



# CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting  
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

**6 October 2024**

## **From Rev Tom**

When I was in the latter years of High School, a student in the year below caught my attention. He carried quite a few extra kilograms than others his height. He always looked in need of a haircut, and would at least do well with some time in front of a mirror with brush and comb. His clothes always looked like they had spent the past week on the floor. I remember on one occasion seeing him with his shirt buttons done up misaligned. That was just embarrassing. He was often not at school. I don't remember thinking much about him, but I do remember my attitude. When I saw him, I had an internal reaction, that he was a rather undesirable creature. His name was Michael. I left Parkes at the end of High School only to return 20 years later. In November 2017 I was contacted by Enid. Enid told me her husband had died and she wanted me to do a graveside funeral. It so happened that her husband was Michael. Enid told me that when Michael was a boy both his parents were killed in a car accident. He was raised by his two older sisters, who weren't much interested, and he would drift from one home to another. It would be better said that Michael raised himself. Enid also told me that when they met, Enid already had three children. All the same, Michael married her and raised the children as his own. It was a bit of a day of reckoning for me, as I heard her story, and Michael's story (I was deeply grateful to do his funeral). What sort of assumptions did I have that caused me to judge Michael the way I did? My experience gave me an enlarged appreciation of the gift of my parents, who loved me and cared for me. They made sure I turned up to school each day. They made sure my hair was cut and combed. They made sure my clothes were clean and ironed, and my shoes shone with polish. I barely did any of that for myself ... they did it for me! How could I feel so almighty as to judge Michael when qualities that I thought I had were simply a part of the privilege of my life circumstances? As I have continued in my life journey I have had many experiences that have taught me not to judge. Sure, I might not approve of certain behaviours. For example, if I have helped someone buy some essential items and as soon as they get more money they spend it on abundant quantities of alcohol, I will ask questions the next time they want help. All the same, I accept that person without judgment of who they are. Why? How do I know what they have been through? How do I know about the weird tricks of life that lead to certain behaviour patterns? The truth is, I am no different from that person. I am no different in respect to the fact that I am largely a product of a genetic and nurturing heritage that is my parents, and a set of largely accidental experiences and particular formative stages of my life. So, what does this mean? DON'T JUDGE!! Most people have heard me refer dozens of times to Jesus saying, "*metanoia*", typically translated as "repent". That is a hugely inadequate translation, particularly given how we interpret the word repent. In any case, Jesus' invitation was to take us beyond all of our conventional thinking. Jesus also says "for the kingdom of God is at hand!" If we ever are not aware of the presence of the kingdom of God it means we are not in a state of *metanoia*, and how many of us can say we are abundantly conscious of the presence of the kingdom of God? Certainly not me! We should be getting an idea of the difficulty of the task, a greater a task than for a camel to walk through the eye of a needle (given we are all so rich with self-approval and other condemnation).

**Continued over .....**

I practice daily letting go my thoughts of judgement, of self and others (mostly unsuccessfully) so that there just might be the space for the kingdom of heaven to shine through ... and indeed, there are moments. But first of all, we have to realise how trapped we are in our ordinary thinking, and behaviour patterns, whether they are considered good or bad. We are no better or worse for them than those of someone else. We all fall short of the glory of God. So, let's let it all go so the glory of God can get centre stage.

# DIARY

## Thursday 3 October

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

## Sunday 6 October – Pentecost 20 Daylight Saving has commenced 3.00am this morning

9.00am Divine Worship - Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom  
*Genesis 2:18-24; Psalm 8; Hebrews 1:1-4, 5-12; Mark 10:2-16*  
With **Cathy's Children's Corner**

## Monday 7 October

10.30am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visitation

## Tuesday 8 October

9.30 – 11am Community Book Library at Garden Suburb

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

## Wednesday 9 October

9.30am Kids Club at Charlestown

10.00am Ladies Fellowship at Charlestown

## Thursday 10 October

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

10.30am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care

## Saturday 12 October

12.00noon Friendship Circle – meet at Murrays Beach Café for lunch

## Sunday 13 October - Pentecost 21

9.00am Divine Worship – Leader: Anne Threlfo Preacher: Rev'd Tom commencing with **Kathy's Bracket of Praise.**

*Job 23:1-9, 16-17; Psalm 22: 1-15; Hebrews 4: 12-16; Mark 10: 17-31*

## Tuesday 15 October

9.00am Needlework n Natter

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

## Thursday 17 October

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

## Sunday 20 October - Pentecost 22

9.00am **Holy Communion** within Divine Worship

Leader: Margaret White; **Preacher: Project Reconnect;**

Celebrant: David Chegwidden

*Job 38: 1-7, (34-41); Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c; Hebrews 5: 1-10; Mark 10: 35-45*



# THE PRAYER PAGE



Prayer is the Voice of Faith

## Pastoral Prayer Points

\* families whose loved ones have died recently especially Clarke and Monaghan families whose funerals occur this and next week.

