



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

19 October 2025

From Rev Tom

In 2014, when the Abbott Government cut nearly a billion dollars from projected overseas aid, *The Sydney Morning Herald* described the move bluntly: "Foreign aid budget plunges to lowest level in Australian history." ABC News reported it under the headline, "Budget 2014: Aid groups vent anger over cuts to foreign aid spending." Yet this year, when aid fell even further relative to national income, there was scarcely a whisper of public concern.

Bit by bit, Australia's interest in overseas aid has faded. During the 1970s, '80s and '90s, aid organisations were woven into our cultural life and featured prominently in mainstream news. Thirty years ago, World Vision's annual 40 Hour Famine was the country's largest community event. Millions of Australians sponsored hundreds of thousands of mostly young people who went without solid food for a weekend. The event was covered on virtually every radio and television network and raised \$7.4 million in 1991—a substantial sum for the time. By 2016, however, that figure had fallen to \$2.2 million, and the event now receives no media attention at all.

During the Howard years, many aid agencies shifted focus from raising funds from the public to relying on government grants. The price of that shift was their public silence in the face of government aid cuts. As Tim Costello observed in 2012, "Charities are receiving up to 90% of their budget from government. At some point, they crossed the line from being clear about their purpose, independent, focused and fearless, to being completely co-opted and captured."

In the May Budget, \$5.097 billion was allocated to aid for 2025–26—an increase of just \$135.8 million over the previous year. That's barely above the \$5.052 billion allocated in Julia Gillard's final budget of 2012–13. Measured as a share of gross national income (GNI)—the standard way to assess generosity over time and across nations—Australia's aid now stands at just 0.18%, the lowest since records began.

By contrast, Australia's proudest period of international generosity was during the Whitlam years, when aid reached 0.6% of GNI. With the UN's global target then at 0.7%, Australia stood among the world's leaders.

Today, as inequality deepens even within our own borders, some politicians and media voices—serving the interests of the wealthy—work to persuade ordinary Australians that we can no longer afford to help the world's poorest.

Last Sunday, I spoke about what it feels like to be an exile in one's own land. Watching these shifts unfold, I feel that sense of exile even more keenly. Yet I also see with greater clarity the truth of Jesus' good news: that it was, and remains, for the poor, the destitute, and the outcast. And so, I feel compelled all the more to speak against the manipulations of wealth and power that perpetuate suffering in our world—just as they did in his.

DIARY

Thursday 16 October

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

1.30-2.30pm Garden Suburb Bible Study

Saturday 18 October

8.00am **Men's Breakfast at Charlestown Uniting Church** with Matthew Clarke speaking on "Modern Slavery" (see more details further in Contact)

Sunday 19 October – Pentecost 19

9.00am The Divine Worship

Leader and Preacher: Rev Tom Stuart

Jeremiah 31:27-34; Psalm 119:97-104; 2 Timothy 3:14 - 4:5; Luke 18:1-8

Monday 20 October

10.00am Pastoral Care Visit to Garden Suburb Aged Care

Tuesday 21 October

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Wednesday 22 October

10.00am Wednesday Reflective Services at Adamstown Uniting Church

Thursday 23 October

10.00am **Presbytery Gathering** Morpeth Uniting Church – meet Rob Floyd, National Director of Frontier Services (see more details further in Contact)

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

1.30-2.30pm Garden Suburb Bible Study

Sunday 26 October – Pentecost 20

9.00am **SRE Service**

Leader: Cathy Beeton with Guest Speakers

Daniel 7:1-3, 15-18; Psalm 149; Ephesians 1:11-23; Luke 6:20-31

2.00-4.30pm **Sacred Songs of the Season: Advent and Christmas** with Trish Watts at the Adamstown Uniting Church (see more details further in Contact)

Tuesday 28 October

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Wednesday 29 October

10.00am Wednesday Reflective Services at Adamstown Uniting Church

Thursday 30 October

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

1.30-2.30pm Garden Suburb Bible Study

Sunday 2 November – Pentecost 21

9.00am **All Saints Service**

Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom Stuart

Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4; Psalm 119:137-144; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12; Luke 19:1-10

THE PRAYER PAGE



Prayer is the Voice of Faith

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Those who are mourning loved ones
- * Beryl and family following death of Graeme
- * Nelda Marshall
- * Michael Smith – cancer diagnosis & in Hospital
- * Lorraine Pepper
- * Glen and Marion
- * Valmai
- * Mike Warren
- * Janice and Don Wright
- * Kelly
- * Tony Sellen
- * Vicki
- * Pam and Ken
- * Lyn Benson
- * Jean
- * Fred Bryant
- * June Locker
- * Jacqueline Fenwick
- * Isabella
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Pam and Mert
- * Enid Power
- * Max
- * Don Humphries

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

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power



A New Position is being created!

Our mission here at Charlestown and Garden Suburb has always been to reach out to the community around us with God's love, inviting them to join in the activities we have provided. We shifted some of our energy a couple of years ago to the NEOS mission, becoming involved in the community organisations such as Hunter Community Alliance and the Charlestown Sustainability Group and to meet up with others over coffee in the local shopping centres.

The church council and SFED (Spiritual Formation Education and Discipleship) have now added a new string to our bow of mission. We recognise that we provide and maintain the building where many community groups meet and we can play our part in building sense of community by publicising their activities to each other and beyond. The name of the property will be Milson St Hub, but be assured, it is still the home and property of the Charlestown Uniting Church and the signage will include the Uniting Church logo.

To foster deeper community connections through the Milson St Hub, we will be employing a Communications Coordinator. They will create material about users of the Hub for the digital platforms such as the new website, social media and the foyer screen. Some of this material will be simple factual information but by engaging people to tell their stories, share their passions and values, we hope deeper connections will be made between members of our community using the Milson St Hub.

