



# CONTACT

Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting  
Church Multi-Centre Congregation



**7 July 2024**

## **From Rev Tom**

Do you know the meaning of the name Paul? Perhaps if you read the commentary on 2 Corinthians 11:16-33 in "With Love to the World" you will know the answer. Or maybe you already knew. I had no idea! In any case, it is from the Roman family name *Paulus*, which meant "small" or "humble" in Latin! Amazing! A big feature of Paul's ministry was his humility. While Paul's writings became a foundation of the Christian tradition, it seems that he was far from impressive in person. Early non-biblical writing describes Paul as "a man of small stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked" (from the apocryphal book "Acts of Paul and Thecla). When writing about himself Paul reports, "For some say, 'His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.'" (2 Corinthians 10:10). I find the issue of humility puzzling and have reflected on it, and read about it, for some time. It is a subtle characteristic and hard-won. I am reminded of Jesus' words "Blessed are the poor", "Blessed are those who mourn", "Blessed are those who hunger". It is almost as if to get to a place like humility we must be challenged to the point where there is a degree of suffering or strife about which we can do nothing. It seems that Paul experienced a lot of this. He experienced it in his reputation as being unimpressive (particularly as people compared him so poorly against the eloquent Apollos). He also experienced it, as described in 2 Corinthians 11, by way of his thorn in the flesh. From time to time I have the opportunity to share with people who you might say have a charmed life, wealthy, talented, healthy! The people I refer to are also very involved in the church and truly act in a way that reflects humility. I could be charged with being judgemental here. However, at times I notice that the humility is a well learned behaviour. And good on them. But the humility is itself something that is valued. There is an awareness that it is good to be humble. So, it is subtle, because even the humility is an acquisition of their impressive character. Don't get me wrong, I am not complaining about this. But it is not the humility that I see Jesus talking about. It is not the humility that Paul is talking about. Paul is explicit. It is his genuine suffering, it is his failing, not seen as a value in itself, that is his blessing. Why? Because then through that failing the sufficiency of God shines through. No one who is with Paul pats him on his back for those things that cause him to be humble. I notice this for myself with my hearing impairment. I do not doubt that my hearing loss causes humility in me because so often I feel inadequate for the task. But no one congratulates me for being hearing impaired. They have to suffer me having it. Poor Kathy, my wife, has to say almost everything at least twice. Give her the medal. So, why am I saying this? Well, it is a warning to those who might too easily think they are humble. It is also an encouragement to those who feel, in some way, in struggle street, or inadequate. Truly that struggle is (weirdly) your strength as you keep on trusting in the goodness of God in all circumstances. I also think of it in relation to the church. This is a time when the church has the potential to discover again genuine humility.

# DIARY

## Thursday 4 July

- 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 7 July – Pentecost 7

- 9.00am Worship Service. Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom  
Including Children's Corner with Cathy  
*2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10; Psalm 48; 2 Corinthians 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13*

## Monday 8 July

- 1.30pm SFED

## Tuesday 9 July

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

## Wednesday 10 July

- 10.00am Charlestown Women's Fellowship for morning tea and chat  
**9.30-3.00 Holiday Kids Club – Crazy Olympics at Garden Suburb**

## Thursday 11 July

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

## Friday 12 July

- 10–11.45am Grief, Loss and Change at Toronto Uniting Church  
6.00pm Ladies night at Kahibah

## Saturday 13 July

- 12.00 noon Charlestown Friendship Circle – Soup and Movie at Charlestown Uniting Church

## Sunday 14 July – Pentecost 8

- 9.00am Worship Service. Leader: Margaret White and Preacher: Rev'd Tom  
*2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19; Psalm 24; Ephesians 1:3-14; Mark 6:14-29*

### **Congregation Meeting following the Service**

## Monday 15 July

- 1.30pm SFED  
10.00am Garden Suburb Aged Care Pastoral Visit

## Tuesday 16 July

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

## Thursday 18 July

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

## Sunday 21 July – Pentecost 9

- 9.00am Holy Communion Service. Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom  
*2 Samuel 7:1-14a; Psalm 89:20-37; Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56*

