



CONTACT

Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

19 March 2023



From Rev Tom

So, how did the Hunter Community Alliance Candidate forums go? Well, it feels great that while we are now a small congregation, mostly aged, we can still pack such an amazing punch as we join in with so many other concerned citizens in the Hunter! That's how it went! The forums were last Wednesday and Thursday, but I will just mention Thursday because that one included candidates from electorates closest to us. The candidates were: Newcastle – John Mackenzie (Greens), Niko Leka (Socialist Alliance), and apologies from Tim Crakanthorp (Labor) and Thomas Triesbsees (Liberals). Charleston – Greg Watkinson (Greens), apologies from Jodie Harrison (Labor). Lake Macquarie – Greg Piper (Independent), Kim Grierson (Greens), Stephan Ryan (Labor). Swansea – Heather Foord (Greens), apologies from Yasmin Catley (Labor). So many politicians in one group, and it was great to watch them grapple with issues considered so important to local constituents. The two primary issues we raised were addressing the consequences of moving away from fossil fuels, and the necessary response to ready our community, in terms of employment, training, and fixing up the environment issues left behind by mining and coal fire power stations. This issue was addressed by asking the candidates to support a transition authority to the tune of \$65 million per annum. All the Green candidates supported this, but the Labor candidates, obviously being controlled by their party policies, limited their support to \$25 million per annum. While we don't consider this enough at least they turned up, unlike the Liberals and National Party candidates. As for housing our ask was that they support restoring the social housing safety net of all local government areas within the Hunter to 5% of total housing stock by 2027, and increase social housing stock at least every three years once social housing reaches the 5% target. The greens supported this but Labor offered their own but lesser figure – "New mandatory requirement for 30% of all homes built on surplus govt land to be set aside for social, affordable and universal housing." Included in the evening were real life stories. One of the stories was of a single parent father who was told that his lease was ended, putting him under particular strain, particularly in not being able to find new accommodation. He discovered that as soon as he vacated his rental accommodation, it was back on the market again at a significantly higher rental rate. It seems this is such a common story that all of the candidates readily agreed to our ask of replacing 'No Grounds Evictions' provisions with 'Reasonable Grounds Evictions'. We also had an ask that candidates commit to at least 50% social and affordable housing at any future residential development at the proposed Hunter Park. The Labor candidates didn't support this but the Greens did. There were a number of things to take away from this time. It is so valuable to work with other local groups and organisations on things about which we agree. We get power doing this that we could otherwise not dream. Also, it was great to hear the candidates in more than the sound bites we get on the news, and also when we are in respectful conversation. It was also wonderful to listen to the candidates articulate their admiration for the Hunter Community Alliance. They responded positively of the research so evident in our presentations, and the level of organisation, and discipline we practiced in our preparation and leadership. All of the candidates agreed to follow up meetings with us to address these issues if they are elected to their respective electorates. While it is quite a deal of work for those who run the forums it is great that the rest of us can just turn up! Yet, just by turning up we deliver such a punch! It was also great when the Charlestown and Garden Suburb Uniting Church was named in the roll call so many voices could be heard as we each cheered letting everyone know our presence.

DIARY

Thursday 16 March

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square
1.30 – 2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Sunday 19 March – Lent 4

9.00am **Holy Communion Service.** Leader & Preacher – Rev Tom Stuart
1 Samuel 16:1-13, Psalm 23, Ephesians 5: 8-14, John 9: 1-41

Monday 20 March

10.00am Pastoral Care Visit to Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility

Tuesday 21 March

9.00 – 11.30am Needlework'n'Natter

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie

Thursday 23 March

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square
1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Friday 24 March

10.00am Ribbon flower assembly at Charlestown Uniting Church



Sunday 26 March – Lent 5

9.00am **Worship Service** – Leader Anne Threlfo, Preacher – PRC
Ezekiel 37:1-14, Psalm 130, Romans 8:6-11, John 11:1-45

Tuesday 28 March

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie

12.00pm Garden Suburb Ladies Fellowship

3.30pm Worship Team Meeting at 'The White House'

Thursday 30 March

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square
1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb



Sunday 2 April – Palm Sunday

9.00am Worship Service and Baptism – Leader & Preacher – Rev Tom Stuart
with Children's Corner

Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 118:1-2,19-29, Philippians 2:5-11, Matthew 21:1-11

Monday 3 April

10.00am Pastoral Care Visit to Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility

7.00pm Holy Week reflection at Hamilton Uniting Church – led by Rev Tom Stuart & team

