



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

21 December 2025

From Rev Tom

Canadian intellectual and communications theorist Marshall McLuhan, who lived from 1911 to 1980, famously coined the phrase "*the medium is the message.*" McLuhan argued that the form a message takes shapes us more profoundly than the content it carries. I am, in a sense, pre-empting the theme of the Christmas Eve service in what I am saying here. However, there are aspects of this reflection that I would not speak in the same way in a setting where children are likely present.

We know a great deal about the content of Jesus' message. Yet when we first encounter him in the Gospel story, we do not meet a teacher or a preacher, but a newborn child - vulnerable, dependent, and largely unnoticed by the world. That child is the medium. And if the medium is the message, then we must ask: what is the message being communicated?

From the very beginning it is clear that the reception of Jesus is a matter of human choice. According to the story, he was not welcomed - and yet he came anyway. He arrived fragile and dependent, carrying nothing but love. That, after all, is what babies do. Few people remain untouched by the presence of a child. Hearts soften, attention shifts, priorities change. From the outset, Jesus is transformative. Yet this transformation does not come by force. We are not seized or compelled; rather, we are invited to embrace. The freedom of response is entirely ours.

The nearness of Christmas following the horrific attack that occurred on Sunday only sharpens the contrast. The selfishness of those responsible is beyond comprehension, and the damage inflicted is both deeply personal and profoundly national. Lives have been lost; other lives have been irrevocably altered through injury, fear, and grief.

And yet, for us, the image of the Christ child remains before us and continues to shape our response. It calls us toward connection rather than isolation, toward presence in vulnerability, and toward hearts that are open to transformation. The longer story of Jesus makes clear that this way is costly - but it is also the only path that leads to genuine peace and reconciliation.

My prayer is that we hold fast to the way revealed to us in the Christ child, especially as recriminations inevitably arise. Whether quietly in our hearts, or in practical and tangible acts, may we communicate that love to all who are impacted by this needless tragedy.

This is how, even in the midst of darkness, the light continues to shine.



DIARY

Thursday 18 December

10.00am Morning tea in the Community – common seated at Charlestown Square
1.30-2.30pm Garden Suburb Bible Study

Sunday 21 December - Advent 4

9.00am The Divine Worship
Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom Stuart
*Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7;
Matthew 1:18-25*



Tuesday 23 December

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Wednesday 24 December – Christmas Eve

6.30pm Christmas Eve Service
Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom Stuart

Thursday 25 December – Christmas Day

9.00am Christmas Day Service
Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom Stuart



Sunday 28 December – Christmas 1

9.00am The Divine Worship
Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom Stuart
Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23

Tuesday 30 December

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Wednesday 31 December

Church Office is closed

Thursday 1 December

New Year's Day – no morning tea in the community

Sunday 4 January 2026 – Christmas 2

9.00am The Divine Worship
Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom Stuart
Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9), 10-18

Tuesday 6 January

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Wednesday 7 January

Church Office is open

Thursday 8 January

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

Sunday 11 January 2026 – Baptism of Jesus

9.00am The Divine Worship
Leader and Preacher: TBA
Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17

THE PRAYER PAGE



Prayer is the Voice of Faith

Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Those who are mourning loved ones
- * The family and friends of Enid Power as her funeral is held on Monday 22nd December
- * Beryl
- * Rene Kelly
- * Nelda Marshall
- * Lorraine Pepper
- * Glen and Marion
- * Valmai
- * Janice and Don Wright
- * Kelly
- * Tony Sellen
- * Vicki
- * Pam and Ken
- * Lyn Benson
- * Jean
- * June Locker
- * Jacqueline Fenwick
- * Isabella
- * Eileen Dunn
- * Pam and Mert
- * Max
- * Don Humphries

Maintained by SFED

Congregational Prayer Points

- Church Council
- John Lewis and his work with Wesley Mission in Windale and Hamilton South
- Prayer for discernment re ongoing mission for the Milson St Hub into 2026
- Employment of a Communications Coordinator
- 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
- Orphanage in Kenya and Wilfreda
- Neos ministry
- Those affected by climate change in Australia eg floods, droughts and fires
- Prayer for the situations in Israel, Palestine and Ukraine

A funeral service for the life of our dear friend and long-time congregation member

Enid Power

Will take place at Charlestown Uniting Church at 10.00am, Monday 22 December 2025.

