



# CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting  
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

**2 February 2025**

**From Anne Threlfo**

*I recently came across this article in "Insights" magazine, which was published in January and written by Adrian Drayton. You might find this useful for your own spiritual life, or something to talk about with others on the journey. Perhaps our "Spiritual Practice of the Week" is a useful tool for experimenting with different approaches to our practices, as Adrian Drayton suggests.*

## Overcoming Spiritual Dry Spells

Periods of spiritual dry spells can feel disheartening, but they often provide an opportunity for growth. When your prayers seem to echo without response, or your usual spiritual practices feel empty, it can be tempting to disengage. Instead, consider these practical ways to navigate and move beyond these moments.

First, reflect on your routines and practices. Spiritual disconnection sometimes arises when rituals become rote. Ask yourself if you are going through the motions without deeper engagement. For instance, if you pray regularly but feel disconnected, experiment with different approaches. Writing out your prayers or meditating silently instead of speaking might help shift your perspective. Alternatively, reading scripture or spiritual texts aloud can rekindle a sense of connection by engaging multiple senses.

Next, consider whether external factors might be influencing your spiritual state. Fatigue, stress, or significant life changes can impact your inner life. When these pressures accumulate, your capacity to feel spiritually attuned may diminish. Take a moment to assess whether your body and mind are receiving adequate care. Are you sleeping enough? Are you nourishing yourself well? Sometimes, addressing these basics can create space for spiritual renewal.

Engaging with community can also help break through a sense of isolation. Spiritual dryness often makes people withdraw, yet reaching out can provide a fresh perspective. Joining a small group, participating in a service project, or attending a gathering focused on shared reflection can be valuable. Hearing about others' experiences can remind you that dryness is a common part of the journey and that it's possible to emerge from it.

Another avenue to explore is introducing variety into your spiritual practices. If you always meditate at the same time, in the same place, try a new environment. A walk in nature, attending a service in a different tradition, or engaging in creative expressions like art or music can offer renewed energy. For example, someone accustomed to solitary practices might find inspiration by joining a choir or engaging in collective prayer.

Revisiting your spiritual motivations can also provide clarity. Why do you engage in your practices? Is it out of habit, duty, or a genuine desire to connect with something greater? Sometimes, asking these questions can reignite a sense of purpose. If you find yourself unclear on the answers, journaling can be a helpful way to explore your thoughts. Write freely about what you seek and what you feel is missing.

Gratitude is another powerful tool. During dry spells, it's easy to focus on what feels absent. Shifting your attention to what remains can reframe your experience. List three things each day that bring you joy or peace. They need not be grand. Even small moments, like a kind word from a friend or a beautiful sunset, can remind you that grace often appears in unexpected places.

**Continued over .....**

Consider seeking guidance from someone you trust. A mentor, spiritual director, or counsellor can offer insights you might not see on your own. These individuals can help you identify patterns, offer practical suggestions, or simply provide a space to share your struggles without judgment.

It's also helpful to remember that spiritual growth is not always linear. It does not mean failure or abandonment. Some of the most transformative periods emerge after feelings of stagnation. Reflect on past instances where you've faced challenges. What helped you then? What lessons did you carry forward? These reflections can remind you of your resilience and capacity to persevere.

As you navigate this time, consider what practices or habits might hinder your spiritual connection. Are you overloading your schedule with distractions? Are there influences in your life that sap your energy or focus? Identifying and addressing these can help you create a clearer space for renewal.

Finally, allow yourself to sit with the discomfort without rushing to resolve it. Dry spells can be opportunities for deeper understanding, even if they are not immediately pleasant. Ask yourself: What might this period be teaching me? How can I approach it with curiosity rather than frustration? Often, the answers come gradually, but the process itself holds value.

By engaging thoughtfully and intentionally with our spiritual dry spells, you can transform them into periods of renewal and growth. Each step you take, however small, brings you closer to a deeper connection and understanding.

# DIARY

## **Thursday 30 January**

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

## **Sunday 2 February – The Fourth Sunday of the Epiphany**

9.00am Divine Worship  
Mrs Cathy Beeton / Mr Ben Waters (SRE)  
*Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30*

## **Tuesday 4 February**

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

## **Thursday 6 February**

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 8 February**

10.30am Charlestown Friendship Circle at the 16 Foot Sailing Club

## **Sunday 9 February – The Fifth Sunday of the Epiphany**

9.00am Divine Worship  
Leader and Preacher: Rev Dr Judy Redman  
*Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13); Psalm 138; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11*

## **Monday 10 February**

1.30pm SFED on Zoom

## **Tuesday 11 February**

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

## **Wednesday 12 February**

10.00am Ladies Fellowship at Charlestown Church

# THE PRAYER PAGE



Prayer is the Voice of Faith

## Pastoral Prayer Points

- \* Those who are mourning loved ones
- \* Ange
- \* Kim
- \* Janice and Don Wright
- \* Kelly
- \* Laraine Chegwiddden
- \* Tony Sellen
- \* Vivianne
- \* 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
- \* 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
- Worship Committee
- Tom & Kathy on holidays

## Wider Community Prayer Points

- Orphanage in Kenya and Wilfreda
- 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, Lebanon and Hamas and that there will be relief from all the suffering
- The situation in Ukraine and other trouble spots





