

## Monthly update

## The Uniting Church in Australia

### St Luke's Congregation, Highton



September 2023



#### **“Who do you say I am?”**

I asked the congregation during the service on August 27<sup>th</sup> to tell me what people beyond the church have to say about Jesus. I was intrigued to learn that the response was, “Nothing.”

Generally, people that congregational members associate with, who are not involved in the church, don't talk about Jesus at all. He is not on their “radar screens.”

This says so much about our culture! To state the obvious, for us Jesus is central to the way we approach life. This is emphasized in the readings from the Gospel of Matthew for August 27<sup>th</sup> and September 3<sup>rd</sup>. (They are respectively Matthew 16:13-20 and 16:21-28).

The first passage contains the challenge from Jesus to his disciples: “... who do you say that I am?” And Peter's response, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” (Matt. 16:16)

This presses us to answer for ourselves: **“Who do we say Jesus is?”**

The second passage contains another challenge: “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” In other words, following Jesus is about the way we live and may well cost us much.

Naming Jesus as Messiah/Christ and following him is foundational to our identity as Christians. It involves heart and soul. It means recognising that here is the fount of such powerful things as “hope,” “forgiveness,” “healing” and “new beginnings.” It is not something we do only on Sundays at 9.30 am. It involves embracing God's vision for the world.

It involves seeking to place Christ and his way at the heart of things for us as individuals and as church and as this planet.

**Paul Stephens**

*Minister in Placement*

## Coming Up

### Services:

Sunday 10/9	9.30am	Theme "Season of Creation" Rev. Tupe Ioelu from Wesley Paul will be leading worship with the same theme at Western Heights
Thursday 14/9	1.30pm	Midweek service
Sunday 17/9	7pm	House Church (Geoff & Judy Boehm)
Sunday 17/9	9:30am	Sunday service (Paul)      Holy Communion

### Activities:

Wednesday 6/9	1:30 - 3pm	Coffee & Chat
Saturday 9/9	1 - 5pm	Geelong Repair Cafe - Highton
Wednesday 13/9	7.30pm	Seekers group
Friday 15/9	12pm - 2pm	Sewing group
Friday 15/9	12pm - 4pm	Collectibles
Saturday 16/9	9am - lunch	Collectibles
Wednesday 20/9	7pm	Church Council
Tuesday 26/9	4:30 - 5:30pm	Environment Action group



# INVITATION

## SUNDAY 10<sup>TH</sup>

## SEPTEMBER



Pastoral Connections invite you to a **B.Y.O brunch to share** on  
Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September, 11.30am following worship and morning tea.

Family names beginning with -  
A to M please bring savoury      N to Z please bring sweet.

All ages welcome.

Over the next few weeks, you will receive an invitation to join us.  
If by chance your invitation doesn't arrive on time, please come along  
and celebrate as we join together as a faith community.

ALSO

We will reflect on the building and opening of the St. Luke's worship  
centre 40 years ago on August 7th.

If you have pictures or memorabilia of the building, opening or  
celebrations surrounding that time please bring them along  
on the morning to be displayed.

# Congregation News

## Pastoral Connections

### HOUSE CHURCH

St. Luke's House Church commenced in July 1997, in answer to requests from several parishioners and friends. It aimed to provide a small group opportunity for:

- Open and liberal discussion on issues of faith and life.
- Informal worship within a home setting.
- A sense of community and sharing and caring for each other.

House Church meets on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month from 7 to 9pm, with a 3 month winter break. Resuming in September.

A range of current issues and topics are discussed and we have welcomed many speakers of different faiths and backgrounds. A great deal of thanks is owed to Rev. David Manks who with the support of his wife Carol, co-ordinated and led this group for over 25 years. Unfortunately, David resigned from this role last year and a small steering group has been appointed.

For details contact Carole Findlay on 0429 349 189. A warm welcome awaits newcomers.



### Can you believe it? "Christmas Is Coming"

With this in mind Valerie Grills, on behalf of Pastoral Connections, will again have a selection of Leprosy Christmas cards during the second half of October into November. Cards will be arriving in mid October, and will be available following Sunday services and the Mid-week services.

