neos
- HCA and ongoing issues of homelessness, affordable housing and climate change
- Praise for the attendance and results obtained from the Founding Assembly of HCA
- 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:

## 9 June 2024 – Kurri-Weston Uniting Church

Kurri - Weston Church meets each Sunday at Weston followed by Morning Tea and Fellowship. About 8 to 10 people then move on to lunch together at the local Club. We are a Multi Congregation with Mulbring Church who meet fortnightly at 10.30am and often provide a light lunch for their visiting Preachers. We conduct a combined Coffee and Chat monthly on a Saturday afternoon.

**Prayer: We pray for Kurri Weston Multi Congregation at Weston and Mulbring as they endeavour to be places of welcome to all comers. As members age, we pray that we can continue to worship and share with our communities. Amen.**



## Announcements in Sunday Worship

Does your group have a meeting or activity you would like announced?

Is there something in the broader Uniting Church or community worth announcing?

If you would like an announcement slide included in our Sunday notices, please contact Anne Threlfo: [annethrelfo@gmail.com](mailto:annethrelfo@gmail.com) or 0439 754 376.



## Refugee Week

Coordinated by  
Refugee Council of Australia

Guest Speaker

*Erica Henley*

Sunday 23 June @ 9am

At Charlestown Uniting  
Church

Erica is the chairwoman of charity Operation Hope. Operation Hope is a group of Australians who were moved by the plight of refugees, and out of compassion decided to raise funds to support refugees fleeing war in Syria and Iraq, and living in refugee camps. More recently the charity has supported a UK based charity in providing food to people in Gaza.



## Notes from Church Council Chairperson

This week's church Council meeting began with two stories of Jesus healing someone; the paralysed man at Bethesda, and blind Bartimaeus. In both cases, Jesus asks what may appear to be a silly question. "Do you want to get well?", he says to the paralysed man. "What do you want me to do for you?", he says to the blind man. We considered that perhaps both men had difficulty recognising that they required healing, and that even from there disabled state, change was difficult. As individuals, or as a congregation, how do we answer these questions Jesus asks?

Matters discussed at the meeting included:

- CHaGS recently organised a conversation with members of neighbouring Uniting Church congregations to hear other's stories, experiences and challenges. The chat involved people from CHaGs, Belmont, New Lambton and Warners Bay. Feedback will be sent on to the Presbytery.
- Following an initiative from the SFED group, members of the congregation will be speaking to us in seven Sunday worship services from 16 June about Spiritual Practices they have engaged with. There will be a further sampling of practices in Contact each week from which you might choose one to try.
- The finance team have been working hard on the draft budget for 2024/25. The draft was adopted by the Council, and includes a \$30,000 deficit for the year. This will be offset to some extent when we claim expenses incurred in the selling of Whitebridge. The finance team have made it clear that this is not a sustainable situation and requires rectifying in the 2024/25 year by either reducing costs or increasing income. A Congregation meeting will be held in the near future to look at the budget and address questions.
- The Sales Proceeds Assessment Team meet next Tuesday 11 June, to discuss whether our mission plan will allow us to access funds to support "Neos", and/or funds to refurbish any of our other properties, if this is in line with our mission. Please keep this meeting in your prayers.
- The Manse sub-committee has met to consider options when the Stuarts vacate at the end of the year. These options include a complete renovation which could cost over \$100,000, or selling the current manse and purchasing another dwelling which doesn't require extensive work and could be rented to produce an income.
- Information collected from members of the congregation indicate no strong desire to move our service time. There were several who indicated a strong preference for 9am, a few who indicated a preference for 9.30am, many who indicated that time was not a factor in their inability to attend, and a majority who indicated no strong preference either way. Therefore the Church Council decided that the time for Sunday worship would remain at 9am. Thank you all for your feedback.
- The Council decided to devote the July meeting to matters concerning our property.

Please hold these matters in your prayers. You are welcome to contact myself, or any member of the Church Council if you have any questions, or would like to provide comments or suggestions.

*Anne Threlfo*

Ph: 0439 754 376      Email: [annethelfo@gmail.com](mailto:annethelfo@gmail.com)

# THE WAY, MY WAY

MIRACLES HAPPEN ON THE CAMINO

## Fundraising Movie Night:

Thursday 20 June at 6.30pm  
Lake Cinema, 62 Main Rd, Boolaroo

Funds raised will help the purchase and  
transport of relief supplies into Gaza.

Buy your ticket at Eventbrite using the QR code



## Refugee Week Event

Coordinated by  
Refugee Council of Australia

*The Way, My Way* is the charming and captivating true story of a stubborn and amusingly self-centred Australian man who decides to walk the 800 kilometre-long Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route through Spain. He doesn't know why he's doing it, but one step at a time it will change him and his outlook on life forever. Based on Bill Bennett's best selling memoir of the same name, *The Way, My Way* has been described by Camino elder statesman Johnnie Walker as the most authentic film ever made about the Camino.



[www.operationhopeaustralia.com](http://www.operationhopeaustralia.com)

Supported by:



Club of Toronto Sunrise

Book using QR code, or follow on this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/fundraising-movienight-the-way-my-way-tickets-894077428657?aff=ebdshpsearchautocomplete>

# *A Life at Sea*

Our speaker is Senior Chaplain Murray Lund recently retired Fleet Chaplain, Royal Australian Navy and current Reservist, is a Uniting Church Minister who has served as a Navy Chaplain for 25 years.

He has deployed on operations to the Middle East during the Second Gulf War, served ashore at the ADF Middle East Headquarters supporting personnel in Afghanistan, Iraq, Bahrain and Kuwait, and served on anti-piracy operational deployments to the Gulf and Africa coast. He has posted to HMA Ships Kanimbla, Success, Anzac, Melbourne and Choules and to Headquarters Joint Operations Command.

He was privileged to officiate at ANZAC Day Ceremonies at Gallipoli and Villers Brettoneux. Murray will be talking about the challenges and joys of life at sea, and the unique nature of serving Jesus in a secular war fighting outfit such as the ADF.

## **A Men's Breakfast**

at Charlestown Uniting Church –  
24 Milson St

**8am Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June**

\$12 RSVP: Paul Russell

[pmraus74@gmail.com](mailto:pmraus74@gmail.com),

or 0411 236 047

*Please advise of any special dietary requirements*

**By Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

*Please do not attend if you are unwell or have been to a Covid-19 hotspot in the previous 14 days.*

## **Sale of Whitebridge Church**

Please give any current keys you have for the Whitebridge church building or dungeon to Paul Russell by or on Sunday 16 June 2024.

A new set of building keys were issued in 2019 (they have numbers engraved on them) - so any building keys from before then are not required.

Dungeon keys were not changed since 2000.





## Rediscover and reimagine pastoral care at SoulCare 2024

You'll be energised, inspired and equipped to bring transformative pastoral care to your church, community and school.

Discover innovative developments and practices, understand community-based approaches and explore existing ministries and programs that give you opportunities for engagement, whether in disaster relief, at school or on social media.

And get practical, with all the skills, tips and tools you'll need to take your ideas into the world.

More information and registration here: [https://www.nswact.uca.org.au/calendar/soulcare-2024-12-13-september/?mc\\_cid=4552bf3406&mc\\_eid=f42c00dba1](https://www.nswact.uca.org.au/calendar/soulcare-2024-12-13-september/?mc_cid=4552bf3406&mc_eid=f42c00dba1)

### **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>