How can this position be seen as mission? As one of the groups using this building, the Charlestown Church will also be telling their stories; this is what we do because of our values, because we know a loving God who wants us share that love with our neighbours.

Members of the Church Council and SFED are working on the advertisement for the position of Milson St Hub Communications Coordinator which we hope will be published next week in a multitude of media.

Kerrie Dixon

Children & Family Worker Update



Next week the 26th October is SRE Sunday in our church, SRE (special religious education) or scripture as it used to be known. I have organised to have two young SRE teachers to come along as guest speakers to tell us their experiences as new SRE teachers. I also have invited 4 children who will be telling us what they love about SRE. Please join us as we celebrate SRE in our public schools & pray that it continues.

Then stay on for morning tea with the teachers & students. We will love to see you there.

Our next **Family Games Night is on the 8th November**, see flyer, please let family & friends know about our game's night, we have games for all ages & abilities, no one is left out & share pizza for dinner, what more could you want.

Praying you all have a great week.

Cathy



Uniting Church in Australia
The Hunter Presbytery
invite all members of congregations to a

PRESBYTERY GATHERING

THURSDAY 23rd October 2025

hosted by

Morpeth Uniting Church
98 High Street, Morpeth NSW 2321

10 am Morning Tea (provided)

10.30am Programme begins

An opportunity to meet Rob Floyd



National Director, Frontier Services
who will be the Guest Speaker
(Offering towards MUNCH (Food program of
Maitland Uniting Churches) and Frontier
Services)

Bring your own lunch. Tea and coffee provided
Sales Table with Greeting Cards etc.

with support of UCAF NSW/ACT Synod Committee



2025-2026 Uniting Church Lectionary available now



The new lectionary
year A begins on 30
November.

To follow the weekly
readings, download
the lectionary here:

<https://tinyurl.com/mr3redkw>

family Game Night

Join us for a night full of fun,
laughter, and friendly competition!

8th Nov. 5pm-7.30pm
Charlestown Uniting Church
RSVP: CATHY 0409445933

Pizza Included

A service of thanksgiving for the life of our dear friend and congregation member

Graeme Gaul

Will take place at Charlestown Uniting Church at 2pm on Thursday 16 October.

The service will be live streamed: <https://www.youtube.com/live/63r5wxH9M50> ,
and will be available to view at any time later.





Spiritual Practice of the Week

Inner Healing Prayer: Prayer for inner healing invites those with emotional wounds to enter the safe and healing presence of Jesus. In this safe place those seeking wholeness and freedom open themselves to listen to Jesus and his word to them.

Practice: Take a "needs mending" inventory. Set aside time for several days or weeks to be in the presence of Jesus with your wounds. Gather a list of wounded places and tender relationships that need mending. Simply gather the list. Let it grow as other wounds come to mind. Leave it with God. At another time, come to God in a safe and quiet place where you can attend to the list in the presence of the great Physician. Breathe deeply. Inhale the closeness of Jesus. He is nearer than your own breath. Don't hurry. Wait in his presence. • When you are ready, set the list before the Lord and wait. What one item seems to have your attention? (Attend to one wound at a time. Don't move on to another wound until you sense that the time has come to do so.) Ask Jesus what he wants to tell you about this wound. Listen. What do you sense the Lord is saying to you? • Respond to Jesus. Trust Jesus to do what he needs to do. The fruit of healing may not be a big feeling of release at the time of prayer, but changed internal responses as time goes by. Over time you may notice that your internal responses to people and situations begin to shift. Talk to God about this.

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

ALL SAINTS SERVICE

Sunday 2 November at 9am
Charlestown Uniting Church

During the service we will be giving thanks to God for the lives of those who have died during the last twelve months.

Your loved one will be honoured with a special candle for you or a family member to light.

As you arrive in the foyer, please collect your candle from the usher.

Morning Tea will be served immediately follow the service.

Please contact Kerrie Dixon on dixonkw@gmail.com with the name of your loved one, or with any enquires.



TRISH WATTS



**ADAMSTOWN
UNITING CHURCH**

An Adamstown Uniting Church
Event for the Hunter Presbytery



Cost: \$20
(\$15 concession)

SACRED SONGS OF THE SEASON: ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Congregational Singing Workshops for Worship Leaders, Music Coordinators and Singers

This workshop offers:

- Songs that help us prepare for the coming of the light of Christ
- Focus, amidst the tinsel and rah rah of the end of year
- New advent and Christmas music
- Basic skills for building confidence in song leading & animating congregational singing for worship and prayer

CONTACT INFO@ADAMSTOWNUCA.ORG.AU FOR MORE INFO

REGISTER HERE: [HTTPS://WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM/E/SACRED-SONGS-OF-THE-SEASON-ADVENT-AND-CHRISTMAS-TICKETS-1550115921449?AFF=ODDTOTCREATOR](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sacred-songs-of-the-season-advent-and-christmas-tickets-1550115921449?aff=oddtotcreator)



**Sunday 26
October 2025**



**2:00pm to
4:30pm**



**Adamstown
Uniting Church**



**Afternoon tea
provided**

About Trish:

Trish brings years of experience as a song leader in sacred spaces. She is passionate about the singing community that instills joy, courage, prayerfulness and solidarity.

Check out: www.trishwatts.com for more info

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/3ppv5k5ws>

GROWING YOUNG WORKSHOP



November 1st, 2025. 10am-1pm

Note the change of date!

Fuller Youth Institute has done a lot of research into what helps a church to "grow young", to attract and keep young people. We will explore some of this, and perhaps you will be interested in doing the whole course. (Pulse is encouraging this).

We will meet via zoom, contact Richard for the zoom link - email richardm@nswact.uca.org.au or phone 0408446281

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>