

Monthly update

The Uniting Church in Australia

St Luke's Congregation, Highton

May 2023



The Lutheran – Uniting Dialogue

You may have heard me talking about heading off to the Lutheran-Uniting Dialogue in Horsham or more recently in Melbourne, and wondered what this was all about.

Since shortly after the formation of the Uniting Church representatives of the Uniting Church and the Lutheran Church of Australia have been meeting. As a participant in the dialogue for some years now, it is a wonderful privilege to share with leaders of another Australian Church. It is also interesting how in entering into such conversations you discover things about your own church's teaching that you were not aware of. For me this experience confirms that it is nearly always healthy to share with people with different perspectives and stories from your own.

The dialogue, in part, aims to reach a point that the two churches will be able to regularly share in ministry. There are many places in rural areas where the two traditions have small congregations, and it would be wonderful if an ordained minister from either tradition could serve these congregations.

The two traditions share much in common and a series of documents outlining what we hold in common and where we differ have been prepared over the years. These include documents such as:

- *Agreed Statement on Baptism* (1984)
- *Agreed Statement on the Church* (1988)
- *Agreed Statement on One Christ in Church and World* (1990)
- *A Great Prayer of Thanksgiving with Commentary* (2013), as a guide for cooperating LCA-UCA congregations, and as an educational tool in both Churches.

Most recently a document called *At the table* has been received and adopted by both churches. This document focuses on "The Lord's Supper" and actually is the first official document since

Union which includes a detailing of the Uniting Church's theology of the sacrament. (I am happy to share copies of it, and a study guide will be developed soon to help small groups explore its contents.)

Currently the major sticking point to our two traditions sharing in ministry is the Lutheran Church's position of not ordaining women. Many attempts have been made in recent times to change this at the Lutheran Synod and the Lutheran Church would value our prayers as they continue to journey with this matter.

You have heard me say it before and I will say it again, that in these increasingly secular times Christians should be working together more than ever. The dialogue is one small example of where this is happening, where Christians together are giving "... an account of the hope that is within us" (1 Peter 3:15)

Grace and peace,

Paul Stephens, Minister in Placement

Coming Up

Services:

Thursday 11/5	Mid-week Worship	12:30 - 4pm
Sunday 14/5	Sunday Service with Paul	9:30am
Sunday 21/5	Holy Communion	9:30am
Sunday 21/5	House Church @ home of Alison & Kenneth Ralph	7pm
Sunday 28/5	Combined Pentecost Service @ Wesley Church	10am
Sunday 4/6	Special celebration: music of Rev Bob McClelland	9:30am
Friday 9/6	Messy Church	

Activities:

Friday 12/5	Sewing group	12 - 2:30pm
Saturday 13/5	Geelong Repair Cafe - Highton	1 - 5pm
Wednesday 17/5	Church Council meeting	
Friday 19/5	Collectibles Sale	12 - 4pm
Saturday 20/5	Collectibles sale@Chapel-Ground-Chapel	9 - 12pm
Wednesday 24/5	Coffee & Chat@Rolling Pin Cafe, Mitre 10	1:30 - 3pm



4 May 2023



Dear Uniting Church communities across Geelong,

God be with you!

Our annual gathering for Pentecost is fast approaching, where we celebrate being the People of God together in this region. A few ministry agents across Greater Geelong have met to begin conversations about this gathering.

This letter extends an invitation for your church community to attend and get involved in the gathering. This year the service is being facilitated by the Greater Geelong Region. Wesley Geelong have kindly offered to host the gathering. Please save the date and encourage your community to attend and be involved.

We will again be sharing in a community choir and band, so if you like to sing, play an instrument, or know someone in your community who does, please pass this message on to them as we would love to have them join us for some music making!

A fellowship meal will be an intentional part of our worship and our time together for the day so all are encouraged to stay for that time. To create simplicity and make the most of our time together the meal will be catered and each community is asked to financially contribute towards the cost.

Pentecost Gathering Details

Hosted by: Greater Geelong Uniting Region

Date: Sunday May 28

Time: 10am

Suggested Dress: red, orange, yellow, white, gold or anything Bright!

Venue: Wesley Uniting Church, Yarra Street, Geelong

Music & Choir Rehearsal Dates/Times: Tuesday 16 & 23 May, 7.30pm at Wesley Geelong.

May God richly bless you over the coming weeks as we prepare and look forward to gathering with one another as a whole people of God across Greater Geelong.

In Christ's Fellowship

~~Yours~~ Amanda & Peter

On behalf of the region ministry agents

Congregation News

Mission Outreach

ST LUKE'S CHAPEL COLLECTIBLES

It's been another busy month for everyone raising money for our refugee support outreach. Our April sale days proved to be amazing as we doubled our floor space while using the Lane Memorial building. There we displayed a large range of vintage wall plates. Many had different themes of 6 or more plates in the series and we were delighted to showcase a large collection of Norman Rockwell plates which are still available for your viewing pleasure.