\* Janice and Don Wright

\* Cathy Beeton

\* Kelly

\* Laraine Chegwiddden

\* Tony Sellen

\* Nelda Marshall

\* Vivianne

\* Shirley Elkin

\* Lorraine Pepper

\* 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
- Tom and Kathy
- Don Humphries

Maintained by SFED and Er

## Congregational Prayer Points

- Church Council
- Elections for 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
- Worship Committee

## Wider Community Prayer Points

- Children in the orphanage as MPox is spreading rapidly in Kenya. Pray for vaccines to arrive soon and Pray for Wilfreda
- Tom on holidays as well as Neos ministry
- 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:

## 6<sup>th</sup> October 2024 – Toronto Uniting Church

Toronto Uniting Church meets every Sunday at 9am with an attendance of approximately 50. Our Minister is a Deacon, Rev Allison Forrest. We have Ministry Teams which generally meet monthly and who report to our Church Council every two months. We have a weekly Christian Meditation Group, a monthly Prayer Group, a fortnightly Kinship Care Group, a monthly Men's Coffee Group and a weekly Faith Nurture Study Group. Our congregation are mainly in the over 60's age group at present. We are grateful for the receipt of a Presbytery Mission Development Grant, which has helped with the funding of the installation of new audio-visual equipment and will also be used to implement "Toronto Uniting Church Online" – a project which aims to open up some new ways into worship and discipleship for people not currently attending in-person worship. We hope that this project will open up ways for us to welcome in younger people, to get involved in the life of our church, and to take up opportunities to get creative in video and digital media production.

**Prayer: For the Ongoing work of the TUC Online Project. Pray that a good number of our members will be equipped to operate the AV system confidently. Pray also for wisdom and encouragement for the members of the project team, as they guide this complex work. The Kinship Carers group – give thanks for the friendship, support and compassion shared between its members. Please pray that all the children and teenagers connected to this support group experience a wonderful year of life and growth. Each member of each Ministry Team – thanks for the gifts, skills and commitment which each person contributes to the mission of the church. Amen.**

## Spiritual Practice of the Week

**The Examen:** The Examen is a practice for discerning the voice and activity of God within the flow of the day. It is a vehicle that creates deeper awareness of God-given desires in one's life.

**Practice:** Find a quiet moment to reflect on your day or week. Open your palms and ask the Holy Spirit to show you the moment for which you are least grateful. What made that moment difficult? • Be with your feelings; don't try to change them or make them acceptable. Offer them up to God. Talk to him about them. • Where was God in this moment? You may want to thank God that he is always ready to be with you and talk to you.

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

## Church Council Elections

The following nominations have been received for the Church Council election on 27 October:-

Sue Warren has been nominated for SFED position,  
Paul Russell for Extravagant Generosity and  
Julie Fenwick for Secretary.



Nominations close 8<sup>th</sup> October so there is still time for nominations for these and the remaining positions - Chairperson, Radical Hospitality and Risk Taking Mission and Service.

## Uniting in Books

**Love reading new books**

**Like to have a chance to find new books**

**Exchange your books for something different**

**Join us for our new & exciting**

**Community Book Library**

**At Garden Suburb Uniting Church**

**Cnr Prospect Rd. & Marshall St**

**Next day will be 8th Oct. 9.30am to 11am**

**then every 2nd Tuesday of the month**





## Charlestown Friendship Circle

**Saturday 12 October**

Will be at Murray's Beach Café at  
12 noon for lunch.

**All Welcome**



Rev Tom Stuart will be on holiday  
from Sunday 20 October to Sunday 27 October

If you need pastoral or other assistance during this time,  
please contact

Julie Fenwick or your Elder



## Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

**Wednesday 9 October**

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

**Join in fellowship**

**ALL WELCOME**



## *Notes from Church Council Chairperson*

This week's Church Council meeting began with a worship time where we thought about who we are. Who is God inviting us, as individuals and as a congregation, to be? Who are we as a community of God's people when we let go of buildings, activities, and people who have been alongside us for decades? What might have withered in us and is seeking rejuvenation, or to be allowed to die? We hold these questions as we celebrate the abundance and lavishness of God's love, friendship and presence within us.

Here is a summary of the discussion points at the meeting.

