



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

27 April 2025

From Rev Tom

This is interesting!

I am sitting in the passenger seat of our car with Kathy driving between Orange and Newcastle.

It is a bit typical of the last week! It was Easter! Always a busy time, with extra worship services to prepare. This year I was really appreciating all the things people did to make our worship experience special! The light meal on Maundy Thursday, music, setting up, orders of service, data and sound. I guess that it is connected with the wonderful good news Easter communicates, the story of love, and sharing the telling of that story with a committed team of people, whose self motivation always catches me by surprise. In the middle of all that though our daughter Maree ended up in hospital with a relapse into the awful symptoms of Crohn's with Kathy carrying the lion's share of support. Gladly Maree was able to leave hospital around lunch time to stay at our other daughter's place while Kathy and I headed for Parkes to visit my mum Mary. So, on Monday morning Kathy prepared a vegetable soup which comes from a favourite recipe in the Stuart household while I trailed over memories with Mum of times up to 85 years ago.

On Monday afternoon I headed to Forbes and worked with some folk for 2 hours on developing their skills using their computer to lead Project Reconnect services. We then got to Orange at about 8pm so I could be ready on Tuesday morning to film 5 Project Reconnect presenters. I heard some wonderful messages and I'm glad church folk will have an opportunity to listen to them in the weeks ahead.

Something else that was happening in the midst of all that is the preparation for the funeral of Margaret Collins. Margaret is just one of those true salt of the earth type women who belongs to the Shortland congregation. Shortland UCA don't have a minister and I was asked to visit her in the last days of her life. I was also fortunate enough to know her, if just a little, from when I first arrived in this placement so many years ago. Shortland don't have access to their church during the week because it is used by Margaret Jurd College. So, her service is to take place at our Charlestown church. I see the "Margaret Collins" of this world in my own congregation and it will be a privilege to support her family and congregation in remembering her next Monday.

So, the last week was/is a bit of a whirlwind but it has included many special experiences that truly warm the heart!

DIARY

Thursday 24 April

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

Sunday 27 April – Easter 2

9.00am The Divine Worship

Leader: Sue Warren and Message: Project Reconnect

Acts 5:27-32; Psalm 118:14-29; Revelations 1:4-18; John 20:19-31 or Psalm 150

Tuesday 29 April

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

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

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

Community: Christian community exists when believers connect with each other in authentic and loving ways that encourage growth in Christ. They engage in transparent relationships that cultivate, celebrate and make evident Christ's love for all the world.

Practice: 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?

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



An opportunity - When we returned to Worship after Covid Lockdown, many of our previous practices had to change.

We have had our new normal for quite a while now and I'm sure many would like to see faces other than Margaret and me welcoming you on Sunday mornings. If you could commit to getting to church soon after 8.30 occasionally and would like to be a welcomer, please talk to me. If you have other commitments in our services, I'm sure we can work around them.

Julie Fenwick



Presbytery News

The Presbytery Project

A few weeks ago I reported on the major changes within the NSW Synod.

This week I attended one of the "Town Hall" Zoom meetings where over 30 people from across the 12 Presbyteries in the NSW Synod met to hear and discuss the steps towards the proposal to this year's Synod meeting to making a decision on the future of the structure of the Synod by dissolving the current 12 presbyteries and forming three new presbyteries.

The journey to arrive at this decision has taken over three years and a number of meetings which included people from all 12 presbyteries meeting together to discern the way forward, ending last year with four discernment summits looking at Funding, Function, Form and Radical Resourcing.

Some of the points that came out of this week's meeting were -

- We have 370 church councils.
- We have 12 Presbyteries (comprising at least 36 committees). Several, particularly our rural Presbyteries, are in an operational resourcing crisis (human and financial).
- We have 500 places of worship (40) **8%** of Congregations average more than 100 weekly attenders
(75) **14%** of Congregations have 10 or more youth or young adults.
23% of all UC members worship in a rural or regional setting
- Ministry placements range from as few as 4 to as many as 44 across our Presbyteries.

270 Ministers of the Word, 19 Deacons, 29 Pastors

In addition to an unquantified number of lay leaders, employees and volunteers serving across our Presbyteries and Congregations.

To fulfil its obligations, Presbytery operating expenses range from \$3,000 to \$3,000,000. To fulfil our life and witness obligations alone we need to complete more than 70 each year (almost 1.5 per week).

This Synod's meeting in July will consider the question to dissolve the current 12 presbyteries and form three new presbyteries. Please keep this meeting in your prayers for the delegates to listen to each other and the Holy Spirit for the way forward.

**FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE
MOTHER'S DAY CELEBRATION 2025**



“DINNER WITH THE NETDIPPERS?”

An invitation is issued to ALL members of the church to join us for our Annual Mother's Day Outing.

The Place – Hunter Wetlands Centre – 1 Wetlands Place, Shortland.

Date – Saturday May 3rd 2025.

Time – 11.15am for 11.30am for Morning Tea. An interesting talk will follow. Lunch will be at 12.30pm. To be bought at the Café.

For those interested, there is a guided tour at 10.30am for the energetic. There is an entry fee of \$5 to the Wetlands. Approximate duration of the tour is 45 minutes. Please phone Grahame on 0402 335 410 if interested.

Consider Carpooling. Meet at the Church if you need a lift. Please notify Sue Warren on 4944 7793.

Please let your seasonal hosts extraordinaire for the day, Grahame Pricter and Noel Drinkwater, know by phoning 0402 335 410 or 0428 431 169 to book your “Dinner with the Netdippers”. RSVP 27 April 2025.

I/We, Will be/will not be attending the ***“Mother's Day Dinner with the Netdippers”*** on Saturday 3 May 2025.

**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
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>