We have discovered that more and more shoppers return to buy birthday and other gifts, knowing that all monies raised support refugee and asylum seeker families.

During our May sale, there will be a large focus on craft, sewing and fabric sales. Splendid timing for indoor winter activities. Jewellery will also be featured for sale.

Special thanks this month go to Alison, Barb and Val who diligently sorted out many "GrandMa's bottom kitchen drawers." Sets of cutlery – knives, forks, spoons – plus wooden spoons, peelers,

graters, egg rings, chopsticks were in the mix. Now they are ready and waiting to be given to newcomer families.

We 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



Collectibles Sale
Raising funds for Refugee Ministry
Next Sale: May 19th & 20th

In May we will be featuring a sewing and craft related collection including vintage machines, vintage notions, fabric, knitting and crochet patterns, needles and hooks and various haberdashery items.

If you have anything in your stash you no longer require we would love to accept it and include it in the sale. Let your friends know too!

Donations can be dropped off on Wednesday mornings between 9.30 and 11.30 or by arrangement.

Feel free to contact Rae 0413 888 84 or Linda 0407 806 312

SPECIAL THANKS

A recently arrived Syrian family has now settled into their own rental accommodation in Belmont after much searching for a house to rent. Both teenage children – enrolled at Belmont High School in Years 11 and 12, needed to live in Belmont to take up their education at BHS and we are glad a suitable home became available.

It is almost impossible these days to study without any technical support, especially for newcomer families. Patricia, the Year 12 Syrian student, asked us if we had a pre-loved spare laptop which would help her with her studies. We are deeply grateful to Val Grills, her son Richard and his wife Leanne, who generously researched for the most appropriate Y12 BHS laptop and purchased a new computer for Patricia. When Patricia was told the night before shopping about Richard and Leanne's offer, her response was 'Oh, thank you..... I will not sleep tonight.'

With Shaghek's extra support of this Syrian family – we know that Patricia and her family will enjoy making their new home in Australia.

MATERIAL AID

White goods, frigs, washing machines, microwaves, irons, toasters, beds, linen, crockery, cutlery, saucepans, doonas and blankets.

Material Aid continues to be distributed almost every week day. As follows: Eight different ethnicities including Afghani (14 families), Australian (13 families), Eritrean (1 family), Iranian (2 families), Iraqi (7 families), Pakistani (1 family), Sri Lankan (2 families) and Syrian (13 families). These families come to us by 'word of mouth' or per Shaghek, our Community Ministry Worker. Most of the Sri Lankan families come via Michelle Filipovic, Shaghek's equivalent at St Paul's Lutheran Church, Grovedale.

A pleasing aspect is that some of the families who we have supported in the past, having established themselves in Geelong, now donate furniture to us.

The biggest problem is that we cannot accept all of the furniture donations as we just do not have the space to store it plus the recently arrived newcomers are finding it extremely difficult to find rental accommodation in Geelong. We continue to work closely with Uniting Barwon both in supplying specific items for some of their clients as well as passing on surplus for them to utilize. We are developing a close link with the new Norlane Op Shop for the supply of material aid. We also support Cultura (ex Diversitat) in furnishing houses that they rent for short term accommodation.

Rae Anderson – Member of Mission Outreach Ministry Team.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The [Week of Prayer for Christian Unity](#) is an ecumenical initiative in which Christians from all over the world belonging to different traditions and confessions, gather spiritually in prayer for the unity of the Church when Christians are reminded of Jesus' prayer for his disciples that "they may be one so that the world may believe" (see John 17.21).

In the Southern Hemisphere, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is usually held between the Day of Ascension and Day of Pentecost, another time to focus on unity (or at a time convenient to the local congregation/s).

Resources are now available for churches and congregations on the [NCCA](#) and VCC website. This year's theme is "Do good; seek justice" (Is 1:17).



Domestic and Family Violence Justice

May is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

As we long for all households to be places of nurture, safety and support, where violence against women is eliminated, join us this May in raising awareness of domestic and family violence.

It is a time for all of us to speak up about the dark reality of domestic and family abuse that is far too common in Australia. [Read this blog by Ellaina Welsman](#), where she reflects on the harrowing statistics from the latest Personal Safety Survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

You might also like to talk to your church about how you can use the [Common Grace SAFER resource](#) to better understand, identify and respond to domestic and family violence as a community.

Taken from Common Grace, May News Update



Documentary film for National Palliative Care Week



You are warmly invited to the Geelong screenings of *Live the Life You Please*, a palliative care documentary honouring and celebrating some amazing patients and their families as they prepare for a good death while still making the most of the life that they have, and the dedicated palliative care staff who support them.