## Monday 22 July

- 1.30pm SFED

# 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
- \* Laraine Chegwiddden
- \* Tony Sellen home from hospital
- \* Liz and Peter
- \* Nelda Marshall
- \* Mike Warren
- \* Elaine Ross
- \* Vivianne
- \* Shirley Elkin
- \* Lorraine Pepper
- \* Vicki
- \* Lesley
- \* Judith Fuller battling cancer
- \* Pam and Ken
- \* Lyn Benson
- \* Jean
- \* Fred Bryant
- \* June Locker
- \* Ryan Walpole
- \* Kathryn Gray
- \* Jacqueline Fenwick home from hospital
- \* Isabella
- \* Janice Wright
- \* Eileen Dunn
- \* Mert
- \* Judith and family
- \* Enid Power
- \* Max
- \* Tom and Kathy
- \* Don Humphries

## Congregational Prayer Points

- Church Council
- 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

- The orphanage
- Tom and Neos
- HCA and ongoing issues of homelessness, affordable housing and climate change
- 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:

## 16 June 2024 – Maitland - Maitland Uniting Church

The congregation at Maitland City Uniting Church is ageing and is becoming increasingly unable to undertake activities other than attending worship services. The MUNCH Program at Maitland City Uniting Church has been providing sit-down meals twice a week to disadvantaged people for going on thirty years. It is led by a member of the congregation and is staffed by volunteers drawn almost entirely from the community. The current leader is retiring after twelve years and there is an urgent need for a wider leadership team to be developed.

**Prayer: We pray that God will raise up younger members to join the congregation but also that all members of the congregation, regardless of their personal circumstances, will have their spiritual needs met and enjoy the fellowship of fellow Christians. Amen. We pray that God will raise up someone to manage the MUNCH Program with a real heart for serving the homeless and disadvantaged people in the Maitland area. We also pray for others to join in leadership roles in support of the manager. Amen.**



**Congregational Meeting**

There will be a Congregation Meeting on

*Next Week!* **Sunday 14 July**

following worship at Charlestown.

Agenda items will include the 2024/25 Budget, an update on Neos, and an update on property matters.

Please contact David Chegwidden if you would like to add any other agenda items.

## Children & Family Worker Update



**Our Holiday Kids Club** has been transferred from Charlestown Church to Garden Suburb, same day, time & activities.

If you have passed the flyer onto any families please just let them know of the change of venue, I will be sure to notify families booking in.

Cathy



Toronto Uniting Church is hosting a workshop on

## Grief, Loss and Change

facilitated by Mandy Cox, Bereavement Counsellor and Educator.

### A repeat workshop owing to a strong demand for the previous workshop

This is an introduction to caring for others, and for ourselves, through the experience of grief, loss and change. Learn about the impacts of loss and change, ways to support someone who is grieving, and when grief gets stuck – what then?

**Friday 12 July at 10am – 11.45am**

Toronto Uniting Church  
118 The Boulevard, Toronto

A free workshop, but please register here:

<https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1247579>

for catering purposes.



**OPERATION HOPE**  
Australia Ltd

## Gaza – You Can Send Aid

We heard recently from Erica Henley of the partnership between Operation Hope, and the UK registered charity “Refugee Biryani and Bananas”. This partnership is delivering much needed food aid to families in Gaza.

Each family size box of non-perishable food costs \$60

Each semi-trailer costs \$60,000

Each semi-trailer carries 1,080 food boxes

Please help us reach more malnourished children and their families.

To donate safely use this link: <https://tinyurl.com/46vjatan>

You can also support the Gaza appeal by purchasing beautiful handmade gifts:

<https://operationhopeaustralia.square.site/s/shop>

A thank you from Uniting Church Stamp  
Committee

Sales to date from used stamps for 2024

\$9,500.00



**NOTE  
CHANGE  
OF DATE**

**Garden Suburb Uniting Church Ladies  
Fellowship**

will meet on **Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> July** 2024 at 12noon for a Pizza Luncheon.

(this date is instead of 23<sup>rd</sup> June)



Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July

Will be held at Charlestown  
Church from 10.00am

For morning tea and a chat



*On Saturday 13 July*

Meet at Charlestown Uniting Church  
at 12 noon for a Soup and  
Movie afternoon

Please bring a small plate of  
food for afternoon tea  
All Welcome







# KEEP THE FIRE BURNING! BLAK, LOUD AND PROUD

**7-14 JULY 2024**

This prayer has been written for NAIDOC Week 2024 by proud Wuthathi and Mabuag Island woman Safina Stewart for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to keep the fire burning, and prayer for the church to continue walking together for truth and justice.

