CONTACT

Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting Church Multi-Centre Congregation

1 November 2026

From Rev. Tom

Halloween is coming up this Saturday, 31 October, and some of us may find ourselves answering the door to children dressed in all manner of strange and frightening costumes, hoping for a treat! I suspect many of us are somewhat resistant to Halloween. At best, we see it as another American import; at worst, as something pagan, perhaps even a little demonic. But its history is rather more interesting than we might imagine.

In the eighth century, Pope Gregory III established 1 November as a day to celebrate all the saints. The evening before became known as All Hallows' Eve - eventually Halloween. Its timing coincided with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, associated with the transition into winter and traditions surrounding the spirit world. In earlier societies, death was a much more visible part of everyday life. Christian traditions surrounding All Saints' and All Souls' Days provided opportunities to remember the dead, celebrate their lives and reflect on our own mortality. Medieval customs included visiting neighbours, sharing food and offering prayers for the departed.

The Protestant Reformation rejected much of the theology associated with these practices. Perhaps, in some respects, we threw out the baby with the bathwater! Nevertheless, the customs continued in community life, eventually developing into the Halloween celebrations we recognise today.

But I wonder whether Halloween offers us another opportunity. We live in a society that seems increasingly intolerant of difference. We are quick to dismiss, judge or distance ourselves from practices and people we don't understand or appreciate. Yet surely the Christian impulse is quite the opposite. We are called to welcome, to engage, to extend kindness - particularly when those at our door are simply children enjoying themselves.

Perhaps we don't need to approve of everything associated with Halloween to participate in something good. A smile, a friendly greeting and a few treats might be a small but meaningful expression of Christian hospitality. And perhaps, in future years, we might even find creative ways to share something of Halloween's Christian heritage. For now, **let's simply be good neighbours** after all, that is the heart of the Gospel.



DIARY

Thursday 29 October
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
Saturday 31 October
2.00-4.00pm GO ALL ELECTRIC & START SAVING AT HOME is on at the Milson St Hub (see more information further in Contact)

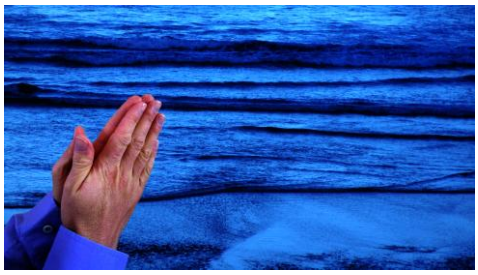
NOVEMBER

Sunday 1 November – All Saints Day
9.00am The Divine Worship
Leader and Preacher: Rev'd Tom Stuart
Revelations 7:9-17; Psalm 34:1-10, 22: 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12
Monday 2 November
10.00am Pastoral Care Visitation at the Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility
Tuesday 3 November
10.00am Pastoral Care Visitation at the Garden Suburb Aged Care Facility
10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square
Thursday 5 November
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 8 November – Pentecost 24
9.00am The Divine Worship
Leader and Preacher: TBA
Joshua 24:1-3a; 14-25; Psalm 78:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13
Tuesday 10 November
10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square
Thursday 12 November
10.00am Morning tea in the Community – common seated area at Charlestown Square
10.30am Worship Service at Garden Suburb Aged Care
1.30-2.30pm Advent Bible Study in the Dudley Room at Milson St Hub
Friday 13 November
6.00pm Ladies Night at Kahibah
Saturday 14 November
9am-12.30pm Quiet Morning at the Milson St Hub (see more further in Contact)
2.00pm Friendship Circle at Milson St Hub – Games and Afternoon Tea (see more details further in Contact). All Welcome

Sunday 15 November – Pentecost 25
9.00am The Divine Worship
Leader and Preacher: TBA
Judges 4:1-7; Psalm 123; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30
Tuesday 17 November
10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square
Thursday 19 November
10.00am Morning tea in the Community – common seated area at Charlestown Square
1.30-2.30pm Advent Bible Study in the Dudley Room at Milson St Hub

THE PRAYER PAGE



Prayer is the Voice of Faith

Pastoral Prayer Points

* Pray for Marion Joyce and family
* Pray for Brian Cox who is in rehab
* Gloria
* Anne Hall
* Jean Witherspoon
* Pray for Janice Wright and family
* Robyn Greaves and family
* Marion Box
* Prayers for Grahame Beeton and family
* Mert and Pam
* Jacqueline Fenwick
* Rene Kelly
* Valmai
* Kelly
* Tony Sellen
* Vicki
* Pam and Ken
* Lyn Benson
* Jean
* Isabella
* Eileen Dunn
* Max
* Don Humphries

