



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

17 December 2023

From Anne Threlfo

Today is Advent 3, when we light the candle of Joy. Today's Psalm 126 provides us with a vision of Joy in the past, present and future, but what exactly does it mean to be Joyful? Joy is in the heart. It is of the soul. Joy transcends, and is constant. Joy is a practice and a behaviour, deliberate and intentional. Joy endures hardship and trials and comes with meaning and purpose. While a person pursues happiness, Joy is a choice.

Our Joy comes from knowing that God gave us the great gift of Jesus, God's incarnated self. There are times for all of us when it is really difficult to recognise that we carry this Joy. I think particularly of all those people whose lives are falling apart in the world at the moment amidst bombing, privations of food and medical care, and the close companionship of death. Even for those of us whose lives are not lived in war zones, life has a habit of throwing challenges at us, which test our choice to be Joyful.

In today's gospel reading, John the Baptist says that he is a witness to the Light. That is also true for us. Even more, thanks to that Joyful gift in Bethlehem, we are also carriers of the Light. Perhaps it is our invitation to carry the lights of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love for those whose life circumstances are a heavy weight; to illuminate their situation and to stand alongside them in their suffering; to help bear the load just a little:

*I will hold the Christ-light for you.
In the night time of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you.
Speak the peace you long to hear.*

That was the message from Bishop Michael Kennedy at the Service for Peace this evening at Sacred Heart Cathedral. The service included prayers for Peace from leaders in the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Uniting Church Christian denominations, as well as leaders from the Baha'i, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Aboriginal faith communities.

I felt great Joy praying in the midst of this diverse community of people, all longing for Peace in our world. Bishop Kennedy had begun the service with the unhappy yet accurate observation that much of the violence and unrest in the world has religious undertones. His words proved to be prophetic as the service was interrupted by a Catholic fundamentalist shouting accusations of heresy. This disruption had the opposite effect to that which the interloper might have desired. He was eventually shown the door, but in the meantime, the Anglican priest stepped out to stand beside the group of Buddhists who had been interrupted, and prayed alongside them. I closed my eyes and heard a murmur of audible prayer fill the cathedral. What a Joy that was!

Theresa Brierley stepped forward and invited us all to take a few deep breaths, and the prayers continued. We left with the words of the Aboriginal Elder in our hearts, "let us find the wisdom (and Joy and Peace) that resides between our breaths."

Amen



DIARY

Thursday 14 December

10.00am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care – Carols and Communion
10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Sq

Sunday 17 December – Advent 3

9.00am Holy Communion Service – Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126: 1 Thessalonians 5: 12-28; John 1:6-8, 19-28



Monday 18 December

10.00am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visit

Tuesday 19 December

9.00am Needlework n Natter

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

Thursday 21 December

10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Sq

Sunday 24 December – Advent 4

9.00am Worship Service – Leader: Michael Smith and
The message will be brought by the Moderator of the Uniting
Church in NSW/ACT, Rev Faaimata (Mata) Havea Hiliau
2 Samuel 7:1-11,16; Psalm 89:1-4, 19-27; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38



Sunday 24 December – Christmas Eve at Garden Suburb Church **Christmas Family Service**

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96: Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20

Monday 25 December – Christmas Day

9.00am Worship Service Leader and Preacher Rev'd Tom
The Communion of Christmas

Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1: 1-12; John 1:1-14



Sunday 31 December – Christmas 1

9.00am Worship Service – Leader and Preacher Rev'd Tom
Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

Sunday 7th January - The Baptism of Jesus

9.00 am Worship Service - Leader & Preacher – Rev'd Tom
Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11

Would you please let me know what get togethers and meetings will be on after Christmas Day so that I can pop them into the Diary next week!! Thanks Jenny

THE PRAYER PAGE



Pray that the Australian Church can model today, the example of the early Christians, in making space for all people to flourish in community.

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Fred Bryant in hospital
- * Daniel Stuart
- * Family and friends of Glenda O'Donahue
- * June Locker
- * Family and friends of Tom and Kathy
- * Ryan Walpole in rehabilitation
- * Kathryn Gray
- * those suffering with Covid
- * Those in our Congregation who have lost loved ones in recent months
- * Anne
- * Mac
- * Jacqueline Fenwick
- * Peter Ferguson
- * Nola in hospital
- * Isabella
- * Ashley
- * Janice Wright
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Mert
- * Judith and family
- * Lorraine Pepper
- * Enid Power
- * Fred Bryant
- * Max

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

Congregational Prayer Points

- Church Council
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Cathy Beeton and SRE classes
- Worship Committee

Wider Community Prayer Points

- those affected by climate change in Australia eg droughts and fires
- Tom and NEOS as he follows ideas and opportunities including with Wesley Mission at Windsor, Hunter Community Alliance, Greater Charlestown Sustainability Group
- Hunter Community Alliance's arrangements towards the Founding Assembly in April 2024 , as approaches are made to encourage politicians to attend and give support to local initiatives to reduce emissions
- The situation in Israel and Gaza
- The victims and families of the earthquake in Afghanistan
- Consequences of climate change around the world
- The situation in Ukraine and other trouble spots
- Fabian, Wilfreda and children as Kenya experiences floods



Children & Family Worker Update

Another fantastic Advent Workshop last Wednesday evening.

Our numbers were small but the fun was great, Christmas craft, games, food & stories. And a special mention to Cain who has been a member of our Holiday Kids & Advent workshop since Kinder, Cain is graduating from year 6 & will be in High School next year but this isn't the last we will see of Cain as he plans to come back & be a junior helper next year. Congratulations Cain, & may you feel God's guidance as you start your next stage of your schooling.



A big Thank you to my Holiday Kids Club & Advent Team, these great days are not possible without your help.

Cathy



OFFICE CLOSED

**The Office will be closed on the
27 December 2023
3 January 2024
17 January 2024**

There will be a Contact completed on the 10 January 2024 so if you have any Group start dates or news please get them to me before the 10th.

Share God's love through the Christmas Bowl



Thank you for joining with churches across Australia as we share God's love through the Christmas Bowl.

Since 1949, the Christmas Bowl has brought together committed Australian Christians with dedicated local partners around the world to give hope to people uprooted by conflict and disaster. By sharing this tradition, you are helping build a world where all people have a safe place to belong. **Thank you.**



CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

If giving to the Christmas Bowl is part of your Christmas traditions, envelopes to put in the offering are available on the entry cupboard or you can make an online donation at

<https://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au/donate>

Some of our Church Contacts:

Minister

Rev Tom Stuart

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Administration:

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Children & Families Resource Worker:

Mrs Cathy Beeton

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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>