

## *Monthly update*

### *The Uniting Church in Australia*

#### **St Luke's Congregation, Highton**

March 2023



"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God."  
Isaiah 40:3



#### **Preparing to Hear Anew**

It may be strange to find the theme of 'preparation' in a series of Lenten reflections. We are so familiar with that cry going up from John the Baptist – 'Prepare the way of the Lord!' – signalling the beginning of Advent.

But I don't see that Advent has any monopoly on it, because in these central seasons of the church, in Lent as much as Advent, what are we doing but preparing to meet the Jesus of our faith anew?

Not, in this season, the holy child in a backyard shed, but rather the crucified and risen One who is coming to us again, carrying the marks of a new world in his body. The Jesus of Easter.

This is essential preparation because Easter holds our best-loved but also most well-worn story. We have heard it year after year, generation after generation. It becomes familiar, and the overly-familiar can lose its power to compel.

Like Nicodemus, whose confusion with Jesus is on the Lectionary this week, we must prepare to always be born again into Easter – into its promise, into its challenge, into its power to speak with familiar words something never heard before. To let this ancient story call us by name with its fresh message for our moment in time. And in this, we meet the Easter Jesus of our faith along the way.

'Prepare the way of the Lord' is a call for many seasons in our lives, the life of the church and

of Christian communities. It is a call for our attention. At those critical moments in the story of God's people it has gone before, a signal that God is near and about to do God's new thing.

In Isaiah, it is a siren of hope to people in exile. Prepare for a new chapter in your story!

At Advent, it alerts us the Messiah is on our doorstep. Prepare for the arrival of the one we have hoped for!

In this season, it may be 'Prepare for the crucified and risen One!' Prepare to see again the presence of God in this suffering man, in whose death the worst we can do to each other is absorbed by self-giving love. He is coming again to redeem and embrace all we are with grace beyond our wildest imagining. Prepare to be changed.

### ***How will you prepare to meet the Easter Jesus this year?***

*Jesus of the Cross, prepare us to join you in the Easter journey, dying to the old and rising ourselves, bearing the marks of your new world. Amen.*

*Bethany Broadstock*

[2023 Assembly Lenten Reflections: Week 2.](#) Image: [Isaiah 40-3|Will Humes|Flickr](#) Lic:CCBY-NC-SA2.0

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## **Coming Up**

### **Services:**

Thursday 9/3	Mid-week Worship: Communion	1:30-3pm
Sunday 19/3	House Church	6:30pm

### **Activities:**

Saturday 11/3	Geelong Repair Cafe - Highton	1 - 5pm
Tuesday 14/3	Contemplative Tuesdays for Climate Justice	11-11:30am

*See details in Church web calendar*

Wednesday 15/3	Church council meeting	
Friday 17/3	Sewing group	12 - 2:30pm
Friday 17/3	Collectibles Sale	12 - 4pm
Saturday 18/3	Collectibles sale@Chapel-Ground-Chapel	9 - 12pm
Wednesday 22/3	Coffee & Chat@ Rolling Pin Cafe, Mitre 10, Sth Geelong	1:30 - 3pm

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## **St Luke's Church Council**

Meeting held Feb 15 at 7pm by Zoom.

In attendance: Paul, Sue, Shaghek, Mike, Robyn.

- Mens Shed MoU and grant still in progress. Synod following up legal issues.
- Kindergarten grant - Council monitoring progress.
- Safe Church training - relevant people to be contacted.
- Messy Church camp - Council will support people to attend if required
- Council along with Presbytery concerned about withdrawal of UCA presence in Norlane. Letter to be sent expressing our concerns.
- Pastoral Connections discussed how to keep connections with different families, Council to send prayer request to congregation and write to government encouraging further support for Turkiye & Syria.
- Resourcing Ministry: need to follow up maintenance issues
- Office Admin: clarify ongoing support and any issues.

**Mike Currie**, Council Secretary

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# Congregation News

## Mission Outreach

### ST LUKE'S CHAPEL COLLECTIBLES

**Raising funds for Refugee Ministry.** For more than 16 years here at St Luke's we have been supporting refugee families and individuals in the Geelong community. This support includes extending the hand of friendship, employment of Shaghek Qassabyan as our Community Ministry Worker, provision of furniture and household goods, English language, cooking and sewing classes, and more.



Funds raised from Collectibles sales go directly to continuing this most important outreach. Collectible sales are held regularly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday and Saturday of the month.

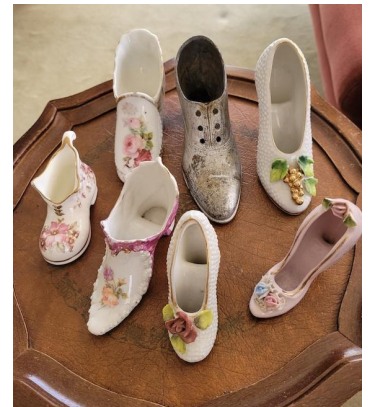
Our next opening is: **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March** (12 noon - 4.30pm) & **Sat 18<sup>th</sup> March** (9am -lunchtime).

If these dates don't suit you why don't you tee up a time with Linda or myself to arrange your own private viewing at your convenience.

Plan to visit the Chapel Collectibles this month. We have tables loaded with gift ideas – whether for birthdays, weddings, for grand-children or simply a gift to share when visiting friends for a cuppa.

