

Monthly update

The Uniting Church in Australia

St Luke's Congregation, Highton



July 2022



The refugee ministry has been a significant aspect of the life of the St Luke's Congregation for many years. As you probably are well aware, one aspect of this ministry has involved helping refugee families restart their lives in this land through the provision of recycled goods. Many people in the congregation have generously supported this ministry by donating all sorts of household items. This has often happened when people have decided to downsize.

I have had quite a few conversations with people about the challenge of downsizing ... about letting go of things or more accurately deciding what to keep. It is one of the profoundly unusual and yet core teachings of the Christian faith that life is found in letting go.

As Jesus said, "... unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12:24). His words, of course, relate to his own life and in particular his crucifixion.

Abundant life is found paradoxically through a willingness to share ... to give.

Throughout the whole arc of the narrative of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, we are constantly reminded about the God who gives: the God who creates, the God who leads the people of Israel, the God who sent the Son out of love for the world. We are called to respond to the giving God by giving of ourselves.

It is healthy to regularly reconsider what we can offer in response to this call. There are seasons in life when we can offer more time or more of our gifts ... and other seasons when this is not the case. Whenever we restart a stewardship program this is a wonderful opportunity for such reflection: to consider how we use our time, gifts, resources, and money.

St Luke's, like many congregations, faces significant opportunities and challenges as we journey into a new chapter of mission and ministry. The "Salt and Light" mission planning process offers a vision of the Congregation being open to the wider community by building on the already existing ministries. Even in the face of secularisation the church, and St Luke's in particular, has a role to

Office administrator: Robyn Hodge.

Office open hours: Tuesdays and Fridays, 9:30am–12:30pm

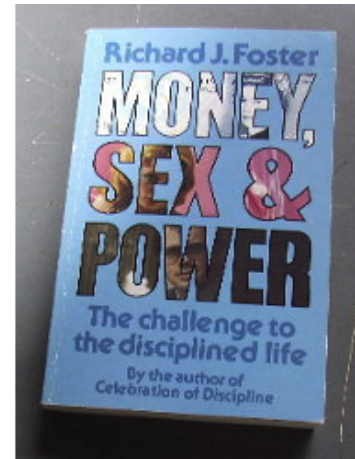
continue to offer worship, witness and service in the name of Christ and the power of the Spirit.

The last time I wrote one of these reflections on stewardship, in the pre-COVID days of 2019, I included a quote from a book by Richard J Foster about Christian discipleship. This book was written way back in the 1980s and has the evocative title of *Money, sex and power: the challenge to the disciplined life*^[1]. Foster has some challenging things to say about these three topics which are still relevant. I thought his words were worth repeating. (See the text box below).

He states bluntly that discipleship includes considering the use of money.

Supporting the ministry of the Congregation financially should not be something we avoid as a topic. It is an aspect of our response to the giving God.

In his book, Richard Foster notes that Jesus wasn't scared to talk about money and indeed that Jesus spoke about money many times. Foster claims Jesus reflected about the use of money "... more frequently than any other subject except the kingdom of God." Foster also points out that one of the freeing things about giving is that the question is not "How much of my money should I give to God?" but "How much of God's money should I keep for myself?" And, he quotes the great reformer Martin Luther, who was never one to beat around the bush, and who observed that, "There are three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, the mind, and the purse." (See pages 19,42, and 44)



"Giving" in the broadest sense of the word is life-giving, both for those who give and those who receive. May we continue to both graciously give and receive in the way of Christ.

^[1] Richard J. Foster, *Money, sex and power: the challenge to the disciplined life*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1985.

A Stewardship Prayer

Lord, giver of life and source of our freedom, we are reminded that Yours is "the earth in its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it." We know that it is from your hand that we have received all we have and are and will be. Gracious and loving God, we understand that you call us to be the stewards of Your abundance, the caretakers of all you have entrusted to us. Help us always to use your gifts wisely and teach us to share them generously. May our faithful stewardship bear witness to the love of Christ in our lives. We pray this with grateful hearts in Jesus' name. Amen

[Microsoft Word - Stewardship Prayers-web page.doc \(dio.org\)](#)

Paul Stephens, Minister in Placement

Coming Services

9.30 am Service Sundays

10/7 Focus on Stewardship. (Worship leader: Paul Stephens)

17/7 Holy Communion. Conversation with Shaghek Qassabyan about her role. (Worship Leader: Paul Stephens)

24/7 Guest speaker: Chris Machar from Armstrong Creek ministry (Worship leader: Paul Stephens)

31/7 Guest worship leader: Rev Robert Van Zetten.