Tuesday 4 April

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie

7.00pm Holy Week reflection at Hamilton Uniting Church – led by Rev Garry Derkenne

Wednesday 5 April

7.00pm Holy Week reflection at Hamilton Uniting Church – led by Rev Rob Hanks

Thursday 6 April

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown

4.30pm Maundy Thursday Service at Garden Suburb Uniting Church

Friday 7 April

9.00am Good Friday Service at Charlestown Uniting Church



THE PRAYER PAGE

And so I urge you: carry on an ongoing conversation with God about the daily stuff of life, a little like Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof. For now, do not worry about 'proper' praying, just talk to God."
Richard J. Foster



Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Peter Ferguson, in hospital recovering from surgery
- * Teagan
- * Isabella
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Glenn, Donna and girls
- * Sue and Warren
- * Cat and Ezra
- * Enid Gaynor
- * Gloria and John Booth
- * Tony and Nan
- * Mert and Pam
- * Judith and family
- * Ashley (in Respite) and Lorraine (DVT)
- * Ken MacDonald (in hospital) and Sharon
- * Rhonda White and family (after death of Bert)
- * Enid Power
- * Fred Bryant
- * Max

Congregational Prayer Points

- Neos and Tom's role week by week
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Lease of Whitebridge property
- Cathy Beeton and SRE classes
- Worship Committee

Wider Community Prayer Points

- Upcoming State elections
- Victims and families of the earthquake in Turkey and Syria
- Flood Victims
- Wilfreda's orphanage
- The situation in Ukraine
- Presbytery as they consider Rev. Dr. Cameron Eccleston's report

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

Men's Breakfast - Recording

The recording of Astrid Hocking speaking about the Hearts and Hands Community Development Organization on 18 February 2023 is now available on Vimeo at <https://vimeo.com/807190093/42e06c1ca5> - please share this link with your friends - it is not accessible by searching on Vimeo.

Please ask Paul Russell if you would like a copy on a DVD

A PASSING THOUGHT...

I'm sure you would have received, at least, one Christmas card with shepherds being summoned to the manger by the angel (Luke 2:8-20). These shepherds were the first to witness, with the Holy Family, the birth of Jesus, the Son of God...so why shepherds...?!

For today's reflection, please read John 10:1-18 wherein Jesus says, "I AM the Good Shepherd." (On the following page.)

In this wide, brown land of ours, we are familiar with sheep graziers who, because of their large mobs of sheep spread over vast areas, use talented kelpie dogs, or horses, motor bikes, utes ...to round up their sheep. Not so in Jesus' time.



Then, the most an owner would have in his 'mob' of sheep would be 100 - quite a different scenario! If the owner had other chores to do, he would hire a shepherd. These shepherds would look after their flock 24/7. Come dusk, the sheep would be led into a stone walled pen with just one way in and out, with a gate for evening closure. Up to seven different flocks of sheep would be gathered in one large pen with their respective shepherds.

Come dawn, the shepherd would call out his sheep by name, they responding only to his voice – the one they knew and trusted. The other flocks similarly to their shepherds. He would lead them out to search for the meagre green grass and pools of even more scarce, water, to be found the rocky, barren hills of Palestine. From Psalm 23, don't forget the waters"! Cattles and horses will drink from running water, but not sheep...oh, no, it must be still!



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amongst
"still

Then there is the shepherd who is more isolated, having only a crudely built stone walled area without the 'luxury' of a gate. He brings his sheep in, settles them down for the night, then he lays down to sleep across the opening, to protect his sheep against the night predators of wolves, bears and lions. (remember David did the same?) Morning comes and the same procedure of calling the sheep out and leading them on.

Now the "Good" bit. The shepherds of Jesus' time, blokes that were very brave, strong, rough and protective, make no mistake about that...you would have to be to survive! However...in their relating of nightly escapades, they were most 'economical' with the truth in its retelling to others, if you get my drift. As such, they were prohibited from testifying in Court, with their standing in society, due to their rough way of living (...no 'Avon' lady calling regularly...) being zilch. Then, as Jesus said, there was the hireling – trouble with wild beasts appeared and he was off like a rocket! No protection there...Luke (above) gives us a perfect "'tis mystery all" – why were the shepherds called to the Holy Birth?! So that **ALL** people would know that Jesus will come to the lowly, the outcast, the pure in heart, the humble – first and foremost! Not the proud, arrogant, rich in themselves (a read of Romans 2:1 may be in order here...)