The service will be live streamed:

<https://tinyurl.com/FuneralEnidPower> and will be available to view at any time later.



Charlestown & Garden
Suburb Uniting Church

Celebrate Christmas

Here at the Milson St Hub

Christmas Eve - 6.30pm

Christmas Day - 9.00am

Celebrate God's gift of love come to us!

Milson St Hub, 24 Milson St, Charlestown

Christmas 2025

We are continuing to supply gifts but only to Mosaic (which used to be known as Northern Settlements).

This year we were able to support ten families, all refugees, comprising of 12 adults and 22 children. We gave a total of 49 gifts using money that has been generously donated previously.

May you know the peace of God which passes all understanding as we enter 2026.

We pray that peace and joy will be yours.

Sue and Warren Pepper



If giving to the Christmas Bowl is one 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>



We are making a change to more flexible seating – for comfort and convenience

There are changes coming to the seating furniture in the worship space!



Menorah Lighting Vigil

Newcastle Rabbi Yossi Rodal will be organising a Menorah lighting vigil at the Newcastle Synagogue, Newcastle to express solidarity with the Jewish community in the wake of the Bondi Beach terrorist attack.



Details:

Wednesday 17
December
7:30pm

Newcastle
Synagogue
122 Tyrell St
The Hill



THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF ST PETER'S EAST MAITLAND

WILLIAM ST, EAST MAITLAND - EST 1834

ORGAN RECITAL SERIES 2026

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF THE 'FATHER' WILLIS ORGAN 1876-2026

LAST SUNDAYS OF THE MONTH FEBRUARY - NOVEMBER AT 2.00PM

FEATURING ORGANISTS

MARKO FRY - 22nd FEBRUARY
PHILIP REICHARDT - 29th MARCH
GERARD NICHOLLS - 26th APRIL
SEAN WEATHERLEY - 31st MAY
GAVIN WARD - 28th JUNE

JAMES BREW - 26th JULY
TIM LI - 30th AUGUST
ROBERT EATHER - 27th SEPTEMBER
DAVID DRURY - 25th OCTOBER
SUZUKI MUSIC - 29th NOVEMBER

TO BOOK, SCAN THE QR CODE OR HEAD TO:
www.123tix.com.au/events/profile/organrecitalseries2026



If you enjoy organ music, you might like to mark these dates for 2026 on your calendar to join St Peter's Anglican church at East Maitland celebrate 150 years of their Willis Organ.

Children & Family Worker Update



Another year of scripture classes are over, what a year it has been, such a large range of ages, some classes more challenging than others but a great lesson for me on adapting to situations. I have had some amazing moments like the SRE Assembly at Charlestown East on 'Peter & Jesus' the interaction with these students always blows me away.

Meeting & getting to know 3 young people from the Catholic Diocese who joined me at Redhead School having the opportunity to train them up to take on their own Scripture lessons gives me hope for the future.

Running 2 SRE Services at Charlestown this year has been another wonderful event for me as I am able to share my passion for Scripture in schools.

I sincerely appreciate the support offered by congregation members through your kindness and encouragement. It is an honour to be part of this congregation, and I wish you all a peaceful Christmas and a New Year filled with Love, Joy & Hope.