For information or to order by phone call Barbara Cox on 0425 849 904.





## Mission Outreach

### ST LUKE'S CHAPEL COLLECTIBLES

We are very grateful for the very positive interest and feedback received from last month's Collectibles report in the church newsletter. Thank you readers.

August proved to be another interesting month for everyone connected, whether it be from our volunteers, new visitors to the Chapel or from the group who came and enjoyed morning tea and hearing about our refugee story, followed by a tour of the Chapel.

We now work towards September's opening days and because of our large range of collections, we will continue to use the Lane Memorial building to feature collections of vintage and retro hard to find treasures.

Our next opening in **SEPTEMBER: Friday 15<sup>th</sup>. Sep**, between 12 noon and 4.30pm; **Sat 16<sup>th</sup>.Sep**, between 9am and lunch time.

**The Chapel Room** – a welcome place for newcomer families – during August we welcomed up to 4 families each week who needed to refurbish their homes. Linen, bedding, pots and pans, crockery, cutlery, dishes, towels and furniture are needed. Shaghek, our Community Ministry Worker together with Ken, generously spend time helping these families. Thanks to Ken who kindly fills his van and delivers this very valuable material aid to the family homes.

**Men's Shed** continue to support our needs. A touch of paint, a broken lock, reworking a glass display cabinet, lifting heavy furniture – are but a few of our needs. Their members are always willing to offer a hand.

**This month special thanks goes to 'Joy'.** Joy - who asked if she could help! Thank you Joy, for taking home a basket of crumpled and/or soiled doilies. A few days later, we received a beautiful range of doilies returned in a pristine condition in readiness for our sale days.

**Do you know:** Every Wednesday morning, the Chapel is open to receive donations that go directly to needy families, or donations for our Chapel. Deliveries from decluttering families means that September promises to be full of surprises. Already we have received a new and very large collection from one lady who over many years collected 'Sale and Pepper Shakers'. Also a 'Toby Jug' collection, a retro smokers stand and a collection of 'red' glass that includes: bowls, sweet dishes, glasses, vases and jugs. We are aiming to display a 'gold' and 'blue' collection which should also provide some delightful viewing for visitors.

Be prepared for a warm welcome when you come and visit our Chapel Collectibles. No need to spend money, come and enjoy memories triggered from days of old.

**Linda Salamy and Rae Anderson** (Collectibles Co-Ordinators)

Mobile: 0413 888 884



# Where does this recycling go?

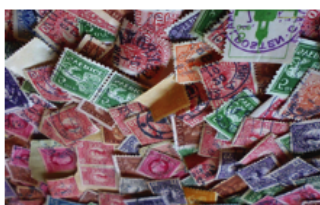
## Lids for Kids

In Victoria, our Lids4Kids Australia partners are the [Rethink Recycling Coop](#) and [Zero Plastics Australia](#) created by scientist [Adzie Slater](#). Please visit our partner websites to view the exciting range of products being created by their passionate innovative designers out of small recyclable plastic. Be sure join them on social media to share your ideas on how your rescued plastic bottle lids can be repurposed.



## Stamps for Kids

Volunteers across the country collect stamps in their community as part of the Lions Clubs International Stamp Club. All stamps are then sold and 100% of funds raised are provided to the Australian Lions Children's Mobility Foundation which provides mobility devices to children with cerebral palsy



## Toothpaste tubes

Once collected, the oral care is cleaned and separated by material type. The fibres and plastics are recycled into raw formats that manufacturers use to make new products.



## E waste

Computers and computer accessories that are in working order can often be refurbished with new software and some replacement parts. These repackaged computers are generally made available to low-income communities, individuals, and community organisations.

Electronic products that are collected for recycling generally undergo a manual dismantling process. The individual materials such as printed circuit boards, cables, glass and plastics are recovered and then processed so they can be used as raw materials to produce new products.



