



CONTACT

Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

6 November 2022



From Rev Tom

I remember quite a few years ago reading something written by Richard Rohr. I don't know if it was one of his books, or an article, or maybe I listened to one of the plethora of his recorded talks. This was at least 10 years ago, and perhaps even 20 years ago. But what he said struck such a chord such that I never forgot it. He said that that never before in history have we had it so good. In saying so he was indicating that we have lived in a very unusual time in human history. When he made this statement, we were living in times of the advantages of antibiotics and the all the rest of the amazing medical advances from which we benefit, electricity, sewerage, reticulated water supply, community wide education, communications technology, computers, social welfare, air-conditioned houses and cars, air-travel, superb diets, stable society, superannuation and retirement, effective control of crime ... and so the list goes on. From that perspective (or our perspective), we would look back just a few 100 years and probably describe life back then as nothing short of perilous. However, it is we are the ones who have lived in a very unusual, and very brief, part of history. We live in a part of history where strife and suffering (at least in the Western world) is more the exception than the rule. So, when trouble does hit it is perplexing. Why is this happening to me? Books get written like, "Why bad things happen to good people". However, we read in Psalm 90 what might well be a realistic rendering of the vastly greater human experience, ¹⁰ "The days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong; even then their span is only toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away." I wonder if the extraordinary privilege of living this part of history has put us in a wrong relationship with our suffering when it does happen. For most of history struggle and suffering WAS the human experience. It was the rule rather than the exception. My hunch is that during those times there was a potential of a different relationship with suffering. A greater acceptance. It was part of life. So, rather than being dismayed, rather than losing all our energy from our grief for the loss of the good life, there is greater connection, acceptance, and even learning in the suffering. Psalm 90 demonstrates the wonderful heights of human experience and insight, and a complete dependence of God, that is realised through the troubles – ¹⁴ "Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. ¹⁵ Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil. ¹⁶ Let your work be manifest to your servants, and your glorious power to their children." I remember that diamonds are created under huge surrounding pressure. What diamonds are being made of us as we also are surrounded by turmoil, struggle, or grief? Should we recoil in horror, or lean in trusting in the unending goodness of God? We might be the clay, but I also know God has diamonds in mind.



DIARY

Thursday 3 November

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at ()
1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Sunday 6 November – *Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost*

9.00am Worship Service – Leader and Preacher - Rev Tom Stuart
with Children's Corner
Dedication of Church Council

Haggai 1:15b- 2:9, Psalm 145:1-5,17-21, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5,13-17, Luke 20: 27-40

Monday 7 November

10.00am Garden Suburb Age Care Visitation
7.30pm Girls' Night Out at Garden Suburb – 50th GNO evening!

Tuesday 8 November

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

Wednesday 9 November

10.00am Charlestown Ladies Fellowship – Picnic at Speers Point Park

Thursday 10 November

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square
11.00am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility
1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Friday 11 November

6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah

Saturday 12 November

TBA Friendship Circle meet at Lake Cinema, Boolaroo

Sunday 13 November – *Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost*

9.00am Worship Service – Leader – Mike Smith and Preacher – Lorraine Pepper
Isaiah 65: 17-25, Isaiah 12, 2 Thessalonians 3: 6-13, Luke 21: 5-19

Monday 14 November

10.00am Worship at Woodlands Village

Tuesday 15 November

9.30am – 11.00am Grandparents, Carers, Kids at Garden Suburb
10.00am Morning tea in the Community – Frankie & Co Café at Lake Macquarie

Thursday 17 November

10.00 am Morning tea in the Community – Smelly Cheesecake Café at Charlestown Square
1.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb

Sunday 20 November – *Christ the King*

9.00am Holy Communion Service, Leader and Preacher – Rev Tom Stuart
Jeremiah 23:1-6, Luke 1:68-79, Colossians 1:11-20, Luke 23:33-43



All Welcome



Charlestown Ladies Fellowship

Wednesday 9th November

Will leave the Church at 10.00am for a picnic morning tea at Speers Point Park. If it is raining we will go to the Café at the Park.

Bring a chair

We will return to the Church at 12.30pm

THE PRAYER PAGE

And so I urge you: carry on an ongoing conversation with God about the daily stuff of life, a little like Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof. For now, do not worry about 'proper' praying, just talk to God."