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Creator God,

You are the sustainer of life, the composer of creation's song  
You taught our Elders how to listen to Country's rhythm  
To stand to protect, sustain and care for Country  
Open our ears and enflame our commitment toward creation justice

*We walk together to keep the fire burning*

You are the celebrator of language, kinship and culture  
You have taught our communities how to be resilient  
Renew and encourage our disheartened spirits, restore our peoples to flourishing  
Overflow us with vision, guide our paths, give us comrades for the journey

*We walk together to keep the fire burning*

You are the fire keeper, the Creator of time and place  
You remember the silenced and ignored stories  
Your stories connect us back to Your love to fuel the flame  
Quicken our memory to Your way of justice, hope and love  
We are Blak, Loud, Proud. We will keep the fire burning.

*We walk together to keep the fire burning*

You are the holy God of truth and justice  
You hear the cry of our hearts, our laments and our mourning  
You comfort and accompany us  
We experience your faithfulness and peace.  
Blaze us with your love and presence, holy God of truth and justice

*We walk together to keep the fire burning*

You are the Spirit of restoration and healing  
You gave Jesus to show us how to live in right relationship  
We take our place to listen, learn and build understanding  
We walk together with honour, respect and celebration

*We walk together to keep the fire burning*

*Amen*



## *Notes from Church Council Chairperson*

This week's Church Council meeting began with a period of worship and prayer where we became still before God, while lifting up the business of our meeting, our Neos mission, and the pastoral needs of members of the congregation. There followed a long and busy meeting covering the following areas:

- There is interest in organising another conversation with neighbouring Uniting Church congregations. The Council agreed to proceed.
- The Vitality of Call review of Tom's ministry will be conducted by a team from Presbytery on Monday 29 July. The team will meet at Charlestown and speak with Tom and with members of the Church Council.
- Safe Church Training update days will be held at Garden Suburb on 24 August, and at Morpeth on 12 October. Contact Cathy Beeton for further information.
- Cathy will be on leave from 31 August to 7 September.
- Holiday Kids will proceed at Garden Suburb on 10 July with about 12-15 children. In a review of Children and Family work to be held later this year consideration will be given to bringing this activity to an end.
- A successful application has been made to draw down \$11,665.44 from the Whitebridge sale proceeds to cover costs incurred in the lease attempt and sale of the property.
- A long discussion was held regarding the future of the Manse property. Due to the considerable maintenance and renovation needs of the existing manse, it was agreed to investigate other options. A property assessment provided by agent Knight Frank indicates an "as is" sale price of \$1.1m - \$1.2m, with a property developer being the most likely purchaser. Uniting Property have informally indicated interest in exploring the feasibility of developing the site themselves. The meeting agreed to enter a conversation with Uniting Property about how we might reach a mutually satisfactory arrangement which would supply us with a manse rental income (or equivalent) in the short term, that is, by the beginning of 2025, and a manse property for the use of future Ministry Agents in the longer term.
- The meeting adopted an update of our Mission Plan. A copy is provided with this issue of Contact.
- The meeting approved a Non Real Estate Mission Approval (NREMA) application to be submitted to Presbytery and Synod in order to gain access to an income from the Whitebridge Sale Proceeds. We are applying for \$35,000 for the 2024/25 financial year which would cover the 25% Neos portion of Tom's placement, with increases according to the CPI index into the future. The Sales Proceeds Assessment Team (SPAT) will be meeting next week to consider this application.
- The SPAT group will also determine the amount of money to be held back from long term investment to cover maintenance and/or renovation costs of the Charlestown and Garden Suburb properties. Both properties have considerable maintenance issues and neither property committee has the funds to cover them. The meeting agreed to ask for \$300,000, realising that these funds will be deducted from the capital from which we want to draw down an ongoing income.



- There are significant conversations and decisions to come about where and why money is spent on the Charlestown and Garden Suburb properties. Which of our properties best serves the needs of the existing congregation? Which property will best serve the needs of Neos and the community now and into the future? Which property should be leased or sold to secure the financial platform for our ongoing mission?

There will be an opportunity at the congregation meeting on 14 July for addressing questions and conveying more information about these matters. In the meantime, you are welcome to contact myself or any member of the Church Council with comments or suggestions.

As we grapple with these complex and challenging decisions, the Church Council gives thanks for your prayers for guidance, insight and attentiveness to God's call on the life of our congregation, as we continue to be "doers of the word" (James 1:22)

*Anne Threlfo*

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

## **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>

# Small is Beautiful 2



## Thriving as a small Church



Saltbush Minister Yvonne Ghavalas will lead a second workshop on thriving as a small church. At our first gathering, we considered how the unravelling of our traditional ways of being church might actually be the activity of the Holy Spirit inviting us to partner together in new ways. Small is Beautiful 2 will focus on creative worship with the seed parables in Mark's Gospel, conversation around the idea of "thriving" communities, and practising intentional community-building through relationship, inclusivity, justice, and discipleship. Morning tea and materials will be provided at no cost - please bring a +1 along with you if possible.