The film has a national focus, but three of the patients whose stories feature are from Geelong, where they are supported by Barwon Health. Russell Armstrong, who has been attending St Luke's over the past year or so, pops up every now and then to talk about his work with them, and the place of spiritual care.

Live the Life You Please will change the way you think about palliative care. Told by medical professionals, patients and their families, it is an intimate portrait of the end of life experience and makes profound observations about life, death and what happens in between. *Live the life you please* boasts a treasure trove of incredible stories captured all around Australia, from cities and regional centres to remote communities. It will make you smile, laugh, laugh harder and occasionally shed a tear as it shares the stories of a diverse range of Australians experiencing their last chapter. Their powerful stories will show you that palliative care is more than medicine. It's about quality of life. It's about providing physical, social, emotional and spiritual support to patients and their loved ones. It's about embracing every moment and living the life you please until the very end.

Speaking about the film, Dr Dan Fleming, head of ethics at St Vincent's Health Australia said, "I wept most of the way through this film. It wasn't because it was about death, and nor was it because it recounts real pain and tragedy. It was because it was so beautiful. In an extraordinary way, *Live the life you Please* brings expression to the dignified and dignifying work of end-of-life care, with all of its joys and hopes which rest alongside grief and suffering. The film highlights that best practice end-of-life care can help to make the final chapter of life a beautiful one, and challenges our community to make best practice a consistent feature of our health care system."

There are two screenings to be held at **Village Geelong**, at **6:00 pm on Tuesday 23 May**, and at **2:00 pm on Sunday 4 June**. The screening on 23 May nicely aligns with National Palliative Care Week, and will include a Q&A panel.

You can see the engaging trailer for the movie at <https://livethelifeyouplease.com/>, where there is also a link for you to purchase tickets through Village. The producers Moonshine Agency have also been releasing a selection of excerpts from the film over the past few months through their Facebook and Twitter accounts, a number of which feature Geelong patients and Russell's work with them. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/LiveTheLifeYouPleaseFilm/> and <https://twitter.com/LiveLifePlsFilm> if you'd like to see and read more.

Russell Armstrong

Praise and Thanksgiving

- Praise God for our Palm Sunday, Mid-week, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday services. May the peace and joy of the risen Lord fill each and every heart with love for others.
- We give thanks for all mothers, the many who are no longer with us but have left special memories and traditions for us to treasure and pass on to our families, along with those who today, continue to share their wisdom and love with us.
- On ANZAC day we are reminded of the contribution, suffering and sacrifice made by so many serving men and women during the great war. We think of those who did not return and their families.
- Praise for Men's Shed, Seekers, Coffee & Chat, Mid-week, House church, Messy Church, Collectables, walking group, Sewing group. Thankyou Lord for those who attend, who lead and coordinate each of these events and the many others who are part of the fabric that binds us together.
- Our thanks to Catherine and Mike, who manage the admin. at St. Luke's. Thanks and praise for all volunteers who work tirelessly to support others and offer supportive care.

General Prayers

- Prayer for healing for those who are suffering pain, waiting for surgery, or recovering following surgery. We ask for reassurance and strength for anyone making difficult decisions either medically or personally.
- Our love and prayers go out to those members of our congregation, and others that we are aware of, who are receiving treatment or are awaiting test results. Grant them strength, patience, and peace of mind.
- We pray for the people in South Sudan, Ukraine, Russia, Myanmar, Syria, Iraq Yemen, Afghanistan and all war-torn cities and countries. Keep us aware of the needs of these people as we continue to pray for them.
- We pray for international relationships worldwide for truth and respect during discussion and negotiations, and that thought will be given to the wellbeing of the people living in dysfunctional, war-torn countries. Grant wisdom to leaders who are working towards world peace.
- Our thoughts are with aid workers helping victims of the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. We pray for their safety and for the needs of the people living in these areas, as they are ravaged by more quakes on a daily basis.

Pam Seller

Readings for the Month

	<i>1st Reading</i>	<i>Psalm</i>	<i>2nd Reading</i>	<i>Gospel</i>
May 14 Easter 6	Acts 17:22-31	Ps 66:8-20	1 Pt 3:13-22	Jn 14:15-21
May 21 Easter 7	Acts 1:6-14	Ps 68: 1-10,32-35	1 Pt 4:12-14,5:6-11	Jn 17:1-11
May 28 Pentecost	Acts 2:1-21	Ps 104: 24-34,35b	1 Cor 12:3b-13	Jn 20:9-23
June 4 Trinity Sunday	Gn 1:1-2:4a	Ps 8	2 Cor 13:11-13	Mt 28:16-20

The April meeting of the **St. Luke's Church Council** was not held due to lack of a quorum.