



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

12 May 2024

From Rev Tom

Last week I referred to the word *metanoia*, a word John the Baptist and Jesus used frequently, as an invitation to transformation (usually the English translation of the word is “repent”). A necessary capacity for this purpose is self-observation. Self-observation as essential to transformation is well-known inside and outside our Christian tradition. One of the most famous references to the importance of self-observation is inscribed on the Temple of Apollo at Delphi in Greece, “Know thyself”. Socrates, the influential philosopher of ancient Athens, emphasized the importance of self-knowledge as a path to wisdom and virtue. Of course, while drawing from all wisdom traditions is advantageous, our primary source is Jesus. We find in Jesus a constant invitation for inner reflection, as he not only acknowledges outward behaviour, but also challenges us to reflect on the underlying motivations. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:8,6:1-18) Jesus taught about the significance of inner attitudes and intentions, such as purity of heart, humility and sincerity. Luke 5:32 says, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” This is typical of Jesus’ invitation to acknowledge one’s sins and shortcomings. But such acknowledgement requires another deliberate effort on our part: self-reflection and honesty about one’s actions and attitudes. Mostly people avoid this sort of self-reflection because it is too painful. However, Jesus invited in us another inner disposition, and that is to be non-judgmental, or to put it another way, to not condemn (rather, to love ourselves, warts and all). Jesus saw our human frailty but did not condemn, for example, Matthew 9:36, “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd,” and when he was on the cross Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” These last words in themselves hint our lack of introspection, but Jesus lack of condemnation. So, Jesus is inviting us to observe ourselves, our attitudes and behaviours, and to do so without condemnation. This gives me the freedom to relate to you one of my discoveries as a result of self-observation (not that I had to look too hard). A behaviour pattern I have is procrastination. Procrastination is defined as the act of delaying or putting off tasks or responsibilities that one should be attending to. I have the typical forms of procrastination, like simply putting off a task that is likely demanding, tiring, or some such. But I also have a subtler form of procrastination. This subtle form of procrastination is to be busy. If I ensure I have lots of things to do I have a good excuse for not doing the task I don’t want to do, whether it is because it will be hard, or there is something about it that invokes fear (like that I might fail), or it draws on skills about which I have no confidence. I am not even aware that I am procrastinating. I have a far better justification in mind, “I am so inundated with work!!” The more I have observed myself the more I have discovered the impact this has on me. That I can see this is part of *metanoia*! But once observed there are new challenges that create opportunities for new moments of *metanoia*. My first response is to condemn myself and beat myself up. However, Jesus teaches us not to judge, or not to condemn. Procrastination has been with me since I was at school and I have a long history of self-condemnation. To not condemn is to change according to Jesus’ invitation. But even without condemning, there is the invitation to change (repent). I have worked on changing my procrastination for a long time. However, it has mostly amounted to frustration, and often the harder I work on it the worse it becomes. This has given me another *metanoia* (to see things differently). I have discovered how difficult it is to change. This has both helped me to understand human nature, but I am also much more compassionate to everyone else. That is, if I find it so difficult to change why should I judge anyone else? All of these elements are components of *metanoia*. It is all part of Jesus often stated invitation, *metanoia*!

DIARY

Thursday 9 May

- 10.00am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care
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

Friday 10 May

- 6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah

Sunday 12 May – Easter 7

- 9.00am Worship Service Leader: Kathy Stuart and Preacher: Rev'd Tom
Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Psalm 1; 1 John 5:9-13; John 17:6-19

Monday 13 May

- 1.30pm SFED

Tuesday 14 May

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

Thursday 16 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 19 May – Pentecost Sunday

- 9.00am Worship Service with Holy Communion. Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom Stuart
Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34; Romans 8:22-27; John 15:26-27

Please wear something RED

Monday 20 May

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

Tuesday 21 May

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

Gas Heaters at Charlestown

As winter approaches it is a timely to talk about the gas heaters at Charlestown.

Last winter we had a massive increase in gas costs - due to both a doubling in gas prices AND a doubling in gas consumption.

Whilst we cannot do much about the price increase - we can certainly influence the gas consumption.

We are fortunate to have very powerful gas heaters that soon warm up the spaces - please be mindful to **NOT** turn them on too early and **ALSO** to turn them off as soon as practical - and use them sparingly (is it really cold enough to need them on?)

Looking forward to a warm and affordable winter!

Charlestown Property Committee



THE PRAYER PAGE



Please join with each other as a congregation, to commit to praying at meal times, for the needs mentioned below.