Richard J. Foster



Pastoral Prayer Points

- * Family of Margaret Asplund, especially her daughter, Susan
- * Tom having a new back device
Inserted on 16 Nov
- * John Trenholm
- * Nita
- * John Booth
- * Vivianne
- * Lillian
- * Enid
- * Jan Russell
- * Tony and Nan
- * Mert and Pam
- * Judith and family
- * Margaret Asplund
- * Ashley and Lorraine
- * Marion and Ron
- * Jean Townsend
- * Ken MacDonald
- * Wilma Birch
- * Enid Power
- * Fred Bryant
- * Max

Congregational Prayer Points

- Next Presbytery meeting at Willows on 22nd November
- Preparation for Neos
- GCK group and Holiday Kid's as we discern if or how these activities will proceed in 2023
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Lease of Whitebridge property
- Tom and Kathy
- Cathy Beeton
- Worship Committee

Wider Community Prayer Points

- State and Federal Parliamentarians
- Wilfreda's orphanage
- Those with financial difficulties in current conditions
- Protest movement in Iran for women's rights

Maintained by SFED and Enid Power



Dear Church family of ours

You are probably aware that each member of our Charlestown and Garden Suburb congregation has an Elder assigned to them. I truly hope and trust that everyone knows who their Elder is!

You will also know that at recent Church Council elections our numbers dropped from 13 to 11 Elders which means there are people who will need a new Elder assigned to them and a heavier load on each Elder but **maybe you can help!**



I know that on my Elders list I have a couple of people who are marvellous at keeping in touch with others.

You don't have to be an Elder to be a carer! We are looking for people who are willing to ring others to check how they are going. Then, if sickness or other concerns are present, ask the person if you can let your Elder know so that we can ensure that they are looked after. If you know a person who is sick or in need of prayer, we would ask you to check if they want to have their names put onto the prayer list.

Why is this important? Not everyone wants others to know about their health or other concerns so it is important that we that we honour their wishes.

Would you be happy to become a telephone or personal visit carer for 1, 2 or more of our congregation? If so please talk to Sue Pepper or your own Elder to find out more and to help us truly care for our Church family who are so very important to all of us.

Thank you.

Sue Pepper
(Pastoral Care Elder)



“Neos” Support Team

The “Neos” Mission of our congregation will commence next year with 25% of Tom’s time being spent in the community connecting with people in places where God is at work. The Mission will follow the example of Jesus, and adopt a stance of guest, rather than host, coming alongside people where they are.

“Neos” requires a small support team to be operational early in 2023. This team will be a place for discussion, for bouncing around ideas, for practical assistance to the Minister and others working on “Neos”, and a place for prayer. You may choose to be involved for just a few months. Please prayerfully consider whether you might be called to serve in this way. It will not require “physical” work or direct involvement with the mission, but is a vital part of “Neos”.

Please speak with Rev Tom Stuart or Anne Threlfo if you have any questions or would like to be part of this team.

A PASSING THOUGHT...

“...no...no...**no**...it can't be...are you serious...you're joking, right?! It can't be. I'm not ready. I haven't done anything...I've not even started!”

If I told you that Christmas Day was exactly seven weeks' away come this Sunday – what would your reaction be? For most, it seems that cards, emails and letters have to be 'done'; cleaning of the house before the hordes of visitors arrive; food...how much will we need...for that matter, what on earth will I get that's different from last year?! Sounds somewhat familiar, eh?

Now, nothing wrong in celebrating the birth of our Lord if it plays a minor role to that of preparing ourselves, Spiritually, for the coming of the King. Remember the slogan of the 70's:

“Jesus is the reason for the season”

Well, Christmas Day is just seven weeks' away, make no mistake about that! So...From this Sunday, our Bible readings at worship over the next three weeks are coming to a climax, beginning with this one.

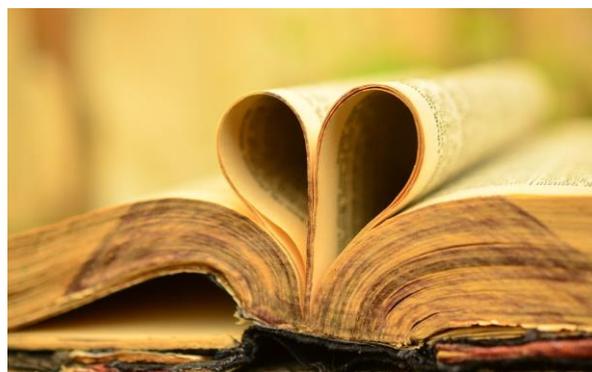
Just as the dawn announces the new sunrise, so these readings prepare us for the coming kingship of the Christ. The Old Testament reading this Sunday speaks of the building of a temple; next Sunday, the building of a city; and on the last Sunday, the gathering of a people.

In the gospel passages there is also a progression leading to Christ as king. This Sunday, Jesus hints at resurrection by calling God the God of the living. Next Sunday, Jesus points to himself as the focus of a people whose former temple has passed away. On the last Sunday, the Christ has won kingship at a terrible price.