Website: stlukesuca.org.au **Email:** info@stlukesuca.org.au **Ph:** 5244 2997

Mid-week Service: July 14th at 1.30 pm

Messy Church ... Coming Up: Sunday August 7th at 4 pm

Congregation News

Mission Outreach

St Luke's Chapel Collectibles: Christmas in July

On Friday afternoon 15th July and Saturday morning 16th July we will be featuring **Christmas in July**. Last year's event was overwhelming and we look forward to another amazing display of all sorts of Christmas items. If you are planning to change your Christmas decorations this year and don't know what to do with your old decorations – drop them off to us and we will try to sell them and raise money for our needy newcomer families. That is what our Collectible sales are all about Raising much needed money to support people in needan important way to live out St Luke's Mission within our community.



July opening: Friday 15th July between 1pm and 4.30pm.

Saturday 16th July between 9am and lunch time.

On both days we will welcome back the **Cottage by the Sea** ladies selling jams, sauces, pickles and Christmas food. There will also be sales of paintings, books, plants and furniture.

Once again we continue to thank our small team of volunteers, and of course Men's Shed who consistently respond to our many requests for help to upgrade our displays. Our customers are thankful that we have a Credit Card facility available.

Why don't you plan to pop into the Chapel, bring a friend, and say 'hello' and take a look at our Collectibles. A warm welcome, and a surprise awaits you.

Linda Salamy and Rae Anderson – Collectibles Co-Ordinators.

Mobile: 0413 888 884

Migrant Womens' Sewing Group



We meet every fortnight on a Friday from 12 to 2.30 pm. Next date is the 29th July as we do not meet during school holidays. We also have child minding.

Women from the congregation are very welcome to come and chat and improve our English conversation.

For further information please ring Shaghek on 0404328233.

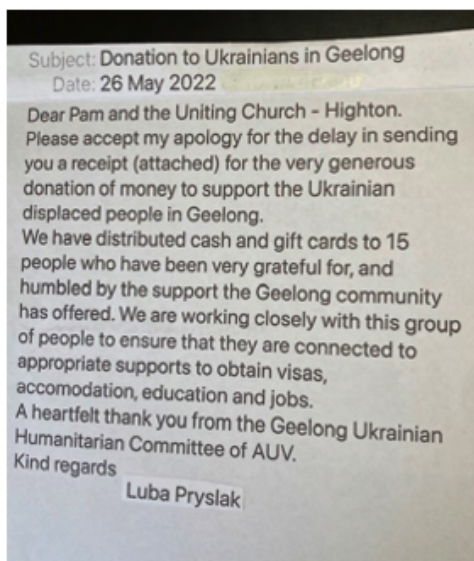
Claire Zeigler

Thank You

Website: stlukesuca.org.au **Email:** info@stlukesuca.org.au **Ph** 7



At the end of April, following an appeal for help, Barbara Murphy and Pam Seller delivered a generous donation of money and shawls, from the St. Luke's congregation, to the Ukrainian Committee to support recent arrivals from that war torn country.



Opposite is a copy of the letter of appreciation received from the committee.

Just one of the challenges faced by new arrivals is that to be granted temporary Humanitarian Concern visas they have to pay almost \$2,000 for a health examination for a family, many having arrived with nothing this is one of the challenges the local Ukrainian group are assisting with, as well as visa application legal requirements.

Pastoral Connections

“Do this in remembrance of Me” (Lk 22:19)

Have you ever wondered what the process is for the preparation of communion? Judy Clarke is the communion facilitator on behalf of Pastoral Connections. Each month Judy provides and prepares the elements before ‘setting’ the Lord’s table with a cloth designed by Jenny van Ginkle, a former member of St. Luke’s. The bread plates and juice trays were made by some of our saints from previous times and the chalice used was crafted by a local potter.

The item pictured at right, is used to fill the small communion glasses. The tube is placed into the juice and the hand pump is worked to activate the suction necessary to fill each of the glasses with exactly the right amount of juice. Over recent months, while seated, the communion bread has been served using tongs and individuals serve themselves from the juice trays, thus ensuring a COVID safe delivery.



Following the service, the collected glasses are placed on a special dishwasher tray and covered with a mesh screen to prevent their dislodgement during the washing process.

Home Communion

Several times a year Rev. Paul, along with a support person, is called upon to offer a home communion. This can take place in a nursing home, hospital or individual’s home. Paul prepares an Order of Service which enables the participation of those present and can be used for future reference and reflection.