Maintained by SFED

Congregational Prayer Points

- Month of October, Prayer for the Way Ahead 10:45 am each Sunday
- 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

- Churches to pray for this month are Singleton-Branxton, Tarro, Tea Gardens, Toronto and Wangi Wangi.
- 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.
- 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

The Way Ahead Prayer Month

The Congregation is encouraged to continue the month of prayer by praying for –

- staffing for next year and
- for a clear sense of mission within the Milson St. Hub
- Also pray for relationships with the neighbours, with the users of the building and the car park.

Children & Family Worker Update



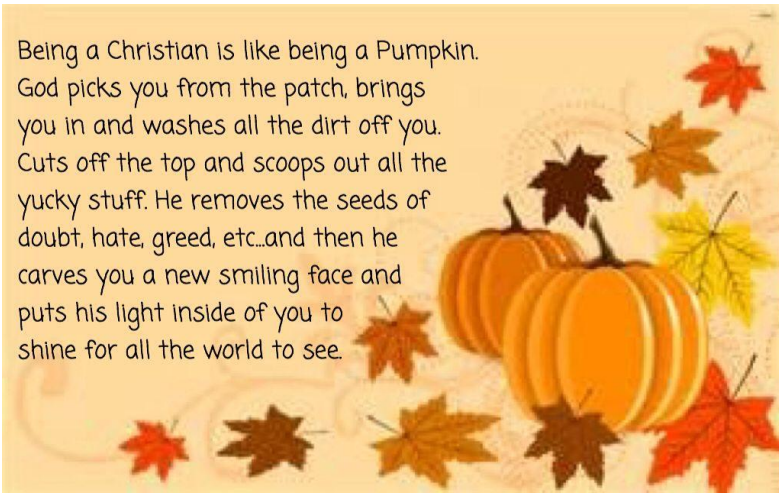
This Saturday is Halloween & even though I know many of you hate the thought of Halloween, I would like you to think of the children that may visit you on Saturday Evening.

To them it is a time to dress up, have fun with friends & possibly get sweets, wouldn't that have been exciting for you when you were little.

So, if you have children knock on your door or pass by your house, put a smile on your face & enjoy the company for the short time they may be with you, if you can give a small treat. And remember the verse I have included.

Have a great week

Cathy



I've moved

Jacqueline Fenwick has moved:

Room 3, Arcare
2B Maude St, Belmont NSW 2280

Phone: 4033 8203

Go All Electric and Start Saving at Home

Next Saturday 31 October 2026 2 to 4pm at The Milson Street Hub

This event will address all the stages as you move from basic home modifications and changes of energy and habits to more efficient appliances, bigger home modifications. Solar power panels, storage batteries and electric cars and chargers. The importance of getting the best from each stage to complement what happens in the next stage will be explained. And be there for the end of the afternoon with a sausage sizzle from a grill powered by an electric car. Use the QR code on the poster or tell Paul Russell on 0411 236 047 if you are going.





Friendship Circle

Will meet at the Milson St Hub

on November 14th at 2pm

for Board and Table Games and Afternoon Tea.

All Welcome



SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF THE WEEK

Solitude: The practice of solitude involves scheduling enough uninterrupted time in a distraction-free environment that you experience isolation and are alone with God. Solitude is a "container discipline" for the practice of other spiritual disciplines.

Practice: Make the time you spend in the shower each morning your alone time with God. Present yourself to your Creator— all of your body, all of the dirt that has accumulated in your soul, all that God has made you to be. Let the water from the shower remind you of the water of life that nourishes and changes you. Let the warmth touch you with love. If you like a cold shower, let the bracing impact call you to live your life to the full. Offer yourself to God for the day. Thank him for the alone time he spends with you.

These resources come from Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us (Transforming Resources). InterVarsity Press



This is a 4-week Bible Study series for Advent. All are welcome.
Resources are NOW AVAILABLE in the church foyer.



All are welcome to join in this peaceful morning of reflection, prayer, and spiritual renewal. Through quiet moments, Scripture, creativity and reflection, we will draw near to God and be refreshed by God's living water. Come and pause, be still, and allow your spirit to be nourished and renewed.

Register using the QR code, this link: https://events.humanitix.com/living-water-a-time-of-spiritual-nourishment or contact Anne Threlfo.



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

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