



# CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting  
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

**5 May 2024**

## From Rev Tom

This week a congregation member mentioned they were reading a book that mentioned one of my favourite words, the Greek word “metanoia”. According to the author, there is no comparable English word. That there is no English equivalent presents us with a dilemma, particularly when the word is found in the scriptures, and expressed in terms of an exhortation or command. In the Gospel of Matthew, John the Baptist emerges from the desert preaching, “*Metanoia*, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” (Matt 3:2) In the Gospel of Mark we read that immediately after the arrest of John, Jesus took up this proclamation with “The time is fulfilled,” He said, “and the kingdom of God is near. *Metanoia* and believe in the gospel!” It is evident in the way these sentences are structured that these exhortations were not used once by John and Jesus, but were a constant in their preaching. A problem we have here is that we have such a keyword, that is given with such an imperative expression, that has no English equivalent, but is typically translated with one English word, “repent” or “repentance”. Even this would not be so bad as the meaning of “repentance” is “a complete change of character” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). However, this word, and its short form “repent” has devolved in the usage of the Christian Church into some sort of scolding moralism. For at least the last 40 years we have observed the decline of the Christian Church. I have been an ordained minister for 30 of those years. So, my ministry has been one of pressing against the ever-diminishing power of the message of the church. Worse, I have been in ministry in a period where not only has the power of the gospel diminished, but where the leadership of the church (particularly clergy) has too often betrayed that Gospel with the most destructive of immoral behaviours – the sexual abuse of children. The question that I hold closely from day to day in my Christian walk is, how did this demise happen? And, how do we find our way back to the radical inbreaking of the kingdom of God witnessed in the life of Jesus and visible at the time of the early church? I need to say that this is nothing new. It is as if the church has always been in a journey of, to come back to the word, *metanoia* (and in this case, appropriately, repentance). When I was being told about the content of the book containing a reference to the word *metanoia* it was described to me that the author suggested a simple exercise to capture something of the meaning of this significant word. I invite you to do it now. If you have glasses, take them off, and close one eye. Then wrap your hand into a cylindrical shape like a telescope, pressing that hand to your eye, and notice what you see (let me help here, a diminished view – but still do this for yourself!). Look through your telescoped hand for a while and notice what and how you see. Then after a period, move your hand away. Notice the difference, notice how much your vision and your perspective have expanded. That is to create an experience of *metanoia*. I believe that to play our part in the longer journey of the church we must be intentional in responding to this exhortation of John and Jesus, *metanoia*. That is; a fundamental change of mind, a spiritual conversion, to alter the field of our perception, to even go beyond the mind, that we will afresh see the kingdom of God at hand in us, present to our lives, present in this world, and then for us to declare what we see. This is no easy task. But like everything else as followers of Jesus, it requires our all.

# DIARY

## Thursday 2 May

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

1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

## Saturday 4 May

11.15am Friendship Circle Mother's Day outing at the Hunter Wetlands

7.00pm Trivia Night at the Hunter Christian Church to support CCEA

## Sunday 5 May – Easter 6

9.00am Worship Service. Leader & Preacher: Rev Tom Stuart and Children's Corner with Cathy

*Acts 10:44-48; Psalm 98; 1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17*



## Monday 6 May

10.00am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visitation

1.30pm SFED

## Tuesday 7 May

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

## Wednesday 8 May

10.30am Biggest Morning Tea at Charlestown Church

## Thursday 9 May

10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Charle:

10.30am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care

1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

## Friday 10 May

6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah



## Sunday 12 May – Easter 7

9.00am Worship Service. Leader: Kathy Stuart & Preacher: Rev Tom Stuart

*Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Psalm 1; 1 John 5:9-13; John 17:6-19*

## Monday 13 May

1.30pm SFED

## Tuesday 14 May

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

## Thursday 16 May

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

1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

## Sunday 19 May – Pentecost Sunday

9.00am Worship Service with Holy Communion. Leader and Preacher: Rev'd. Tom Stuart

*Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34; Romans 8:22-27; John 15:26-27*

**Please wear something RED**

## Monday 20 May

10.00am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visitation

1.30pm SFED

## Tuesday 21 May

9.00am Needlework n Natter at Garden Suburb

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square



# THE PRAYER PAGE

Please join with each other as a congregation, to commit to praying at meal times, for the needs mentioned below.