**Saturday 31st August 2024**  
**9am - 1pm**

**East Maitland Uniting Church - 35 William St**

Register here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/small-is-beautiful-2-tickets-936103269077?aff=oddtcreator>

The Hunter Presbyterian Uniting Church in Australia

# Practices That Transform Us

## Share My Life with Others

Robert Mulholland suggests that spiritual formation is about being transformed into the image of Christ “for the sake of others.” Keeping company with Jesus is not just a private spiritual act, it is the way we share the trinitarian life of God with others. We are meant to live in community in the same way God does. In the company of others we make our journey and learn to tell the truth about ourselves. Interacting with others we learn the vulnerability of giving and receiving love. The S disciplines connect us with this loving-one-another life of Christ’s body.

“S” Sharing our Life With Others and God

1. Accountability- No. 2
2. Chastity - No. 1
3. Community- No. 3
4. Covenant Group - No. 1
5. Discipling - No. 3
6. Face to face Connection- No. 1
7. Hospitality - No. 7- (with this one ask people to make suggestions and hand to Sue Warren so they can be shared)
8. Mentoring- No. 1
9. Service - No. 3
10. Small Group - No. 1
11. Spiritual Friendship - No. 5
12. Unity - No. 3
13. Witness - No. 3

1. **Accountability** - Think back over the last three decades about the people that have shaped your faith. List their initials on a piece of paper. Beside each initial describe how they helped you grow. What did they give you? What did they not give you? • What patterns do you see? • Discuss your observations with your accountability partner. • Discuss what you would like to be for one another.
2. **Chastity** - Read through Psalm 139: 11-18. What is David’s opinion of his body? What is God’s view of the body? • What is your own view of your body? Talk to God frankly about how you feel about your body. Listen to what he wants to say to you.
3. **Community** - Ask someone to tell you their story. Listen to the story as deeply as you can. Tell the person how much it means to you to hear the story. • How does the story give you a deeper understanding of your friend, of God and of yourself ?
4. **Covenant Group** - 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?
5. **Discipling** - How would you describe the people who have helped you grow in your spiritual journey? What particular gift did they give to you? What have you learned from them about yourself and God? • What do you want to say to God about each person? • How can you express your thanks to each of these people?
6. **Face-to-Face Connection** - Practice arriving early or staying late at events so you can loiter and have face time with people. What conversations come up because you are there in the flesh?
7. **Hospitality** - Develop a list of standard conversational questions (other than “What do you do?”) that can open people up to one another. How do the questions you ask bring welcome rather than comparison? (You might like to write down your list and give to Sue Warren so they can be shared).

8. **Mentoring** – Take a mentor review. Think back over your life, writing down the names of those who have believed in you and mentored you. What happened to you because of their presence in your life? Write them a letter telling them what they mean to you.
9. **Service** - Divide a paper into three columns. Above one column write, “For Me.” Above the second column write, “For Others.” Above the third column write, “For God.” Review the past week or month. Jot down in each column the things you have bought and done for yourself, others and God. What does this inventory reveal about your life? • Take time to read Luke 23. Gaze at Jesus on the cross. What has God given because he loves you? • How would you like to see the answers in your columns change over the next months? Listen to your longings and God’s promptings.
10. **Small Group** - If you have never been part of a small group experience, ask the Lord if now is the time to join one. Consider what kind of small group you would like to be involved in: an outreach group, a Bible study group, a book club, a covenant group or a support group. Ask God to help you start or find a group you can journey with.
11. **Spiritual Friendship** - Where do you want and need balance? Complete the following.  
Friends for the heart . . .  
Friends for the head . . .  
Friends for the hand . . .  
Friends for the soul . . .
12. **Unity** - Look for God in other churches: once a year, go for a God hunt in a church tradition that is different from your own. How does this body of Christ reflect the Lord? What do they have to give you as part of the body?
13. **Witness** - Make a list of the people you are praying will respond to God. Beside each name list one intentional way you can be the face of God to them in the next month.

*“The pace of life and our preoccupation with unimportant things take so much of our attention. The significant things, like taking time to develop friendship, to read and pray, . . . to listen to God— these all get sacrificed on the altar of good works and Christian busyness.” - Luci Shaw*

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