



CONTACT

Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

3 December 2023



From Rev Tom

This Sunday is the beginning of Advent. The word “Advent” is derived from the Latin word “adventus” meaning “coming” or “arrival”. Advent is a time of anticipation, preparation, and reflection on the meaning of the incarnation – the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. As most of you will have experienced, living through Advent has a demand that is quite opposed to the life demands of this time of year. People are endeavouring to get the last of the things of the year done, jobs, reports, and prize giving events. There are the preparations for Christmas, the presents, perhaps preparations for visitors, and holidays. But the invitation of Advent is toward self-examination, repentance, and spiritual preparation. Last night I listened to a recording of Stan Grant giving his address as a keynote speaker at PreachFest 2023. He talked about his role as a journalist, often finding himself in the midst of pain and suffering. He recalled an occasion where he attended the scene of a senseless terrorist attack on a bus in Beirut. He saw death all around him. He wondered at the time, where is God in this? He looked down and saw a hand print of blood on a towel, or piece of material. The print was the size of a child’s hand. Strangely that hand print grabbed his attention above all else. He felt the answer to his question, “God’s presence is right there, the hand print!”. He recalled the suffering of his own Aboriginal people, and the despair of having his own tribal nation methodically decimated from the area of Bathurst and further south-west. Like the case of the hand print of blood, that same hand print of blood is present for his people. God is present in the suffering. This awareness requires reflection. And we require this awareness. If we don’t then God will only ever be available to us on days like Christmas day, when we are being showered by gifts, and everything is jolly. But to get the full measure of God’s presence, so that we might know that God meets us in every place and in every circumstance, we must step aside from the sleep that is caused by our busyness. We must wake up to the full circumstances of life. We must ask the question, “Where is God in Gaza?” “Where is God in Ukraine?” “Where is God in Myanmar?” “Where is God in Somalia?” In each case God is in the suffering. That might seem facile for me to say. After all, here I am well fed, safe, adorned with the attributes of modern life. However, as Stan Grant points out, it is profoundly important to have this awareness for when things go terribly wrong. As the Australian Aboriginals sank into the mire of felt rejection through the failure of the referendum it is that knowledge that holds them. God is present in their suffering. During Advent we reflect of the “coming” of Jesus. In that reflection we remember the breadth, depth, and height of the presence we experience in Jesus. So, I invite you, as you read the scripture lessons, read your daily devotionals, listen to the sermons over the following weeks, reflect, prepare and wake up to the to the intimacy of God in the good times and bad. And somehow, as God shares the suffering, even that somehow, is redeemed to be the goodness of our lives.



DIARY

Thursday 30 November

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

Friday 1 December

2.00pm Live stream of Glenda O'Donohue's funeral at Charlestown Church

Sunday 3 December – Advent 1

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

Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; Mark 13:24-37

Monday 4 December

SFED Meetings have finished for the year
10.00am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visit

Tuesday 5 December

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

Wednesday 6 December

4.00pm to 7.30pm Advent Workshop

Thursday 7 December

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

Friday 8 December

6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah

Saturday 9 December

12 noon Friendship Circle Christmas Luncheon at the Pricter's

Sunday 10 December – Advent 2

9.00am Worship Service – Leader: Sue Pepper Preacher: Rev'd Tom

Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

Tuesday 12 December

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

Wednesday 13 December

12 noon Ladies Fellowship Christmas Lunch at Poppies

Thursday 14 December

10.00am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care – Carols and Communion
10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Sq

Sunday 17 December – Advent 3

9.00am Holy Communion Service – Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126: 1 Thessalonians 5: 12-28; John 1:6-8, 19-28

Monday 18 December

10.00am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visit

Tuesday 19 December

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

Thursday 21 December

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



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

- * Family and friends of Glenda O'Donahue who passed away Tuesday 14th November. Funeral is on Friday 1st December at 2pm
- * June Locker
- * Tom and Kathy's aunt's funeral next Monday 4 December in Parkes. Continue to uphold the family in your prayers
- * Ryan Walpole in rehabilitation
- * Kathryn Gray
- * those suffering with Covid
- * Those in our Congregation who have lost loved ones in recent months
- * Anne
- * Mac
- * Jacqueline Fenwick
- * Peter Ferguson
- * Nola in hospital
- * Isabella
- * Ashley back in hospital
- * Janice Wright
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Mert – praise that his operation was so successful
- * Judith and family
- * Lorraine Pepper
- * Enid Power
- * Fred Bryant
- * Max