The late Keith Shrimpton, with the help of Men’s Shed, designed and crafted a compact case to transport the necessary communion items and is easily set up in small areas. Keith’s wife Rae, made the cover which protects the case and also makes it convenient for transportation. Pictured above is a home communion, set up ready for serving. At right is the ‘kit’ built by Keith and Men’s Shed along with Rae’s cover.



Delivering Home Communion has been made more difficult during COVID as there have been strict regulations for entry with masks, and face shields, along with temperature checks and much paperwork being required.

It is a privilege to be invited to serve communion at any time, but more so when it has special meaning for someone who may be housebound or unwell.

Pam Seller

July Prayer Requests (from Wednesday Prayer Time)

Praise and Thanksgiving

- We give thanks for the beauty and moods of nature. The bulbs popping up, the full moon, the Cootamundra (winter flowering) wattles and the lingering colours of scattered autumn leaves.
- Give thanks for the life and witness of Marilyn Gilbert, Maurie Redfern and Robert Tantau, all of whom recently passed away but have contributed to the life of St. Luke's at various times and in various ways. How thankful we are that we can serve and support the families of those suffering such loss through hospitality and pastoral care.
- Praise God for the medical facilities and specialists that are available to us here in Geelong. Their availability and the expertise of medical staff that we so often take for granted.
- Thankyou Lord for those people in the congregation who step forward in so many areas when asked to help.
- Praise for the many groups that have recommenced at St. Luke's during the past few months. Men's Shed, Coffee and Chat, Seekers, Mid-week, Repair Café, Pastoral Care, Mission Outreach, Refugee support, Collectables. To name just a few. We give thanks for the leaders and helpers that continue to keep these groups moving forward.

General Prayers

- Our prayers are for people who have been displaced, by war, drought and/or climate change. We think especially of the people of Ukraine and Afghanistan where war and natural disaster have brought tragic consequences. Again, we uphold the humanitarian workers trying, in often dangerous situations, to assist and support the many people in need.
- Thoughts and prayers go out to those who are grieving, recovering from surgery, receiving treatment, awaiting results or anyone who is lonely. May we be aware of those situations in order to offer help or support in any way.
- Lord, we ask your peace and grace for Uniting church Synod Vic as they meet. May they be led by the spirit to faithfully bring your word and truth to many and through our actions may they see your face shine forth .
- We pray for the leaders of St. Luke's. For Paul as he prepares services, visits those who are not well and supports a number of families, who are grieving. We ask that our church council members and group leaders may have wisdom and be encouraged to seek God's guidance as they continue to faithfully serve our congregation.

Pam Seller

OUR PRAYER FOCUS FOR THIS MONTH.

REFUGEES. (Refugee week 20-26th June)

<p>Prayer for Refugee Week By - <i>Abi Benham-Bannon</i></p> <p>God of peace, Bring light to the dark corners of hearts, To the violent shadows of our world, whose power crushes down, inflicting suffering, pushing so many out of their lives and out of their homes.</p> <p>God of welcome, Bring warmth to the hearts of the homes to which they flee, May they find safety and comfort, In open arms.</p> <p>God of liberation, Bring freedom for all people locked up by cruel policies, From the bars which bear down on their souls, Freedom to walk the land, to live a life. Freedom of spirit.</p> <p>God of justice, Open our eyes and give us the courage to call for change, For a country that rejects cruelty and violence, That puts down its fear, and chooses welcome.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">AMEN</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Facts</p> <p>89.3 million people were forced to flee their homes Among them 27.1m were refugees ½ of whom are under 18 years of age.</p> <p>1 in every 88 people on earth have been forced to flee their homes.</p> <p>7.7m Ukraine 6.8m Syria 5.4m Venezuela 2.8m Afghanistan 2.2m South Sudan 1.1m Myanmar 1.0m Dominican Republic Congo.</p>
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Readings for the Month

	1st Reading	Psalm	2nd Reading	Gospel
July 17 Pentecost 6	Am 8:1-12	Ps 52	Col 1:15-28	Lk 10:38-42
July 24 Pentecost 7	Hos 1:2-10	Ps 85	Col 2:6-15 (16-19)	Lk 11:1-13
July 31 Pentecost 8	Hos 11:1-11	Ps 107:1-9,43	Col 3:1-11	Lk 12:13-21
Aug 7 Pentecost 9	Is 1:1,10-20	Ps 50:1-8,22-23	Heb 11:1-3,8-16	Lk 12:32-40
Aug 14 Pentecost 10	Is 5:1-7	Ps 80:1-2,8-19	Heb 11:29-12:2	Lk 12:49-56