



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

30 August 2026

The following reflection comes from Rev Jon Owen, CEO & Pastor of the Wayside Chapel.

In this time of great change, new staff and expanding possibilities, SFED group thinks this account from Rev Owen serves as an inspiration for us in the Milson St Hub mission.

During October, we are going to be intentional about coming together to pray for our Community, our Mission, our leadership and ourselves. Please set aside a little extra time on Sunday mornings.

More information to come.

A few years ago now, two brothers walked into Redfern from the country. Their shoes had given up long before they had — soles flapping, the remaining canvas worn thin and grey. An elder saw the boys before anyone else did and was up and across the street in an instant. After he established how they were connected, he marched them into a shop like he'd been expecting them all his life. They emerged in brand new shoes, beaming, both about a foot taller than when they'd walked in.

I heard the rest of the story only recently, at the elder's birthday party (which wasn't at Wayside, but at a gathering of people who love him). He was delighted to learn that one of those two boys, now a grown man, works for Wayside.

The elder later spoke of being raised by his nana, deep in the outback, in a town that has seen and farewelled industry and now looks like a forgotten outpost in the red earth of the central west. When the inspectors came round looking for children to remove from families, his nana didn't hide him or the other children. She ordered them sternly to dress up. *"Spit on your hair and flatten it down. Best clothes, best shoes on, chin up."* Then she'd stand them in the doorway, chins up, backs straight.

It was an act of dignified resistance. Whatever comes next, you're going to see our humanity and equality.



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The now-elder never forgot it, so when decades later, those two boys walked into town with their shoes falling apart, something in him went straight back to that doorway. One of those young boys who walked to Redfern, the one who now works at Wayside, recalled the story and he wasn't just remembering a kindness done to him. He was describing a way of life that act of kindness sparked in him. He treats people who walk through our doors the way that elder treated him — noticing what's falling apart before anyone else does and moving in quietly.

That's how this place works, it's through people rather than our programs, through our people who have been cared for, who grow up to become someone's doorway. *"Can I confess something, Rev?"* No one ever wait for the yes. *"I no longer identify as I used to. I'm an earthling now — humans are too weird."* I quickly checked whether we have a policy on that. We don't. Never needed one. To my knowledge 'earthling' covers everyone who walks through that door anyway.

Rev. Jon Owen

DIARY

Thursday 27 August

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

1.30-2.30pm Bible Study in the Dudley Room at Milson St Hub

Sunday 30 August – Pentecost 14

9.00am The Divine Worship – SRE Service

Leader: Cathy Beeton and Preacher: Sara Cooper

Exodus 3:1-15, Jeremiah 15:15-21; Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b, Psalm 26:1-8; Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 16:21-28

Tuesday 1 September

10.00am **Pastoral Care Visit at Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility**

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Thursday 3 September

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

1.30-2.30pm Bible Study in the Dudley Room at Milson St Hub

Sunday 6 September – Pentecost 15

9.00am The Divine Worship

Leader and Preacher: TBA

Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 149; Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20

Monday 7 September

10.00am **Pastoral Care Visit at Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility**

Tuesday 8 September

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Wednesday 9 September

10.00am Ladies Fellowship at the Milson St Hub

Thursday 10 September

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

1.30-2.30pm Bible Study in the Dudley Room at Milson St Hub

Friday 11 September

6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah

Saturday 12 September

12noon Friendship Circle will meet for **lunch at Flower Power Garden Centre at Ashtonfield** – for more information see further in Contact

Continued over the page

Sunday 13 September – Pentecost 16

9.00am The Divine Worship

Leader and Preacher: TBA

Exodus 14:19-31; Psalm 114 or Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21; Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35

Tuesday 15 September

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

THE PRAYER PAGE



Prayer is the Voice of Faith

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Anne Hall (post surgery)
- * Jean Witherspoon in hospital
- * Pray for Tom and Cathy holiday to Uluru and his ongoing recovery
- * Pray for Janice Wright and family
- * Jean Witherspoon and family
- * Robyn Greaves and family
- * Marion Box
- * Prayers for Grahame Beeton and family
- * Mert and Pam
- * Jacqueline Fenwick
- * Rene Kelly
- * Glen and Marion
- * Valmai
- * Kelly
- * Tony Sellen
- * Vicki
- * Pam and Ken
- * Lyn Benson
- * Jean
- * Isabella
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Max
- * Don Humphries

