

Monthly update

The Uniting Church in Australia

St Luke's Congregation, Highton

October 2022



Response to the proliferation of Gambling in our city and country

In so many places in the Bible we are reminded that as the people of God we are called to strive for the best for the community as a whole. The people of Israel who were exiled in the strange land of Babylon were challenged by the word of the Lord that came to the prophet Jeremiah, (29: 7), to "... seek the welfare of the city."

Jesus calls us to love our neighbour, whoever that neighbour might be. And Jesus so often sought to bring healing for the broken, the rejected and the lost.

As Christians we thus cannot remain passive when we see deep hurts in our city and country. And clearly one such hurt is the damage caused by the currently uncontrolled nature of gambling.

At the Gambling Forum that St Luke's hosted on the afternoon of October 9th, Rev. Tim Costello addressed questions related to what can be done in response to this scourge. Tim currently is the public face and voice of The Alliance for Gambling Reform. (The Alliance national advocacy organisation which works to prevent and minimize the harm from gambling.)

In introducing Tim and the theme at this Forum, I made the following comments:

The Mission Outreach Ministry Team of this congregation was meeting a few months ago; and Sue Anderson the convenor handed out an article from *The Geelong Advertiser* which detailed the most recent mind-numbing statistics related to the amount of money being fed into poker machines in this region.

Office administrator: Robyn Hodge.

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

The group responded in the way many of us have in recent days with a deep sense of sadness about the damage being done to individuals, families and the community as a whole by the industrial scale of gambling in this city. There was also a sense of powerlessness.

All right, we know the statistics, what can we do about this disease?

As a couple of people have asked me, “What can you say to young males (and it is so often young males), who are still at school, who attend a footy match and use their phones to gamble on every aspect of the game?”

“What do we do about the proliferation of gambling advertisements on television, advertisements shown right through major sporting events, advertisements which clearly seek to normalise gambling.”

In recent days there have been many voices seeking action from governments.

In NSW, Stu Cameron, CEO and Superintendent, of the Uniting Church’s Wesley Mission and Sandy Grant, Anglican Dean of Sydney wrote an [open letter](#) to that state’s political leaders. This letter reminds the political leaders in NSW of the damage being done by gambling, notes that Australians are the world’s most prolific gamblers and also asks for a unity ticket on this matter in that State’s politics ... that all sides of politics would agree to do something.

A [segment on the 7.30 program](#) on Wednesday October 5th on the ABC underlined the strong tide of concern in the community about gambling advertisements and gambling Apps.

The St Luke’s Mission Outreach Ministry Team at that meeting I have mentioned felt it needed to do something and decided to organise the forum: a forum that was about “Next Steps.” And the Team was therefore so pleased that Tim agreed to make the trip to Geelong to address this topic.

You can watch the Forum on the Congregation’s YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJAL8289CyXTVBd-Y8dvT6Q>

You can find out more about the *Alliance for Gambling Reform*, with which the Uniting Church is formally associated, at www.agr.org.au



Paul Stephens, Minister in Placement

Image copyright: Pavel Danilyuk Pexels <https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-woman-sitting-on-the-couch-8057066/>

Coming Up

Paul is away from the evening of October 9th until October 31st.

Services:

October 13 th	Mid-week Worship	1:30-3pm	Led by Barry Tattersall
October 16 th	Sunday at 9.30 am		Led by Linda Salamy
October 23 rd	Sunday 9.30 am		Led by Rev. Tevita Holani
October 30 th	Sunday 9.30 am		Led by Rev. Robert Van Zetten.

Activities:

October 14,15	Collectibles	
October 21	Sewing group	12-2.30pm

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

Why the Difference?

This article was written by Mission Outreach member, Rex Rouse after the Black Saturday Bushfires of February 2009. He shared it with us at our recent Mission Outreach meeting.

“The recent bushfires have shown us the magnificent response by the Australian community in helping those who lost their homes and supporting those in their grief of loss of love ones. We all, in some way, knew someone who was affected.

I sat down, and thought, how inspiring it was in the way we responded. I then started to think “Why did we respond to the refugees’ plight so differently?”

Here we have the government, media, aid organisations and community all ‘pitching in’ to help the bushfire victims. Not so, for refugees (boat people). They too lost their homes, loved ones and their possessions. Many lost their lives fleeing, and those that made it to Australia were then put into detention for years!

Why the difference? Is it because they were not one of us? Is it because, maybe they look different? Is it because they speak a different language? Is it because they have a different religion? Or was it because of a persistent campaign to tell us they had no right to be here? We were repeatedly reminded that asylum seekers are queue jumpers and that the people in the boats are terrorists.

This is NOT true!

They are NOT illegals. Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, states that “everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.”

They are NOT queue jumpers. There are NO queues for people to jump. In Iraq and Afghanistan, there was NO Australian diplomatic representation.

That people in boats are terrorists is INCORRECT. Just 11 of more than 13 000 who sought asylum in Australia were rejected on “character grounds”. Only one was regarded as a security risk. He had come by AIR, not by boat!

Refugees are people who have feelings just like us, wanting to build a new life, to have security and NOT be persecuted. Let us embrace all who are in need.’

Rex Rouse



As mentioned this article was written in 2009 - has there been a change of attitude by Australians and our government? I don't think so. We have waited and waited.....a change of government who promised a different attitude is now with us. Not much of a change yet.....

We have members of our Church Family living on bridging visas which severely restrict them in numerous ways.

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A friend of Rex's, on a bridging visa, was granted permission by the previous government to visit his ailing mother in Sri Lanka. He had NOT seen her for 15 years. Two days BEFORE the election this was rescinded! WHAT?

