



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

4 May 2025

From Rev Tom

I know I usually focus on more spiritual topics, but with an election happening this Saturday, it feels wrong to ignore it entirely. Don't worry—I'm not about to tell you how to vote! And I'm certainly not here to declare that one political party will destroy our way of life and bring about the end of the world as we know it—though, let's be honest, that's often how the political messaging feels. Fear, after all, is a powerful motivator.

Instead, as we head into the election and await the results (which we'll likely know by Saturday night), I want to reflect on something we often take for granted: how fortunate we are to live in a country with such a strong and vibrant democracy.

Just the other day, I spoke with the husband of an electoral candidate. He mentioned that their teenage kids were helping hand out flyers at polling booths. I asked if he had any concerns about that. He said that while they sometimes face the occasional cold shoulder, most people are courteous and respectful, so he's not too worried.

Compare that to many parts of the world where elections—if they even happen—require armed guards to protect voters. Here in Australia, we treat voting almost like a community event. You'll find sausage sizzles outside polling stations, sometimes with volunteers from opposing political sides flipping snags together on the BBQ.

Democracy is under serious pressure in many countries right now. And that makes Australia stand out even more for the strength of its democratic system. We have high voter turnout, thanks to compulsory voting. Our elections are run by an independent electoral commission that ensures fairness, transparency, and impartiality. Our institutions are stable, with a clear separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

While our system isn't perfect—the rule of law is occasionally broken, and media ownership raises concerns—we still have an independent judiciary and a free press. Journalists in Australia can report the truth without fear for their safety or freedom. We still enjoy freedom of speech, freedom of association, religious liberty, and the right to protest.

This democratic strength underpins much of what makes life in Australia so good: universal healthcare, public safety, access to education, and political stability. Despite occasional tensions, we're also one of the most successful multicultural nations in the world. We enjoy a healthy work-life balance and live surrounded by the extraordinary beauty of this unique continent.

So, when you cast your vote on Saturday, amid all the political noise and diversity of opinion, remember the strong democratic foundation that allows it all to happen—and be grateful.

DIARY

Thursday 1 May

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 3 May

11.15am Friendship Circle – Mother's Day Celebration at Hunter Wetlands Centre

Sunday 4 May – Easter 3

9.00am The Divine Worship

Leader and Preacher: Rev Tom

Acts 9:1-6, (7-20); Psalm 30; Revelations 5:11-14; John 21:1-19;

Monday 5 May

10.00am Garden Suburb Aged Care Pastoral Visitation

Tuesday 6 May

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Thursday 8 May

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

10.30am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility

1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb Church

Friday 9 May

6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah

Saturday 10 May

8.30am Walking on Country, Staples Lookout, Woy Woy Bay (See attached PDF)

Sunday 11 May – Easter 4

9.00am The Divine Worship

Leader and Preacher: Rev Tom

Acts 9:36-43; Psalm 23; Revelations 7:9-17; John 10:22-30

Tuesday 13 May

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Wednesday 14 May

10.00am Ladies Fellowship at Charlestown

Thursday 15 May

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

Sunday 18 May – Easter 5

9.00am The Divine Worship

Leader and Preacher: Rev Tom

Acts 11:1-18; Psalm 148; Revelations 21:1-6; John 13:31-35

Monday 19 May

10.00am Garden Suburb Aged Care Pastoral Visitation

Tuesday 20 May

9.00am Needlework 'n' Natter at Garden Suburb

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

THE PRAYER PAGE



Prayer is the Voice of Faith

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Those who are mourning loved ones
- * Mike Warren
- * Kim
- * Janice and Don Wright
- * Kelly
- * Laraine Chegwiddden
- * Tony Sellen
- * Vivianne
- * Vicki
- * Pam and Ken
- * Lyn Benson
- * Jean
- * Fred Bryant
- * June Locker
- * Ryan Walpole
- * Kathryn Gray
- * Jacqueline Fenwick
- * Isabella
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Pam and Mert
- * Enid Power
- * Max
- * Don Humphries

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

Congregational Prayer Points

- Church Council
- John Lewis and his work with Wesley Mission in Windale and Hamilton South
- pray for guidance and discernment
missional use of buildings into the future
- 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
- Young people who struggle to participate
in our school system
- Orphanage in Kenya and Wilfreda
- Neos ministry
- Those affected by climate change in
Australia eg floods, droughts and fires
- The situation in Israel and Palestine
- The situation in Ukraine and other trouble
spots



Spiritual Practice of the Week

Covenant Group: A covenant group is composed of people who commit themselves to helping and encouraging one another as each prayerfully seeks to live out God's will in their lives.

Practice: Take an inventory of your relationships. Divide a piece of paper into columns titled "Allies," "Colleagues," "Acquaintances," "Friends," "Close Friends." Name those who you know in each category. What did you find out about your relationships? • What is God saying to you about this?

These resources come from Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us (Transforming Resources). InterVarsity Press

Children & Family Worker Update



Well here we are at the start of Term 2 already, having been a short school week my only classes are at Redhead School on Friday afternoon, where I plan to continue on with the Easter Bag idea with 'After the Tomb' & particularly focus on Peter & Jesus on the beach. Which you will see is also my Children's Corner message on Sunday.

This coming week all classes resume & I will also take an SRE Assembly at Charlestown East School on Tuesday afternoon, Ben Waters will help me out with this assembly as we have around 150 children attend. The message I have chosen for this is again 'After the Tomb' I will have a number of children involved with Bible Readings, discovering hidden messages & song.

Praying you all have a great week.

Blessings

Cathy



Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

Wednesday 14 May

**Will be held at Charlestown
Church from 10.00am**

**Come have a cuppa and join in
Fellowship with stories and a
laugh**

**Wednesday 28 May at
10.00am**

Entry by Donation



Donations gratefully requested for support of the
Cancer Council

Bring your Friends

Contact Sue Warren on 0427 737 793 for further details.

Some of our Church Contacts:

Minister

Rev Tom Stuart

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Administration:

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Children & Families Resource Worker:

Mrs Cathy Beeton

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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>