This third Sunday is the climax of the Churches' year as we come together, with Christians all over the world, to celebrate the wonderful day of “Christ the King”. Since last Advent Sunday 2021, we have been working our way through Luke's Gospel (with huge hunks of John thrown in!). In four weeks' time, we will again celebrate Advent Sunday with the Gospel of Matthew (again with John) for the next twelve months. More about that later.

So if you are not in the habit of reading the scripture passages before you come to worship, now may be a good time to start. And where do I find them, you may well ask?! Just look on the Diary page of our “Contact” (that which has your undivided attention now!) and you will see them all ready and waiting just for you!

May God bless you all as you continue your pilgrim journey with Jesus!





Notes from Church Council Chairperson

The Church Council met this week on 1 November, All Saints Day. All Saints Day is a day set aside to remember and celebrate all those through whom the glory of God has been revealed. They may be people who have been recognised saints of the Church like Mary Magdalene or St Frances. They may be people who have loved God and others in extraordinary circumstances like Mother Teresa or Marin Luther King Jr. They may be ordinary people who have lit your path of faith like a family member, or a member of our own congregation. Who has been a Saint in your life?

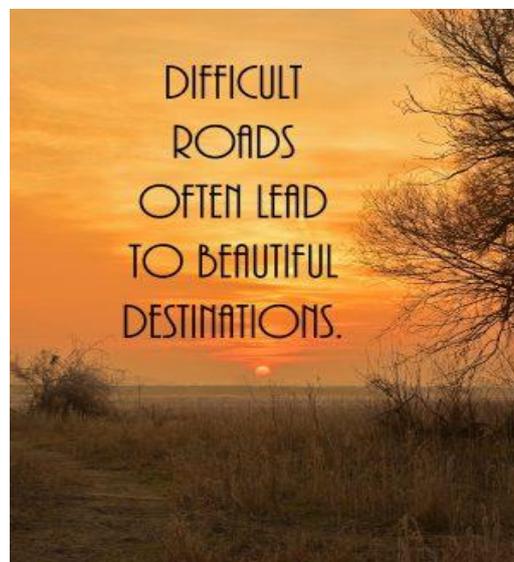
Matters discussed at our meeting included:

- Pastoral matters including updating our Elder's list now that we have two less Elders. Members of the congregation who are gifted in pastoral caring will be approached to support the congregation and Elders as Pastoral Carers. See article from Sue Pepper in this Contact.
- Holiday Kid's Club will carry on next year with a reduced number of children. Thanks to Cathy and her team for this valuable ministry.
- The Church Council has applied for a \$10,000 grant from the Hunter Presbytery Mission Fund. A grant will be used to pay for a property study on the Garden Suburb and Charlestown properties to determine possible uses and income earning potential. This study would then be used as a reference in our decision about which of these two properties will be used to generate an income to support the "Neos" mission of the congregation. Please pray for wisdom and compassion for the Church Council and congregation as we move towards this significant decision.
- "Neos" requires a small support team to be operational early in 2023. This team of 4-5 people will consist of members of our congregation and beyond, who have an interest in Mission. This team will be a place for discussion, for bouncing around ideas, for practical assistance to the Minister and others working on "Neos", and a place for prayer. Please prayerfully consider whether you might be called to serve in this way. (See article in this Contact).

Blessings to all

Anne Threlfo

Ph: 0439 754 376 Email: annethrelfo@gmail.com

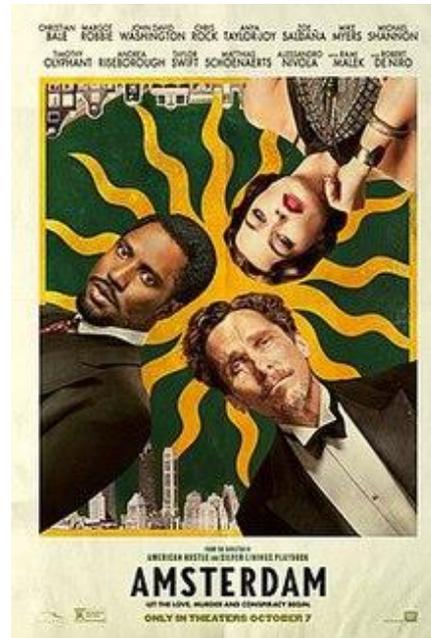




Next Charlestown Friendship Circle
is on 12th November at 2.30pm
at Lake Cinema Boolaroo
to see "Amsterdam"

All Welcome

If you require transport contact
Sue Warren on 0427 737 793



Some of our Church Contacts:

Minister

Rev Tom Stuart
M: 0427 625 502
E: tom@thestuarts.id.au

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

Administration:

P: 4943 4019
E: office@charlestown.unitingchurch.org.au
24 Milson Street, Charlestown NSW 2290
PO Box 449, Charlestown NSW 2290

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>