Since the election his Australian wife has written of his case to the Minister for Immigration forwarded by our local member and Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles. Unfortunately the response has been in the negative. This newcomer to our shores was in detention for ten years because he was an asylum seeker, NOT because he was a risk to Australia's security.

Mission Outreach will be preparing a petition to deliver to Richard Marles about this situation and will be asking the congregations of Wesley, as well St Luke's and others to be supportive by signing it.



Sue Anderson

Congregation News

Mission Outreach



ST LUKE'S CHAPEL COLLECTIBLES

Another valuable month has passed and I am hoping that you will plan to come and visit our Collectibles on 14th or 15 October. Come and soak up memories of your families and friends as you walk around the Chapel.

The September opening featured an amazing collection of royal memorabilia with a special focus on Queen Elizabeth II. We will continue to display many items for your viewing pleasure.

Generous thanks continue to be showered over our many volunteers. Thanks to: Catherine Mullen who graciously accepted the challenge of cleaning silverware.

Val McKenzie and Alison Ralph who sorted many 'bottom drawers' of kitchen cutlery, and to Deb, Alison and Gill whose welcome surrounds all who visit the chapel. Men's Shed continue to respond when handy men are needed.

By now you will know that a collection of vintage, retro and eclectic treasures gathered from many families who were needing to declutter are now for sale in the Chapel. We raise money from sales to support our Refugee Ministry program, and we support Shaghek Qassabyan our Community Ministry Worker who is employed by our church.

So. How can you help? We are currently keen to increase our 'badge' collection. We would be glad to receive any old or unwanted badges.

OCTOBER opening: Friday 14th. October between 1pm and 4.30pm.
Sat 15th. October between 9am and lunch time.

Please come and see what is happening in the Chapel – then you can inspire your friends, family and neighbours to come in and enjoy every possible Collectible item from Tupperware, Crystal, Crafts, pottery, porcelain, wicker ware, mirrors, lamps.... the list goes on and on.

Linda Salamy & Rae Anderson – Collectibles Co-Ordinator

Pastoral Connections

SHINE FOR KIDS CAKE STALL

In September Pastoral Connections were invited to organise a cake stall to coincide with the Collectables Open Day on the Saturday 17th September.

Considering our brief time to coordinate this fundraiser we are extremely grateful to those ladies who baked and supported us.

The Saturday was very wet and cold and as a consequence there were not the usual numbers of visitors to the Chapel. However, with a follow up sale on Sunday morning we managed to raise \$511.00 for "Shine For Kids" an organisation that supports children and families who have a mother or family member in custody.



This amount was supplemented when those attending Coffee and Chat donated a further \$114.00 making our final donation \$625.00.

Thank you to everyone who contributed, by baking or buying. Your support is always appreciated.

Pam Seller

REMINDER: CHRISTMAS CARDS

CHRISTMAS cards are available from Valerie Grills following worship for the next 4 Sundays. Or by placing an order with Valerie by contacting her on 0438 139 424.

COFFEE & CHAT

Coffee & Chat is taking a break in October but will return on November 23 at 1.30pm at the Church.



PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayer requests received during Prayer gatherings throughout September 2022. Please use these prayer points as a reference for your prayer time.



Praise and Thanksgiving.

- Praise God for the blessing of new life as the season changes, for crops, flowers and baby animals, for sunshine, spring rains and winds to freshen the air.
- We are reminded and thankful of the wonders of modern discoveries and we give thanks for the researchers who work tirelessly to ensure outcomes that bring relief, healing and comfort to many.
- Praise for teachers as they continue to teach with enthusiasm bringing the joy of learning to young people. We also think of VCE students as they begin exams in two weeks. May they be calm and have self-belief as they reach for their dreams and may they be reminded that a VCE score does not define who they are, or who they can be.
- Thank you Lord, for all those family and friends who care and support us. May we find ways of caring for others.
- Lord, we praise you for the life and work of the late Queen Elizabeth and pray for King Charles and the family as they take up the responsibility of leading the nation.

General Prayers.

- Our prayers this month have been focused on Peace in all places of conflict where people feel powerless and oppressed. Lord, give them courage to stand up for what is right. Bring people into their lives to help, support and encourage
- Our love and prayers are with those of our congregation and who are unwell, receiving treatment, have experienced grief or loneliness. In particular we ask your peace for the Cations, Dawson, Tinney and East families. Grant them peace and strength to continue and let there be someone close who can support them during their time of need.
- Our thoughts have been with the homeless, hungry, abused, recent arrivals, along with those suffering from mental health and medical problems. We acknowledge and support the work that Shaghek does encouraging and assisting our new arrivals.
- We think of the survivors of the recent school bus accident. For the students, teachers, bus driver and first responders, as they process what happened, what they saw and the impact it will have on their lives.
- We pray for those suffering through the floods in Qld, NSW and NE Victoria and the people devastated by hurricane Ian in Florida USA, Pakistan floods and those killed in Indonesia and all South Pacific countries impacted by climate change.

ALL PRAYER REQUESTS ARE CONFIDENTIAL NAMES ARE MENTIONED ONLY WHEN SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED.



Readings for the Month

	<i>1st Reading</i>	<i>Psalm</i>	<i>2nd Reading</i>	<i>Gospel</i>
October 16 Pentecost 19	Jer 31:27-34	Ps 119:97-104	2 Tim 3:14-4:5	Lk 18:1-8
October 23 Pentecost 20	Joel 2:23-32	Ps 65	2 Tim 4:6-8, 16-18	Lk 18:9-14
October 30 Pentecost 21	Heb 1:1-4; 2:1-4	Ps 119:137-144	2 Thes 1:1-4, 11-12	Lk 19:1-10
November 1 All Saints Day	Dan 7:1-3, 15-18	Ps 149	Eph 1:11-23	Lk 6:20-31