Congregational Prayer Points

- NREMA application
- Major upgrades to the Project Reconnect website
- Worship Services
- Cathy Beeton and SRE classes
- Church profile and preparations for Tom's retirement
- Worship Committee

Wider Community Prayer Points

- pray for Catherine Pepper who has recently been appointed Associate General Secretary, Strategy and Governance for the Assembly of the UCA. Pray that she may receive wisdom and grace as she fulfills her role which is involved with preparing the church for the future in the areas of strategy and governance.
- Pray for Medowie/Tilligerry
- Margaret Jurd College and Darren Twist the Principal
- Orphanage in Kenya and Wilfreda
- Neos ministry
- Those affected by climate change in Australia eg floods, droughts and fires
- Prayer for those in conflict zones in the world

Rev Tom Stuart Leave to be Extended

Reverend Tom began his leave on the first Monday of August anticipating some relaxing time while taking Long Service Leave. That all came unstuck when he came off his bike the next day and ended up in hospital with many broken ribs and punctured lung.

Tom is recovering slowly and the progress of fractures healing is still being investigated.

The Worship Committee and SFED (Spiritual Formation Education and Discipleship) group have offered to adjust the church services for the first two weeks of September so Tom can continue his leave to properly recover from his accident.

We continue to pray for Tom's healing and wish Kathy and Tom some rejuvenating days away.

Kerrie Dixon

Acting Chair Church Council

The Hunter Presbytery

Report from the August Presbytery meeting

Tuesday Night was the final meeting of The Hunter Presbytery chaired by Dr Jenny Barnes the chairperson of the Presbytery at the North Lake Macquarie Uniting Church before the Northern Presbytery officially becomes the Presbytery of which all the congregations in the Hunter Presbytery will all be a part.

There were about 19 specially invited guests at the meeting consisting of previous office holders in The Hunter Presbytery who were recognised.

A cake was cut by together by Mrs Shirley Mitchell, Mrs Gloria Carter and Rev Richard Wrightson as previous office holders when all had gathered for refreshments and a lot of talk and reconnecting with old acquaintances.

The meeting after refreshments was held in the worship centre where memories of the past 4 years were highlighted.

A reflection on the readings from Ecclesiastes was given by student practicum minister Trish Bevan currently in the Cessnock congregation.

Of special importance was the commissioning of a lay preacher, Lyn Brattan, from the Maitland Congregation.

We all joined in singing especially composed hymns led by a choir led by Jenny Barnes.

The meeting concluded in prayer led by Rev Stephen De Plater

David Chegidden



Stuart, Mary Avery

27/04/1928 - 11/08/2026

Mary's funeral service can be viewed here:

<https://vimeo.com/1219455914?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci>

Children & Family Worker Update



Well, I am officially back at work this week after taking leave due to Grahame's diagnoses & treatment. Thank you for all your kind thoughts, words & prayers during this time, Grahame has one more treatment to go next week & than a PET scan 5 weeks later, but I am happy to say things are looking very positive for him.

I have had a very busy SRE related week this past week. On Saturday I travelled up to Singleton to be part of an **SRE Encouragement Day** for SRE teachers in the Hunter Valley, we had teachers from Muswellbrook, Merriwa, Scone, Vacey as well as Singleton. **My daughter Jenna** was the guest speaker for the event she spoke on 'Supporting Neurodiverse Students in the Classroom' a very proud Mum moment for me.

I have also prepared an SRE Assembly for Charlestown East School on '**Prayer, Anywhere, Anytime**' which I will present on Wednesday afternoon.

As well as finishing the final points to the **SRE Service for this coming Sunday**, I hope you can join me for this special service as I have invited Sara Cooper Warners Bay High SRE Teacher to come along & share her story with us, it will be a wonderful to have you all there to show your support for Sara & Ben our High School SRE teachers & SRE classes in our area.