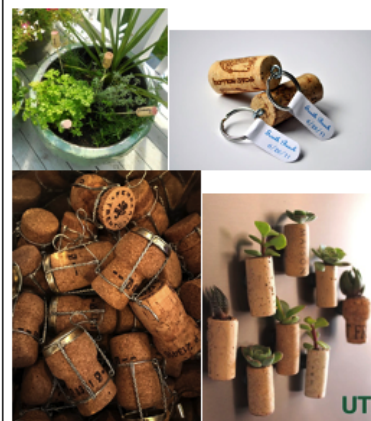
## Reading Glasses

We've launched a nationwide glasses recycling program in partnership with Lions Recycle For Sight that delivers quality glasses and sunglasses to people in need overseas.



## Corks

Corks can be composted (but only if they're a natural and not a synthetic cork) or turned into garden mulch. For both of these options make sure you shred the cork first to make it easier to break down. They are also taken to Kindergartens and Child Care for crafts.



# PRAYER REQUESTS

God's love is unconditional.



## Praise and Thanksgiving

- Praise God for each new day and the beauty of spring blossoms and bulbs.
- We are thankful and mindful of the pastoral care and outreach work that is being done by so many, to support those who are feeling lonely, those who are separated from family, and for our recently arrived families who continue to adjust and resettle.
- Praise and thanks for ministers and lay people who facilitate worship and continued to serve within the church and throughout the community. We pray that they will be granted patience, time, and a caring heart for all they serve.
- Give thanks for the safe return of travelers and for the celebration of new life and special birthdays.

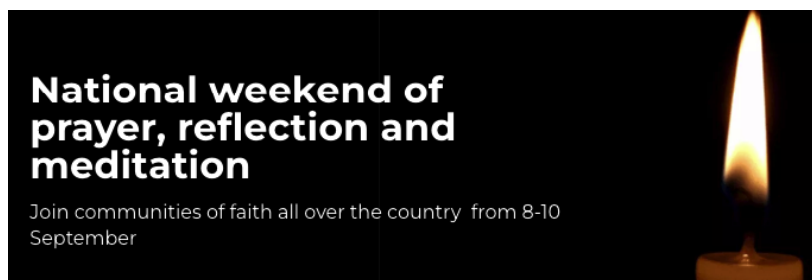
## General Prayers

- Special thoughts for those having to make difficult decisions regarding treatment, moving house or relocating to a care facility.
- Prayer for peace and calm leadership throughout the world as leaders of countries strive to gain power over others. We pray for those citizens living in war-torn countries, that they will find relief from the stress and worry they endure. Pray especially for the children and older people who have no means of escape.
- Lord, we ask for your guiding hand, as our year 12 students visit Universities and TAFE Institutes in preparation for post VCE courses.
- Please pray for the mental health of politicians, farmers, small business owners and corporate leaders as they struggle with difficult environment decision, that will affect the lives of many in our country.
- Our prayers are always with all of those we know of who are unwell, having treatment, recovering from operations or making hard decisions. These include Rex, Noel, Joan, Doug, Merv, Ian, Lyn, Graham.
- May they know God's peace and strength on the journey they are traveling.

**\*\*\*\*\*Reminder all prayer requests remain confidential\*\*\*\*\***

## Readings for the Month

	<i>1st Reading</i>	<i>Psalm</i>	<i>2nd Reading</i>	<i>Gospel</i>
Sept 10 <b>Pentecost 15</b>	Gn 12:1-14	Ps 149	Rm 13:8-14	Mt 18:15-20
Sept 17 <b>Pentecost 16</b>	Ex 14:19-31	Ps 114	Rm 14:1-12	Mt 18:21-35
Sept 24 <b>Pentecost 17</b>	Ex 16:2-15	Ps 105:1-6, 37-45	Phil 1:21-30	Mt 20:1-16
Oct 1 <b>Pentecost 18</b>	Ex 17:1-7	Ps 78:1-4,12-16	Phil 2:1-13	Mt 21:23-32



Communities of faith all over the country are invited to participate in a **National Weekend of Prayer, Reflection and Meditation** from 8-10 September to reflect on and pray for unity and hope in the lead-up to the Voice referendum.