Jesus is always with us, never leaving nor abandoning us. He will protect us through the very gates of death to life eternal with Him...make no mistake about that – just reread today's passage for reassurance! If it feels as though Jesus may have gone away from you for a bit...guess who's moved, eh???

Here is an old prayer you may care to use, and reflect upon, this week:

**Remember, O Lord,
what you have wrought in us
and not what we deserve,
and, as you have called us to your service,
make us worthy of our calling;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

See you at Church!



John 10:1-18

'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

¹¹'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.'

Loud Sky Project - Making compassion visible!



Ribbon flowers will be planted in the grounds of Newcastle Anglican and Catholic Cathedrals to remember people who have been impacted by institutional child sexual abuse.

You are invited to join with others to assemble ribbon flowers. No special skill required. Refreshments are provided.

Charlestown Uniting Church

Friday 24 March from 10am

All welcome

Contact Anne Threlfo for more information.

Children & Family Worker Update

Hi Everyone

Thank you to those who gave money towards the drink bottles for students at Wiripaang school, today (Wednesday) I am off to Kmart to buy a dozen bottles & I will deliver these to the school on Friday.



Our Holiday Kid's Club will be on Wednesday the 19th of April right in between Easter & ANZAC day, so our theme is remembering. We will remember the events of Easter & the sacrifice Jesus made for us as well as the ANZAC's & those who served. Lorraine has suggested using the donkey to centre our story on, as in the donkey who carried Jesus into Jerusalem & Simpson's donkey. Such humble animals but such an important role that they both played.



SRE - only 3 more weeks of this term left. Only 2 or 3 SRE lessons. It seems in most cases we only just got started & now we are having to introduce Jesus dying for us. I will be running 2 Easter assemblies on the last week of term, I ask that you please pray for me & my SRE teams as we present the Easter Assembly, such an important message to bring to the children & some who have barely heard about Jesus.

Pray that we are able to present it in a way that is engaging & fun, so that the children know there is more to Easter than the Easter Bunny & eggs.

Thank you for your support in all I do.

Cathy



Sunday 30 April
FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY
Worship service at 10.30am

Family Fun, TRIVIA Night SRE FUNDRAISER & AUCTION

Come take part in
the Silent Auction
to help Raise
money for SRE at
Whitebridge High.

*Up for a Challenge?
Lots of Fun, Laughs,
Games for the Kids,
And PRIZES!*

Tickets
\$15 per Adult
Kids under 16yrs free

Tables of 8 or individual tickets available

Enquiries & Bookings contact:
Hunter Christian Church on (02) 49 421 351
info@hcc.org.au

Saturday 11th November
7pm
Hunter Christian Church
20a Hillcrest Pde, Highfields

BYO Nibbles
(nut free zone)
Drinks and Tea & Coffee for Sale

Hi Everyone,

We would like to invite you and your church to our **SRE Family Fun and Trivia Night Fundraiser** that we are holding Saturday evening 25th March at 7pm at Hunter Christian Church. This is a kids friendly event with games and prizes as well as Trivia and some auction items. It would be great if a group from your church could join us!! Entry is \$15 for those 16 and over and free for those younger than that.

Our SRE teacher at Whitebridge High Ben Waters will be the MC so come along and meet him and join the fun.

Please book a table if you can or just turn up on the night☺

Hope to see you there!

God Bless,
Merise Downey
CCEA Secretary

Bullet Proofing Yourself Against Depression

Depression is a serious and tricky illness

Unfortunately, it can also go unrecognized for a long period of time – often especially true for men.

People suffering with depression can become really good at covering the symptoms or making excuses. Some may not even realise that there's a problem. But 1 in 8 men will experience depression, and blokes make up an average seven out of every nine suicides every single day in Australia.

Learn about ways to “bullet-proof” yourself against depression: recognise the signs, get in early and make a difference, keep yourself staying more mentally healthy.

Gwenda Brownell (almost-retired psychologist) will help us understand how depression shows up differently in men, and present strategies that help with keeping the “black dog” away.

A Men's Breakfast

at Charlestown Uniting Church - 24 Milson St

8am Saturday 15th April

Cost \$12 RSVP: Paul Russell

pmraus74@gmail.com, or 0411 236 047

or sign-up sheet in the foyer.

Please advise of any special dietary requirements

By Wednesday 12th April 2023

Please do not attend if you are unwell or have been to a Covid-19 hotspot in the previous 14 days.

Some of our Church Contacts:

Minister

Rev Tom Stuart

M: 0427 625 502

E: tom@thestuarts.id.au

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

Administration:

P: 4943 4019

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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>