



# CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting  
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

**30 March 2025**

## From Rev Tom

Last night I received my monthly newsletter from "Sojourners", a magazine I have read since I was in my twenties. It was originally described as an "evangelical social justice" magazine and was initiated by, now deceased, Tony Compolo, a brilliant Baptist pastor and sociologist. American evangelicals have largely become Christian nationalists (an anathema to real Christianity), but "Sojourners" has maintained the real sense of being evangelical – radical discipleship and a commitment to the poor. I was attracted to an article titled, "Apartheid Theology didn't end. It evolved". After reading, I was so impressed that I checked for the author's name. It is Adam Joyce. Adam Joyce is an Australian who writes for "ABC Religion & Ethics". Desiring to share the insights I asked ChatGPT to create a shortened version I could share. That is what follows. I think it does a reasonable job of expressing Joyce's article. For me, it cuts to the chase of what is happening in the US and provides a guide for our endeavour to be faithful to the Gospel in our Australian context:

Elon Musk, appointed by President Trump as the head of the Department of Government Efficiency, has been dismantling federal agencies, firing workers, and undermining public institutions under the guise of reform. Trump has openly boasted about these destructive efforts, particularly the shutdown of USAID. These actions fit into a broader pattern of the administration's policies—dismantling civil rights victories, targeting marginalised groups, and fostering racial hierarchies—all of which align with what commentator Elie Mystal describes as a "neo-apartheid economic agenda."

Apartheid is not just a system of racial segregation; it is an economic strategy that enforces social hierarchies for profit. It builds divisions through policies and violence while justifying itself through ideology. The administration's efforts reflect a broader trend of "apartheid theology," a belief system that ignores the suffering of the marginalised and blesses extreme wealth inequality. German theologian Dorothee Söelle described apartheid theology as a worldview that is blind to injustice, refusing to acknowledge the realities of economic exploitation.

The biblical story of the rich young ruler illustrates the moral failure of apartheid theology. When asked to give up his wealth for the poor, the ruler walks away, unwilling to embrace true justice. Similarly, today's powerful figures—whether Musk or politicians like J.D. Vance—propagate a worldview that prioritises wealth over solidarity. Apartheid theology ensures the rich remain comfortable while others suffer, allowing them to justify oppression as a moral good.

The antidote to apartheid theology is solidaristic love—a love that moves beyond empathy or charity into real, collective action. Solidarity is not a vague benevolence; it is the practice of interconnection and mutual struggle. It is both a spiritual and material commitment to justice, seen in actions like mutual aid, protests, and labour organising. True Christian love, as Jesus teaches, is not passive but active, working to dismantle systems of apartheid and economic domination.

Musk has claimed that empathy is a weakness, but in reality, individualism is the true scam. Apartheid systems isolate people, convincing them they don't need solidarity. Yet faith calls for collective struggle, where justice is pursued together. As theologian Rowan Williams puts it, "Solidarity builds the integrity of the spiritual life." Only through solidaristic love can we heal the wounds apartheid creates and move toward the world Christ envisions for all.

# DIARY

## Thursday 27 March

- 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 30 March – The Fourth Sunday of Lent

- 9.00am The Divine Worship  
Leader and Preacher: Rev Tom  
*Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32*

## Tuesday 1 April

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

## Thursday 3 April

- 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 5 April

- 7.00pm Family Fun Trivia Night & Auction – **CCEA SRE Fundraiser**

**Daylight Saving finishes tonight – put clocks back one hour**



## Sunday 6 April – The Fifth Sunday of Lent

- 9.00am The Divine Worship  
Leader and Preacher: Rev Tom  
*Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126; Philippians 3:4b-14; John 12:1-8*

## Monday 7 April

- 10.00am Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility Pastoral Care Visit

## Tuesday 8 April

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

## Wednesday 9 April

- 10.00am Ladies Fellowship at Charlestown

## Thursday 10 April

- 10.00am Morning tea in the Community – common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Square  
10.30am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care  
1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb Church

## Friday 11 April

- 6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah  
1.00-2.00pm The Quiet Hour at The Willows (see notice further in Contact)