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 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 victims and families of the earthquake in Afghanistan
- Consequences of climate change around the world
- The situation in Ukraine and other trouble spots
- Fabian, Wilfreda and children as Kenya experiences floods



Children & Family Worker Update



Last week I finished SRE at both Charlestown & Teralba School for the year, we concluded with a wonderful Christmas Assembly involving all the students as we sang songs learnt over the past couple of weeks, looked at items that tell us it is Christmas time but are they really what Christmas is all about, candy canes, holly, santa, tinsel & so on until we come to Baby Jesus. Had a story called 'God's Christmas Promise' a simple telling of the Luke 2: 1-20 with aboriginal drawings done by Auntie fern Martin, who teaches SRE at Charlestown School. I was able to get hold of 200 of these little books from the Bible Society to give to each of my SRE children this Christmas. Year 6 read the readings from the Bible & we watched a video where children retold the story as they knew it & what that story means to them & the world. Ending with a prayer & presentation to the year 6 students.



Next week I will repeat similar assemblies, along with Ben Waters at Charlestown East School, the only difference is that the school choir will be singing the Christmas songs for us. And the last SRE lesson for the year will be at Redhead on Friday.

This Wednesday is our Advent Workshop, so if you have a child looking for a special Christmas Activity let them know about our Advent Workshop. I can take registrations up until Wednesday morning, with room for more children to enjoy a great afternoon of fun, craft, games & great food.

Cathy



In loving memory of

Rev Glenda Frances O'Donohue

2.00 p.m. Friday 1st December, 2023

Uniting Church, Milson St, Charlestown

You are invited to gather and view a live stream of Glenda's funeral service (held in Wakool, NSW).



Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

Wednesday 13th December

**Christmas Lunch at
Poppies at 12 noon**

ALL WELCOME

Let Sue Warren know if you are
attending 0427 737 793



Newcastle Chamber Choir's Christmas concert will showcase our best festive repertoire for our beloved home crowd.

For group bookings or assistance purchasing tickets, email us

at info@newcastlechamberchoir.com

www.newcastlechamberchoir.com

People Power Breakfast

Join David Barrow (37), Executive Officer of NSW Community Alliance as he shares his experience as a community organiser of 17 years.

NSW is a state where decisions are made by Martin Place.
How do we respond when not in the capital?

Expect vivid stories from David's experience, recent and not-so-recent history.

Expect insights; philosophical, political, and perhaps theological.

Expect to finish your brekkie with more fire in the belly and humour in the heart.

A Men's Breakfast

at Charlestown Uniting Church - 24 Milson St

8am Saturday 9th

December

\$12 RSVP: Paul Russell pmraus74@gmail.com,
or 0411 236 047

or sign-up sheet in the foyer.

Please advise of any special dietary requirements

By Wednesday 6th December 2023

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

Congregation Directory

**PRINTING
SOON!!!!**

Last call to let Paul know if you have any changes to make for the new Directory!

Please provide any changes by Friday the
8th December

Send an email to Paul Russell pmraus74@gmail.com - clearly stating the change - and signing with your name(s) as authorisation.

For brand new entries and if you do not have email access - please complete one of the Change Forms available in the foyer at Charlestown and give to Paul Russell or give to Jenny Cummings _ Admin Officer.

Any questions - ask Paul Russell 0411236047





**CHARLESTOWN FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE
CHRISTMAS IN THE WEST**

All are invited to the Annual Christmas Party of the Charlestown Friendship Circle to be held at

**Grahame and Lynne Pricter's Place
137 Cassinia Crescent, West Wallsend.**

On Saturday 9th December 2023

11-30 am to whenever!!

Cost: Approx \$10 per person on day.

This includes a BBQ Meal, Salads, Prawns, Desserts plus an assortment of festive nibbles on the table and pre dinner drinks.

Come and enjoy a time of Fun, Food and Fellowship

Please let Sue Warren know by Wednesday 6th December 2023 if you are attending **and if you need a lift.**

Let Sue Warren know if you have any special dietary needs.



Share God's love through the Christmas Bowl



Thank you for joining with churches across Australia as we share God's love through the Christmas Bowl.

Since 1949, the Christmas Bowl has brought together committed Australian Christians with dedicated local partners around the world to give hope to people uprooted by conflict and disaster. By sharing this tradition, you are helping build a world where all people have a safe place to belong. **Thank you.**



CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

If giving to the Christmas Bowl is part of your Christmas traditions, envelopes to put in the offering are available on the entry cupboard or you can make an online donation at

<https://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au/donate>

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>