- We continue to explore options for the ways in which the mission of the congregation will move forward in coming month:
  - We have received a sales strategy and marketing recommendation from Knight Frank for the Garden Suburb property as we explore options. Synod is to be asked about their view of selling the property, and Lake Macquarie Council will be approached to see if they have an interest in the property for open space.
  - In cooperation with Presbytery, there will be a transition to retirement plan worked on for Tom, which will include the Neos mission. It may include the employment of other workers.
  - SFED has suggested that we are intentional about creating relationships with the people and groups who use the Charlestown property. A part-time worker might connect with users and a TV screen in the foyer be used to promote community and congregation activities. This would also include an upgrade of our website to include a broader community focus.
- Tom will be taking a period of extended leave from the end of December into February. Preachers are being approached to prepare and lead our worship services during that time.
- Les Butchers has advised that he will be stepping down from the role of auditor after many years. The Church Council thanks Les, and appreciates the contribution of his expertise.
- We have been officially advised that our NREMA grant (for the Whitebridge sale proceeds) has been approved. We are required to sign a grant agreement, the funds will be invested and in time the income stream will commence. The Church Council also approved \$62,000 to be drawn down to attend to urgent external repairs on the Charlestown building.
- Cathy reported that there are eight children attending the Holiday Kids on 8 October. A recommendation was accepted to conclude this activity. Cathy will determine if there is interest in an Advent Workshop in December. The Church Council agreed that the Holiday Kids external helpers will be invited to attend worship on Sunday 3 November, where they will be acknowledged for their contribution in "Children's Corner". Cathy also offered to organise an SRE service on a Sunday morning in early 2025 which was warmly accepted.
- There was a discussion about the ongoing use of CHaGS properties by the Hunter Community Alliance (HCA). It was decided that this arrangement will continue subject to availability, and that as we are a member of the alliance there will be no charge, with the expectation that the property will be left clean and tidy. An offer to provide refreshments to attendees at HCA events will be subject to the availability of our people at the time.
- Some nominations have been received for Church Council vacancies, but a number of vacancies remain. Please consider if you are able to serve in this way, or if there is someone else you could nominate.

- The Council has been asked by a member of the congregation to consider replacing the pews in the Charlestown worship space. This request was minuted, and will be addressed when a firm decision about the Garden Suburb property has been made, as we have chairs at Garden Suburb which are comfortable and in “as new” condition.

After five years, this is my last “Notes” to you as Chairperson. These years have brought tremendous change and great challenges to the life of our congregation. We adjusted to life as a congregation when we weren’t able to meet in person for nine months, we have accepted the challenge of creating a legacy beyond the life of our current congregation and we have let go of property and more significantly, farewelled dearly loved members of our congregation. Even so, we remain confident of God’s presence within us and in the midst of our community, and are thankful that God continues to lavish great love upon us.

May God continue to bless and keep us.

*Anne Threlfo*

Ph: 0439 754 376

Email: [annethrelfo@gmail.com](mailto:annethrelfo@gmail.com)

# Fresh Expressions

Explore > Form > Connect

Wednesday  
6 November  
7pm on Zoom



## Explore

*Explore is a Zoom gathering twice a year to find out more about Fresh Expressions.*

## Explore

*With Carolyn Meers*



Our first Explore will feature Carolyn Meers, who will share the joys and challenges of leading a traditional church that has started 3 Fresh Expressions.

Join us to find out more about Fresh Expressions pathways and connect with our Fresh Expressions community.

Contact Karina Kreminski for more information: [karinak@nswact.uca.org.au](mailto:karinak@nswact.uca.org.au)



Explore



Form



Connect



[www.nswact.uca.org.au](http://www.nswact.uca.org.au)

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/mrhpxrp3>



Bring a  
Friend!

# MEN'S BREAKFAST



With Guest Speaker

**Gwenda Brownell**

**Taking hold of the near edge**

**Social Justice**

**Why Bother?**

Charlestown Uniting Church - 24 Milson Street

**8am Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October**

Cost \$12 RSVP to Paul Russell

0411 236047 [pmraus74@gmail.com](mailto:pmraus74@gmail.com) By 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Our Speaker will be **Gwenda Brownell**, leader of the social justice team at Toronto Uniting Church. This team has led a variety of activities both advocating for and taking action towards bringing about social justice where unjust systems bring harm to people. Our hope brings us to work in the small ways available to us for Australia to be a nation that is just, compassionate, inclusive and courageous.

*From little things .....*



## Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

Wednesday 9 October

Will be held at Charlestown Church from 10.00am

Join in fellowship

**ALL WELCOME**

## Margaret Jurd College



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CHANGE THE LIVES  
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Donate today by emailing [donations@mjcs.w.edu.au](mailto:donations@mjcs.w.edu.au)



The Church Office will be **closed** on the 16 October as Jenny is on holidays.

There will be no Contact or mailouts for this week.

# LUNCH BREAK CONCERTS



**1.10PM TO 1.50PM**

**OCTOBER 2024**

**3RD "CADENCE"**

**17TH "TWO VOICES IN THE CROWD"**

**22ND "STEEL CITY SUE" MORLEY**

**31ST "THE SINGING CIRCLE"**

**"BILL'S PLACE" HAMILTON UNITING CHURCH**

**150 BEAUMONT ST M: 0407401833**



## 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>