Cathy

The August Breakfast talk **A Papua New Guinea Story** is now available on line

Look [here](#) to view the Video

Rev Lu Piper OAM has worked for twenty years over a fifty year period in PNG as a teacher, in curriculum work, as a lecturer, and also project officer in PNG and is still significantly involved particularly in the islands of the Milne Bay Province.

What makes these islands so unique? What has kept Lu involved over so many years, and why? What is life like there now? If you are interested to hear and see the real story of our near neighbours, this is your opportunity!

Church Council Elections

Several of our councillors are coming to the end of their term – Lesley Clulow (Treasurer), Kerrie Dixon, Lorraine Pepper and Margaret White.

We have vacancies in the areas of SFED, Passionate Worship, Risk Taking Mission and Service, Radical Hospitality, Church Council Chair and Treasurer.

Please prayerfully consider if you could serve in this way, or if there is someone in the Congregation you would like to encourage to be nominated for these roles.

David Chegvidden has agreed to be nominated as our new representative to the new Northern Presbytery. We thank Les Butchers for performing this role for many years.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF THE WEEK

Confession: is a process whereby the Holy Spirit opens my ear 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



Friendship Circle

**Will meet on 12th September with lunch
at Flower Power Garden Centre at
Ashtonfield 12noon.**

Contact Sue Warren for transport

0427 737 793

All Welcome

Sale Proceeds (Garden Suburb) Assessment Team

We have finally had our first SPAT (Sale Proceeds Assessment Team) meeting to decide on how the money from the sale of Garden Suburb Uniting Church property will be invested and used for missional purposes. Despite our best efforts to have an approved NREMA (Non Real Estate Mission Application) ready to employ a full-time Milson Street Hub Community Engagement Worker by now, the SPAT has only just convened with the first meeting on Monday 18th August.

The SPAT (team) is made up of three representatives from our congregation (Paul Russell, Lorraine Pepper and myself), two representatives from The Hunter Presbytery (Rev Suzanne Holloway and Eldrene March), Synod Property representative (Heather Keenan) and Synod Mission Growth and Innovation representative (Dr Cameron Eccleston).

We met by Zoom (over the internet) which means no-one has to travel and has the advantage of recording the meeting and making a summary of matters discussed, decisions made and actions to be taken.

The SPAT this time has a very different feel to our last one, when the Whitebridge sale proceeds were being invested for the NEOS mission to release Rev Tom Stuart for a quarter of his time for mission to the Charlestown community. Back then The Hunter Presbytery was still responsible for a couple of years into the future. Now we are facing the responsibilities being handed to the new Northern Presbytery from September, so any decisions about future mission will wait until Northern Presbytery positions are filled and operational.

Before our next SPAT meeting, a member of the Synod Mission Growth and Innovation team, will come to visit the Charlestown site to become better acquainted with our mission ideas and help 'polish' the NREMA.

Although this process feels like walking through treacle, we will do our part to keep the process moving and hopefully by the start of 2027 we will be ready to employ a missional worker for the Milson Street Hub. In the meantime, let us pick up the reins to build those community connections initiated by Piteeri, our previous part-time Milson Street Hub Communications Co-ordinator in preparation for the new position. Like preparing the soil before sowing.

Kerrie Dixon

Acting Chair Charlestown and Garden Suburb Church Council

	Charlestown Ladies Fellowship will meet on the Wednesday 9th September at 10am You are welcome to come and join us for morning tea and a chat! ALL WELCOME
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RESCHEDULED!

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The Greater
Charlestown
Sustainable
Neighbourhood
Group



ALEC ROBERTS
Chairman of CLEANaS

24 Milson St.
Charlestown

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Afternoon Tea provided

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book your spot:
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THE CHURCH IN THE TREES
10 STOCKTON ST.

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CONTACT **0412 829 667**

Morisset Uniting
Church is asking for

ANY TOY DONATIONS!

They are specifically
seeking Fisher-Price;
Wooden; Kitchen
Bench; Tea sets &
Ride-on items.

Contact the number on
the poster if you can
help.

REMINDER that the Church Office will be closed on Wednesday the 2nd and the 9th of September, as Jenny is away.

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 St, 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

Communications Coordinator:

Piteeri Michail

M: 0493 094 231 E:

Piteeri.m@outlook.com

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>