## Pastoral Prayer Points

- \* Family and friends of Pat Foster
- \* Family and friends of Edward Mordue
- \* Family and friends of Nola
- \* Lorraine Pepper home from Hospital
- \* Vicki
- \* Lesley
- \* Judith Fuller battling cancer
- \* Pam
- \* pray for Ken as he undergoes an operation on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May
- \* pray for Lyn Benson following surgery
- \* Sue and Warren Pepper
- \* Those in our Congregation who have lost loved ones in recent months
- \* Gloria
- \* Peter
- \* Tony
- \* Graeme
- \* Jean
- \* Fred Bryant
- \* June Locker
- \* Ryan Walpole
- \* Kathryn Gray
- \* Jacqueline Fenwick
- \* Isabella
- \* Janice Wright
- \* Eileen Dunn
- \* Mert
- \* Judith and family
- \* Enid Power
- \* Max

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power

## Congregational Prayer Points

- pray for the successful sale of the Whitebridge property
- pray for guidance and discernment for missional use of buildings into the future
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Cathy Beeton and SRE classes
- Worship Committee

## Wider Community Prayer Points

- Tom and Neos
- HCA and ongoing issues of homelessness, affordable housing and climate change
- Praise for the attendance and results obtained from the Founding Assembly of HCA
- pray for victims and families affected by the recent tragedies in Sydney
- those affected by climate change in Australia eg floods, droughts and fires
- pray that a cease fire agreement will be negotiated between Israel and Hamas and that there will be relief from all the suffering
- The situation in Ukraine and other trouble spots
- Thanksgiving for all orphanage children at school thanks to generous donations
- Rohingya people in Bangladesh where 7000 people homeless

**Vivianne & I have appreciated** the congregation prayers and messages, giving us both support and encouragement.

I once was told when someone passes away the first year is the hardest as each significant event reminds us of the loved one.

Similarly, my recovery is going really well having seen the surgeon, cardiologist & GP.

I'm currently doing cardiac rehab at a gym, to regain my strength lost whilst my chest was/Is regrowing.



# The Hunter Presbytery Prayer Diary



This diary provides an opportunity to pray each week for congregations in the Presbytery. By praying together, we can encourage one another in mission, as we grow in faith and unity and develop understanding and relationships across the region. Each week there will be information and a prayer for each of the congregations in the Hunter Presbytery. This week we pray for:

## 5 May 2024 – Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting Church

Charlestown Garden Suburb Congregation is an older congregation with attendance hovering around 40 each Sunday morning. Like many we are grappling with issues regarding finance and property. However, we have a strong desire to leave a legacy, and so have committed to forming relationships and participating in ventures outside of our own walls in a mission we are calling "Neos". As a beginning, we have "Coffee in the Community" at two shopping centres each week and participate in the Hunter Community Alliance.

**Prayer: We pray for the leaders and congregation of Charlestown Garden Suburb Uniting Church as they seek to engage with the community in new ways so that they might give life to something new that will contribute to an ongoing expression of the love of God and the ethos of the Uniting Church in their area. Amen.**

## Children & Family Worker Update



Another great Holiday Kid's Club last Wednesday, our theme was 'Come Join the Circus'. As you can see from the photos we were definitely joining the circus, lots of fun circus activities, craft, food & stories. Our message was Daniel in the Lion's den, which I compared to a Lion trainer at the circus, training his lions so he could work with Daniel only had to put his trust in God to keep him safe.



Another great story from our church family, Sarah Hoffman, Valmai Taylor's granddaughter has been selected to be part of the Australian team competing in the Women's America's Cup, it is the first time there has been a women's event. Sarah has been sailing since she was a young girl & has already achieved many accolades though this is the best by far.