This month we have new 'collections' that will give you much viewing pleasure:

1. Elephant collection.
2. Miniature Skateboards.
3. Porcelain shoes.
4. A telephone collection.
5. Crystal salt/ pepper shaker collection.
6. Vintage dinner sets – afternoon tea sets.
7. Carlton Ware collection.
8. Fine china cup/saucer/plates.
9. Badge collection.
10. Australian pottery.
11. Wedgwood collection.
12. Tea spoon collection.
13. Magnet collection.
14. Coloured glass ornaments and glassware.
15. Marble collection.



How can you help increase our saleable items? Firstly bring your friends to enjoy all that we do. Then, If you have any unwanted items in your house and you wish to declutter, why don't you think about passing them on to our Chapel Collectibles.

I continue to thank everyone for helping us make a difference towards enabling St Luke's to be a church that is attempting to live out God's mission in the community.

**Linda Salamy & Rae Anderson, Collectibles Co-Ordinators**

# Pastoral Connections

## TEAM NEWS

Can you believe that this January just past marked 5 years of Rev Paul's leadership at St Luke's? Although a lot of exciting events have happened under his leadership, last Sunday Pastoral Connections marked a more personal one with the presentation of a handmade shawl to new Granddaughter Rosie Lynn, on behalf of the congregation. Becoming a Grandparent is a special time- welcome to the club Jenny and Paul!

Also, you may have been contacted recently by someone from your Connections Team. If not, then you will shortly. In 2023, in order to enable us to care for our congregation on a more personal level, all members will have a contact person from Connections who is their first port of call if you need information, or have a concern that you wish passed on to Paul or the Prayer Chain, or indeed just want a chat! Let's see how it goes,

*Barbara Murphy, Connection's Team Leader.*

## MIDWEEK SERVICE REPORT 2022

During 2022, and after much consultation it was decided to move the start time of the midweek service from 2 pm to 1.30pm in the hope that we could miss the busy school traffic. This move has proved successful.

We had the pleasure of welcoming residents from Ryman Village during the year. The village provide a bus to transport those who are interested and there have been 5 or 6 residents coming by bus most months. During December we served 39 members a special afternoon tea and on average we have welcomed 35 members to each of the services during the year.

Our special events for the year have been shared Pancakes in March, June High Tea and our Christmas High Tea. We also had the privilege of celebrating 2, 90<sup>th</sup> birthdays.

Team members are Lyn & Max Robertson, Dorothy and Terry Ayrton, Alison John, Joy Hicks and Mark & Pam Seller. Don Slater is our usher, Val Mackenzie our pianist plus we have 5 cars that pick up those who need transport to the service.

2023 has begun and at our February service we had over 30 people attending.

If you would like to share with us or include a friend but need more information please call Pam on 0407 557 933.

*Pam Seller*



## THE JOY OF BEING BACK AGAIN

Twenty years ago, the St. Luke's study group approached the Kinder to ask if the children would be able to attend our Christmas Mid-week luncheon (yes, we had monthly luncheons back in the 'old days'), and to sing some Christmas songs for the 20 or so who attended.

Almost every year since, with the exception of during COVID, we have had some interaction with the children at St. Luke's Pre-school. This sharing has taken different forms over the years, ranging from them coming to us to sing, to us serving pancakes to the children and staff, and to Kinder inviting us to their room for a concert at Christmas. This year has been no exception, when we attended the Pre-school to serve pancakes. The teachers allow the children 2 pancakes each, the first round choices were mainly rainbow sprinkles, however the second choices were a little more adventuresome with some requests for maple syrup, honey, lemon and sugar OR chocolate sprinkles. 😊 All money raised is sent off to support Uniting Care projects. What a privilege it is to have this special interaction.



*Pam Seller*

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## GREAT OPPORTUNITY

If you haven't been out lately, no longer drive, wish to share in fellowship with like minded Christians, then this is for you! Our friends at Wesley Church GEELONG are offering you an outing:

**Wednesday 15 March to Werribee Park.**

All you need is your lunch money.

Wesley's Minister driven bus, will pick you up and deliver you home. 10 am - 3 pm

Please ring Sue Anderson 0412 081 608 if you would like to try.

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## Blessing

May the feet of God walk with you,  
and his hand hold you tight.

May the eye of God rest on you,  
and his ear hear your cry.

May the smile of God be for you,  
and his breath give you life.

May the Child of God grow in you,  
and his love bring you home.

*By Aub Podlich (1983) as used by Russell Armstrong last Sunday*

## Readings for the Month

	<i>1st Reading</i>	<i>Psalm</i>	<i>2nd Reading</i>	<i>Gospel</i>
<b>March 12</b> Lent 3	Ex 17:1-7	Ps 95	Rm 5:1-11	Jn 4:5-42
<b>March 19</b> Lent 4	1 Sm 16:1-13	Ps 23	Eph 5:8-14	Jn 9:1-41
<b>March 26</b> Lent 5	Ez 37:1-14	Ps 130	Rom 8:6-11	Jn 11:1-45
<b>April 2</b> Palm Sunday	Is 50:4-9a	Ps 118:1-2,19-29	Phil 2:5-11	Mt 21:1-11
<b>April 9</b> Easter Sunday	Acts 10:34-43	Ps 118:1-2,14-24	Col 3:1-4	Jn 20:1-18