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * those in our congregation whose loved ones have died in recent times
- * Shirley Elkin
- * Lorraine Pepper
- * Vicki
- * Lesley
- * Judith Fuller battling cancer
- * Pam and Ken (home from hospital today)
- * Lyn Benson
- * Graeme
- * Jean
- * Fred Bryant
- * June Locker
- * Ryan Walpole
- * Kathryn Gray
- * Jacqueline Fenwick
- * Isabella
- * Janice Wright
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Mert
- * Judith and family
- * Enid Power
- * Max
- * Tom and Kathy

Congregational Prayer Points

- Give thanks for the sale of Whitebridge property
- Pray for guidance and discernment for 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 experience heavy rain and 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
- Pray for victims and families affected by the recent tragedies in Sydney
- 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
- Thanksgiving for all orphanage children at school thanks to generous donations
- Rohingya people in Bangladesh where 7000 people homeless





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:

12 May 2024 – University of Newcastle

Pastor Kim Langford has served in the role of Uniting Church Chaplain at the University of Newcastle since 2017. The focus of her day-by-day ministry work includes pastoral conversations and counselling among students and staff. She is also Assistant Chaplaincy Coordinator, and contributes to events such as Orientation Week, Harmony Day celebrations and Psychological Health Working Group activities. She continues to offer the unique gifts of a Uniting Church presence on campus with both students and staff.

Prayer: All students, new and continuing, as they manage and thrive amid the stresses of study, employment, and family life. The twelve chaplains, from various traditions, who work to work together to enhance well-being and offer an intentional and diverse presence. Staff who are passionate to contribute to the 'whys' and the 'what' of learning. And the University community as it seeks to be a place of academic and vocational excellence, supporting a sense of belonging and encouraging personal growth. Amen.

Children & Family Worker Update



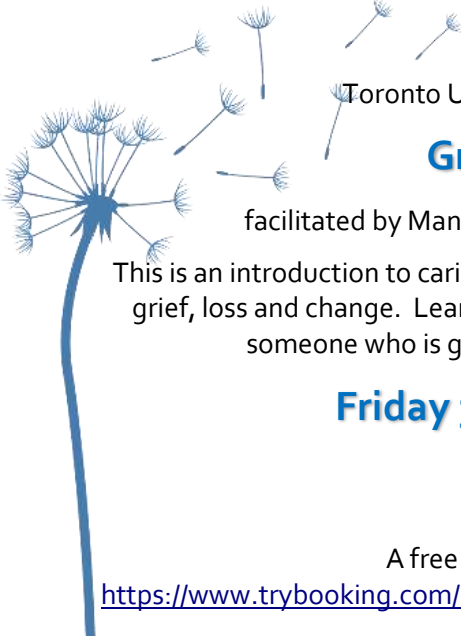
Last Sunday in our Children's Corner we heard the Lost Sheep story of The Gardener & the Vine. I started with a branch that had fallen from a tree, talking about what exciting thing could possibly happen to a branch, I followed this with the story in which we hear that the garden took a scraggly old piece of vine & snipped a healthy grape vine then grafted the old vine onto the healthy vine & it produced grapes. I hope you either heard the story at church or online or DVD if not maybe you have the worship booklet or can get hold of last weeks' worship booklet & read the story for yourself.

After the story Mabel & I took the old branch & gave it new life. Mabel is holding her branch in the photo, I think you will agree the branch definitely is blossoming with new life.

Have a good week.

Cathy





Toronto Uniting Church is hosting a workshop on

Grief, Loss and Change

facilitated by Mandy Cox, Bereavement Counsellor and Educator.

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 31 May at 10am – 11.30am

Toronto Uniting Church
118 The Boulevard, Toronto

A free workshop, but please register here:

<https://www.trybooking.com/events/1215499/sessions/4580807/sections/2285709/tickets>
for catering purposes:



Tom and Kathy will be on holiday from 20 May to 2 June (inclusive).

If you have any concerns during this time, please contact Anne Threlfo, Julie Fenwick, or your Elder.

I was given 4 of these “giant print” English Standard Version Bibles. You will find them on the table in the foyer at Charlestown. Please take one, either for yourself, or for someone known to you who would find the large print helpful.

Anne Threlfo



Uniting Climate Conference

Faith in a Better Future



Online

11 May
2024

In-Person

Register Now

Join us on Saturday May 11 for our Uniting Climate Conference – *Faith in a Better Future*

The Uniting Church has a long tradition of environmental concern and action. The conference will bring Uniting Church and wider community members together in shared concern for a better future.

The conference will be held in Sydney for those who can attend in-person, but all keynote sessions and afternoon plenary will be livestreamed for those joining online.

Full agenda here: <https://www.unitingclimate.org/2024/04/22/uniting-climate-conference-uniting-faith-in-a-better-future/>

Free registration here: <https://events.humanitix.com/ucan-conference>

May 18, August 10,
November 16, 2024.

A series of 1 day retreats,
using reflection, nature &
creativity to deepen your
spiritual life.



Find out more: <https://www.fostertonretreat.com.au/space-for-the-great-i-am>

Making Space for the Divine at Fosterton Retreat...