Tom and Kathy will be on holiday from 1 January to 12 February 2025

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



### Guest Preachers during Rev Tom's leave

<b>5 January 2025</b>	Rev Dr Peter Oliver
<b>12 January 2025</b>	Rev Dale Yardy
<b>19 January 2025</b>	Rev Dale Yardy
<b>26 January 2025</b>	Ms Kim Langford
<b>2 February</b>	Mrs Cathy Beeton / Mr Ben Waters (SRE)
<b>9 February</b>	Rev Dr Judy Redman

## Spiritual Practice of the Week

**Confession & Self-Examination:** Self-examination is a process whereby the Holy Spirit opens my hear to what is true about me. This is not the same thing as a neurotic shame-inducing inventory. Instead it is a way of opening myself to God within the safety of divine love so I can authentically seek transformation. Confession embraces Christ's gift of forgiveness and restoration while setting us on the path of renewal and change.

**Practice:** - Begin to notice your strong emotions. When do you feel yourself getting hot, defensive, angry, withdrawn? What is motivating your emotion? What behaviour stems from your emotion? • As you attend to this internal world, ask God to make you alert to what triggers strong emotional reactions. Confess any sin relating to these reactions. • Practice noticing your internal world, and begin to develop a habit of immediate confession.

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



The Hunter Presbytery is creating a new position - **Children and Families Mission Consultant**.

This role will offer input into the Strategic Planning of the Presbytery particularly in the area of work with children and families. The role will work directly with congregations to resource young people through playgroups, Messy Church and Sunday Programs, all-age worship and intergenerational communities, Youth Groups and Clubs.

Contact Julie Fenwick (0424422257) if you or someone you know would like more information. Applications close 28 February.

## Children & Family Worker Update

As I wrote last week, many **SRE activities** will be starting in the next week or 2 but first to start the year will be our **SRE Service this Sunday**. SRE is Special Religious Education, so please come along, it will give you a great insight into what children learn in scripture & how it is presented, as well as hearing from Sue, Ken & Paul on what they got out of being an SRE teacher or in Paul's case on the Charlestown SRE Board. Please keep SRE in your prayers over the next month as many teachers new & experienced will be starting with their usual & or new schools.



I will be in contact with Wiripaang School next week asking if they have children in need of pencil packs, I have already started shopping while many things are on special, as through your generosity last year, I had some funds in reserve. I will keep you updated how this goes.

Cathy



*You're  
Invited!*

**SRE**



# DEDICATION SERVICE

2pm , 23rd February 2025

@ New Vine Beaches - Jewells cnr Ntaba and  
Dalrymple Streets and Halewood Close Jewells  
Come along and support our Primary and High  
School SRE Teachers!

## Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February

Will be held at Charlestown Church  
from 10.00am

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

**ALL WELCOME**



## Charlestown Friendship Circle

Saturday 8 February

10.30am at Belmont 16 Footers for Morning Tea  
and Lunch

**All Welcome**

**2025**

HUNTER COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

# “ASSEMBLY”



Coming together as civil society for the common good  
Celebrating commitments, change and hope

## 6th March 2025

6pm inside for briefing

6.30pm to 8.30pm Assembly

The Great Hall, University of Newcastle

TIME FOR THE UNITING CHURCH TO SHOW UP AGAIN!  
SIGN UP TO ATTEND BY BOOKING YOUR FREE TICKET/S  
HUMANITIX [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/2VD6D5MS](https://tinyurl.com/2VD6D5MS)



Energy Transition, Affordable Housing,  
Stretched Services and more....



*You're invited to turn out and participate in God's mission*

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/2nua9cb2>



*With Guest Speaker*  
**Frank Wortley**  
**The Camino**  
**A Way of Encountering the Divine**

The French Camino is an 800 km journey between St Jean Pied de Port on the French side of the border between France and Spain moving west to Santiago de Compostela the traditional resting place of Saint James the Apostle.

Using it as a retreat Frank has walked this Camino on four occasions since 2013. Each time he has come away having met the Divine in ways that continue to impact him today.

The Camino rightly understood is a symbol of the spiritual journey we are all on and the God of the Camino is the same God we can encounter in the journey of our own lives.

Frank Wortley has been in ministry for over 45 years, first as a Baptist pastor, then thirty years as a military chaplain and a further nine as chaplain to Gosford Hospital. He is an Associate Lecturer with the Sydney College of Divinity in pastoral and spiritual care and supervision and a clinical pastoral educator and supervisor in private practice.

***Charlestown Uniting Church - 24 Milson St***

**8am Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February**

Cost \$12 RSVP: Paul Russell

pmraus74@gmail.com, or 0411 236 047  
or sign-up sheet in the foyer.

**By Wednesday 12th February 2025**





**Embody** is a time and space to engage in embodied practice to explore, express and play with the stuff of life. Anybody can do it. No experience or skill needed. We use the tools and forms of InterPlay which are improvised, incremental, accessible, playful and embodied. A little bit of movement, a little bit of talking, a little bit of stillness.

This is a free offering, and all are welcome to attend.

... and we actually mean that. There is no prescribed or imposed belief system or religion. Come as you are - and no one is going to ask you to change. Engage as you want to.

First Sunday of every month, **5:30-7pm** - in the **Memorial Hall of Adamstown Uniting Church** - entrance from the top of the building on the carpark side.

Initial gathering: **Sunday 2 February 2025**

## 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>