Blessings

Cathy



Over the December/January holidays the Office will closed on the following days:

Wednesday 24 December

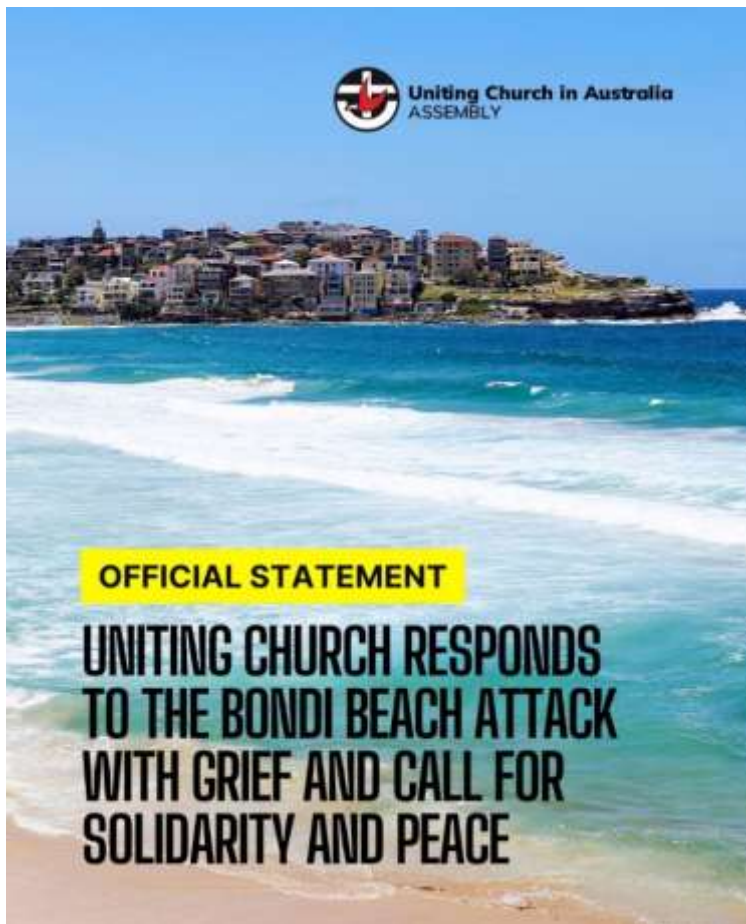
Wednesday 31 December

Wednesday 14 January 2026



The Office will be open on the 7 January 2026 as usual

and then resume normal scheduling from Wednesday 21 January.



The Uniting Church in Australia expresses its deep sorrow following the attack at Bondi Beach, which NSW Police have identified as a terrorist act.

The violence occurred while families and children were gathered to celebrate the start of Hanukkah, a long-held religious tradition, in peace. What should have been a time of joy, faith and community was instead marked by fear and devastation.

We grieve the lives lost and hold in prayer all who have been injured, traumatised and affected.

As the Uniting Church in Australia, we unequivocally state that any attack on families and children gathered peacefully to celebrate faith is utterly unacceptable. We name and reject

antisemitism in all its forms. Violence and hatred must never have the final word.

We stand in solidarity with the Jewish community and commit ourselves again to compassion, peace, and care for one another. We reaffirm our commitment to stand with our Jewish friends against hatred, violence, and fear. This horrifying moment reminds us as a nation that the safety and dignity of our neighbours must never be taken for granted and that protecting one another, especially children and those targeted for their faith, is a shared responsibility.

The Uniting Church affirms the dignity of every person and the right of all people to gather, worship, and celebrate their traditions without fear or violence.

At moments like this, when terror seeks to unsettle our sense of safety and unity, we reject fear, hatred, and division. As a Christian church, shaped by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, we are called to speak with moral clarity and to act with deep compassion.

We give thanks for the courage and care of first responders, health workers, and all who have supported those affected during this time.

We invite the church and the wider community to join us in prayer and quiet reflection for all who are grieving today.

The Uniting Church continues to hold in prayer the Jewish community, the families and children impacted, and the wider community as it grieves and seeks healing.

Rev Charissa Suli

President, Uniting Church in Australia

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>