In a historic collaboration, the Uniting Church has joined with other major religious traditions in setting aside this date to celebrate the wonderful opportunity for recognition and reconciliation offered by the landmark vote.

National religious groups first came together on 27 May 2022 to sign a Joint Resolution calling for bipartisan action to hold a Referendum on a First Nations Voice. Uniting Church President Rev Sharon Hollis was one of nine national faith leaders to endorse the Uluru Statement and its call for a Voice guaranteed by the Constitution.

As we approach the referendum, under this same alliance, communities of faith will again unite for a weekend of prayer, reflection and meditation which focuses on unity, reconciliation and healing.

Rev Hollis encouraged Uniting Church communities everywhere to take part in this national event which will unite people across different faiths and traditions.

“In the midst of what has been an extremely divisive debate, fuelled by messages of fear and hate, this is an extremely important and timely opportunity to stop and create spaces that make room for hope and unity,” said Rev Hollis.

“I encourage Uniting Church people as they gather for worship on this weekend to take a moment to pray for and reflect upon the referendum.”

“This is an opportunity for us to open your hearts again to what is at the core of the Uluru Statement – a gracious and generous invitation from the First Peoples of this country to walk together to a better future.”

“As followers of Jesus, and as people of faith, may we open our hearts to this invitation for a more just and reconciled nation.”

“This is also a time to hold in prayer First Nations people in this country who have been impacted by a torrent of negativity and racism.”

Three things Uniting Church communities can do across the weekend:

- Make time in your worship to pray and reflect on the referendum (Find prayer resources below)
- Share information with your congregation about the Voice (the Uniting Church has this two-page explainer and other resources here)
- Tell others about your gathering by sharing photos on your socials or email your photos to us.



The weekend's reflections will commence at 11am on Friday 8 September as representatives from Australia's Buddhist community embark on a 56-hour meditation, concluding on Sunday at 7pm.

## Prayer resources

### Why Say Yes

Proud Palawa woman from south east nations of *lutruwita*/Tasmania, Alison Overeem, offers this reflection on the whole campaign. Alison is the Advocate for the Walking Together as First and Second Peoples Circle. Artwork by Grace Williams, UAICC Tasmania.

*Why say yes?*

**At a time in our nation a Voice for our mob is much needed  
"why say yes" is my take on the whole campaign - Alison Overeem**

My voice and my family's voice  
and our family matriarch's voice, Fanny  
Cochrane Smith,  
is still here, on the lands, on the sands, in  
the waterways,  
in the forever time and all days.

May all the voices be heard  
May all the voices be upheld and stirred  
weaving and unweaving across lutruwita  
weaving and unweaving across milaythina  
mana mapali (lots of country)  
Whispering in the pungkatina (bush)  
Flowing, growing and all knowing from  
the muka (water)

The voices of the Muwinina people  
Of all knowing and all being ancient  
wisdom and knowledge  
Heard  
Held  
Felt  
The broken  
The unspoken  
The silence  
The colonial violence

A yes vote is a yes to all the stories woven  
in every footprint of 65,000 plus years  
Of struggle survival resilience and tears

If we say no  
How will we as a nation grow?

We know in people's takila (heart) the  
call  
is these ancient storylines and songlines  
of woven voices to be held and nurtured

For recognition and a voice for self  
determination,  
this is what a yes is for this nation.

This is a yes from the heart  
To weave together a pathway for  
restorative justice,  
truth and treaty - to weave us all  
together - not divide or bring us apart

This is a call for a yes from your heart

To kani (say) Yes is the first step  
to footprints of justice that will give  
voices  
to the policies of a nation  
weaving the threads of first peoples  
self determination

May our hearts be woven in the yes for  
a healing of a nation  
It's time  
It's now  
It's yes  
I hear my old people  
I hear the voices  
We can together be the shared  
weaving voice of the tirrina (basket)  
of new hope  
Let's weave together our shared voice  
and story

*Alison Overeem*

Proud Smith from south east nations of  
lutruwita/Tasmania