Sarah will be the youngest woman on board. Sarah was a constant member of our Messy Church family as you can see by the photo provided by Valmai (Sarah on the left) with her cousin in their yachting dresses.

Cathy







Donations gratefully requested for support of the Cancer Council

Bring your friends

Contact Sue Warren on 0427 737 793 for further details.



Join us on Saturday May 11 for our Uniting Climate Conference – *Faith in a Better Future*

The Uniting Church has a long tradition of environmental concern and action. The conference will bring Uniting Church and wider community members together in shared concern for a better future.

The conference will be held in Sydney for those who can attend in-person, but all keynote sessions and afternoon plenary will be livestreamed for those joining online.

Full agenda here: <https://www.unitingclimate.org/2024/04/22/uniting-climate-conference-uniting-faith-in-a-better-future/>

Free registration here: <https://events.humanitix.com/ucan-conference>

# Small is Beautiful



## Thriving as a small Church



Presbytery Minister Graham Perry and Saltbush Scattered Community Minister Yvonne Ghavalas invite you to a time of deep listening and sharing together the challenges and opportunities of being a small church. Yvonne has worked extensively across intergenerational, multicultural, and depleted resource contexts as a social worker, high school teacher, and minister. She is passionate about creating authentic places of belonging through prayer, play, and ancient spiritual practices. Come and find inspiration together in this real and down-to-earth gathering which will include worship, Holy Communion, and sources of support for thriving small communities

**Saturday 11th May 2024**  
**10am - 1pm \$20/15 conc.**  
East Maitland Uniting Church - 35 William St

Details and registration here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/small-is-beautiful-thriving-as-a-small-church-tickets-865935605707?aff=oddtcreator>

### WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD

Booklets are available to collect from the foyer this Sunday – if you usually order a booklet, please collect your copy.





Every community organiser and many of those who took the stage at the Founding Assembly learned our methods through the two-day Foundations Training with the Hunter Community Alliance.

Learn about Intro to Community Organising | Public Pressures | Our stories | Power Dynamics | Relational meetings | Civil Society | The Organising Cycle | Action & Evaluation

#### **Next training sessions:**

**Option 1:** Foundations Training (2 Days) Saturday May 25th & Saturday June 1st, 9am-2:30pm, Jesmond Park UC. Register here: <https://events.humanitix.com/foundations-training-saturdays-may-25th-and-june-6th>

**Option 2:** Foundations Training (2 Days) Thursday 6th & Friday 7th June, Garden Suburb UC. Register here: <https://events.humanitix.com/foundations-training-2-days-thursday-6th-and-friday-7th-june>



These masterclasses have relevance for those involved in various leadership roles in our congregation. Sessions are online and free. More information and registration here: <https://nswactuca.eventsair.com/min-masterclasses-2024/mm-reg/Site/Register>

You are warmly invited to *Ministry Masterclasses*, a free online monthly forum designed to support active ministry leaders by exploring contemporary perspectives and fostering networks of support and collaboration. *Ministry Masterclasses* are ideal for ministers and pastors who are keen to build networks and gain new insights from thought leaders.

#### **Other Upcoming Masterclasses**

- **Wednesday 22 May** - Technology and Worship with Craig Mitchell, Presbytery Minister - Church Development at Port Phillip East Presbytery
- **Wednesday 19 June** - Evangelism Conversation with Ben Gilmour, Director of Vital Leadership, and Pablo Nunez, Minister at Ballina Uniting Church
- **Wednesday 24 July** - Music and Worship with Tash Holmes, Uniting Creative, and Rev. Radhika Sukumar-White, Ministry Leader, Leichhardt Uniting Church
- + more great sessions to come!

Please note all sessions will run from 2:00pm-4:00pm. Registration is free and sessions are run online via Zoom. You are warmly invited to register for as many sessions as you'd like to attend.

**Some of our Church Contacts:**

**Minister**

Rev Tom Stuart

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**Administration:**

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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](mailto: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>