## Saturday 12 April

- 8.00am A Men's Breakfast – Give me the Mountain - **With Guest Speaker David Stephenson Managing Director of YWAM**  
10.30am Friendship Circle – trip to Maitland Art Gallery

# 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

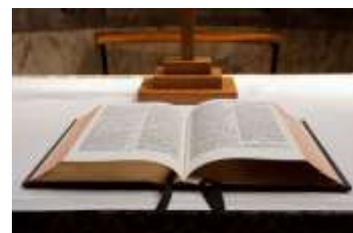
Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

## **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

**Spiritual Direction:** Spiritual Direction is help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship.

**Practice:** A spiritual director might ask you to attend to the activity of God in your life through the following exercise. (If this sort of exercise is beneficial to you, consider speaking about your experience with someone you know who listens well to God.) Draw a lifeline and divide it into seven-year segments. In each segment put the initials of a person you trusted. What kind of people have you trusted? • How has this affected you? How has it affected your view of the trustworthiness of God? • Who do you trust right now?

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

## Holy Week and Easter Services



### **Palm Sunday 13 April**

9am at Charlestown Church

### **Maundy Thursday 17 April**

7.30pm at Garden Suburb Church

### **Good Friday 18 April**

9am at Charlestown Church

### **Easter Day 20 April**

9am at Charlestown Church

**On 13<sup>th</sup> April a new song will be introduced.** It is called "In your Hands" or variously "I'm so Secure"

If you have access to youtube, click on the link below to familiarise yourself with the new song.

Sheet music can be made available if you ask Laraine for a copy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cv6Y8zMKN0Y>



# FAMILY FUN TRIVIA NIGHT & AUCTION CCEA SRE FUNDRAISER

LET THE  
GAMES  
BEGIN!

BYO Snacks  
(Nut free zone),  
Drinks, Tea & coffee  
for Sale



SATURDAY 5TH APRIL 2025  
7PM AT  
HUNTER CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
20A HILLSCREST PRD, HIGHFIELDS

TABLES OF 8 OR INDIVIDUAL TICKETS AVAILABLE  
(\$20 PERSON - UNDER 16 FREE)

Enquiries & booking  
Contact Hunter Christian Church  
02 4942 1351  
info@hcc.org.au

Come and take part in a  
silent auction to raise money  
for SRE at  
Whitebridge High



## Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April

Will be held at Charlestown  
Church from 10.00am

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

Bring a  
Friend!



With Guest Speaker

**David Stephenson**

**Give me the Mountain**

**Stories of reaching Ukrainians and Syrians**

Charlestown Uniting Church – 24 Milson Street

**8am Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April**

Cost \$12 RSVP to Paul Russell

0411 236047 [pmraus74@gmail.com](mailto:pmraus74@gmail.com) By 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025

David Stephenson is the Managing Director of Youth With A Mission (YWAM's) operations in the Hunter.

YWAM locally have trained over 3000 missionaries since inception, and have provided over 600,000 Volunteer contact hours over the last ten years. They have been given the keys to the city, and were recently recognised by the City of Newcastle for their contribution to the people of Ukraine.



**Charlestown Friendship Circle**

**Saturday 12 April**

Maitland Art Gallery - With lunch to follow

We will leave the Church at 10.30am

**All Welcome**

@ The Willows  
Warners Bay Uniting Church  
342 Hillsborough Road,  
Warners Bay

## The Quiet Hour

Fridays 1pm to 2pm.

The Quiet Hour a time for everyone—regardless of faith, background, or beliefs.  
A place to gather, reflect & put down your load.  
Stay for an hour or as short a time as you want.  
For Further information contact Stephen

Ph 0488 380 860

## Children & Family Worker Update



**As of Sunday the 30<sup>th</sup> March** I will be off on an adventure with my daughter to South Africa, it is an organised trip so all will be fine. We are both looking forward to it very much, please pray for us that we are safe & have great weather 😊.

**I have organised a teacher** to take the 4 scripture classes that I will miss, so the children will still hear the Easter message, it is a blessing to have someone able to step in to allow me these short breaks.

Praying for you all while I am away & look forward to catching up in Holy Week.

Blessings

Cathy



## 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>