Notes from Church Council Chairperson

This week's Church Council meeting began with a look at the first 2 verses of John 15 where Jesus speaks of himself as the true vine, while God the gardener prunes all the branches whether they bear fruit or not so that they may be more fruitful. We also read Isaiah 18:5-6, which speaks of pruned branches that provide sustenance for birds and animals. We thought about this pruning in terms of the life of our congregation and then re-watched the story of Basil the branch from last week's worship service. What does this pruning have to say to us about the future life and mission of our congregation?

Matters discussed in the meeting included:

- A conversation with representatives of neighbouring congregations will take place next Thursday 16 May.
- We have received an update from Uniting regarding the Charlestown development. The State Significant Development Application has been approved, and the detailed planning phase has commenced. A builder will be selected later in the year. The development will include 203 independent living units, 133 apartments, 120 residential aged care beds, including dementia places and a variety of community facilities.
- We have chosen to participate in the Uniting Church Prayer chain, and have been matched with the Lugar Brae Uniting Church in Bronte, Sydney. Contact has been made, and we will be sharing more with them in coming weeks.
- The Council has accepted a recommendation from the worship team to engage with the congregation about a possible change of time for Sunday worship services from 9am to 9.30am. The aim is to determine if this adjustment would make it easier for folk to attend worship in person. Each member of the congregation will be asked to express their preference, and a decision will be made based on the information gathered. So, expect a call from your Elder in the next couple of weeks.
- The SFED group is looking at the book "Spiritual Disciplines Handbook", and will be introducing a sampling of spiritual practices through Contact and Sunday worship in coming weeks.
- Rev Tom will be taking leave from 20 May to 2 June (inclusive).
- The Whitebridge property has been sold for \$1,600,000 plus GST, and will settle on Wednesday 19 June. All Uniting Church properties which are sold contribute 3% to the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress as an act of reconciliation, and the agent Knight Frank is paid 1.85%. The nett total then is \$1,522,400, from which we can immediately claim our costs associated with the sale of the property. What happens to the bulk of the sales proceeds is then a matter to be negotiated with Synod and Presbytery, remembering that the money belongs to the Uniting Church Synod, not CHAGS. A portion of the sale proceeds may be used for maintenance on our other properties. Income from the sale proceeds may be used to further the mission of the church in Charlestown, or it may not. Representatives from our Council will be involved in discussions based on our mission plan, to examine whether our congregation may draw an income from the proceeds, to support the mission of God in our community.
- Reach Church have decided not to proceed in leasing the Garden Suburb Property.
- Tom provided an update on Neos, including involvement with the Greater Charlestown Sustainability Group.
- The Manse sub-committee of the Church Council will meet in coming weeks to discuss options for the Manse when the Stuarts vacate the 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: annethrelfo@gmail.com

Tickets for Opera Hunter, who are presenting Bizet's

Carmen

Were you planning to see Carmen at the Warners Bay Theatre?

Opening night is -

Wednesday July 10th at 7.30 pm

and performances are -

Friday 12th 7.30pm

with matinees on

Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th at 2pm

We have two tickets donated for use at the **SRE Silent Auction** (face value \$110) - being offered now - please make your bid (your choice of session) to

Paul Russell on 0411236047

The poster features a vibrant red and yellow color scheme. At the top, it lists the production details: 'Sung in French with English Surtitles & English Dialogue', the 'LAKE MACQUARIE CITY' logo, the 'Opera Hunter' logo, and the website 'Book Now: stickytickets.com.au'. The title 'Carmen' is written in a large, elegant script. Below the title, the venue and dates are listed: 'WARNERS BAY THEATRE ~ JULY 10-21 2024'. The production team is credited: Director ~ Stewart McGowan, Conductor ~ Christopher Bearman OAM, and Music Director ~ Mercia Buck OAM. The cast members are listed in two columns: Anthea Harrington, Ellen Malone, Emma Lewis, Ezekiel Weedon, James Walker, Joanna Andrew, John Campbell, Malcolm Young, Marian Moroney, Michael Saunders, PJ Willis, Raphael Hudson, and Sam Elmi. The Opera Hunter Chorus is also mentioned. The bottom of the poster is decorated with a large, stylized illustration of a woman's face, focusing on her eyes and a floral pattern. At the very bottom, there is a silhouette of a bull against a sunburst background.

Sung in French
with English Surtitles
& English Dialogue

LAKE
MACQUARIE
CITY

Opera Hunter
CONFIDENTIAL

Book Now:
stickytickets.com.au

Present Bizet's
Carmen

WARNERS BAY THEATRE ~ JULY 10-21 2024

Director ~ Stewart McGowan
Conductor ~ Christopher Bearman OAM
Music Director ~ Mercia Buck OAM

Anthea Harrington
Ellen Malone
Emma Lewis
Ezekiel Weedon
James Walker
Joanna Andrew
John Campbell

Malcolm Young
Marian Moroney
Michael Saunders
PJ Willis
Raphael Hudson
Sam Elmi
Opera Hunter Chorus

Some of our Church Contacts:

Minister

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Administration:

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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>