

Monthly update

The Uniting Church in Australia

St Luke's Congregation, Highton

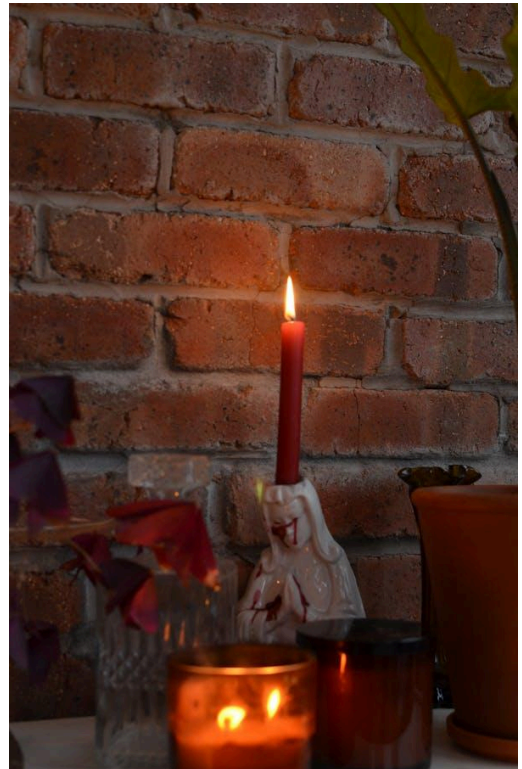
April 2024



House Blessing

A few weeks ago, I was asked to lead the blessing of a new house for a family associated with the St Luke's Congregation. I had done this before, but I still went hunting to see if I could find some helpful resources. I discovered that many Christian traditions from the Church of Scotland to various Orthodox Churches have developed services for the blessing of a house. These services usually involve moving from space to space within the house and offering a prayer related to each space.

The following are some of the prayers I adapted and used from a resource on the website of a parish of the Church of England. The order has frustratingly since disappeared from this website.[1] The last prayer is adapted from a blessing I found on a website of Celtic prayers.[2] You might like to use some of these prayers in your place of residence.



In the entrance hall

Loving Father, who sent your own Son to be born of a mortal mother and to live at Nazareth in a human house, bless this house and all who enter it. May it always be a place of love and peace. Give to the members of the household your good gifts of health and cheerfulness, of gladness and a contented spirit. May the door of this home be open to all reflecting your generous hospitality. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the dining room

Heavenly Father, you nourish and sustain us all through your creation, and your Son delighted to share food and drink with his friends. We ask you to bless this room so that meals may be shared here with generosity, delight, and thanksgiving. May those fed here with earthly food, come by your grace to share in your heavenly banquet. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the kitchen

Lord Jesus, who came to serve and not to be served, bless this kitchen and all the work done here. After your resurrection, you greeted your friends with fish that you had cooked. May those who cook and those who receive the outcome of the labour in this kitchen be blessed and have sense of your presence. Amen.

In the area near the bedrooms

Loving God, you neither slumber nor sleep, bless the bedrooms of this house. Guard those who rest within these walls. Protect them from all the evils of the night so being refreshed

*by untroubled sleep, they may wake to serve you truly in the work to which you call them.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

General Celtic Blessing of a House (adapted)

*Bless this house and those within,
Bless the giving and receiving,
Bless the words and conversation,
Bless the hands and recreation,
Bless the sowing and the growing,
Bless the coming and the going,
Bless all who enter and depart,
Bless this house, your peace impart.*

Paul Stephens

Minister in Placement

[1] Colwall & Coddington Churches (squarespace.com)
[2] Christian Blessings for a Home (faithandworship.com)
Photo: © Skylar Kang (pexels-photo-6044291.jpg)

Coming Up

Services:

Sunday 7/4	9:30am	Sunday Service with Rev Paul Stephens.
Thurs 11/4	1:30pm	Mid-week service. Rev Paul Stephens
Sunday 14/4	9:30am	Sunday Service with Rev Paul Stephens.
Sunday 21/4	9:30am	Holy Communion Rev Dr Kevin Yelverton
Sunday 21/4	7:00pm	House Church (home of Judy Clark)
Sunday 28/4	9:30am	Sunday Service Rev Peter Gador-Whyte

Paul will be (effectively) on long service leave from the 20th of April until Tuesday 25th June.

Activities:

Wed 3/4	1:30pm	Coffee & Chat
Wed 10/4	7:30pm	Seekers
Friday 19/4	12pm - 2pm	Sewing group
Friday 19/4	12pm - 4pm	Collectibles
Saturday 20/4	9am - lunch	Collectibles

Council News

Notes from Council meeting held **March 20, 2024** at 7pm.

- Paul led us in a reflection on the significance of the Easter triduum.
- Administration Coordinator: Helen Amos has been appointed and is settling in well.
- Cleaning contract to be reviewed.
- Centrelink: St Lukes is now a registered workplace for Centrelink payments.
- Manse issues: Action being taken on repair of Roslyn Rd balcony; Barrabool Rd sale still waiting on Synod action
- Transfers: Panel to be appointed to manage congregation transfers in and out. Official Church roll to be updated.
- Funerals: Council agreed that except in particular circumstances, St Lukes Church would not be used for civil funeral services.
- Security lighting and Chapel roof: Need for professional repairs to be assessed.
- Key security: Key register to be updated and distribution clarified

Next meeting to be held **June 6, 2024**.

Congregation News

Mens Shed

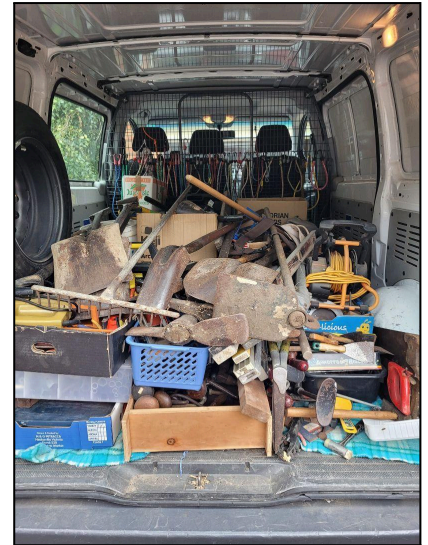
Pomonal Bush Fires – 19 March 2024

Pomonal is a farming community nestled in the foothills of the Grampians, not far from Hall's Gap. Try to imagine living in a street with 30 homes, a fire rushes through and past and 3 houses remain! In this community of 300 people, the blaze destroyed 46 homes and everything inside them.

Proudly though, our St Luke's Men's Shed hastily saw the need for urgent material aid. Within a couple of days, Ken and Ross filled Ken's van with a huge variety of tools and made the 600 kms round trip to deliver these items to the men connected to the Pomonal Men's Shed.

Mission Outreach in Action!

Rae Anderson



St Luke's Chapel Collectibles

Our next opening is on **Friday 19 April** between 12 noon and 4.30pm & **Sat 20 April** between 9am and lunch time.

Last month, the Chapel looked fresh and inviting after we placed many new items that had been generously donated by people who had been downsizing, and who were deeply grateful to know that sales from these items would become part of our ministry to refugees.

Chapel Collectibles – how it operates:

Many voluntary people make up the Team – some St Luke's members, others from within our Community.

1. Sales Team.
2. Wednesday Helpers Team.
3. Cleaning Team.
4. Silverware Cleaning Team.
5. Cutlery sorting Team.
6. Glass-ware cleaning Team.
7. Chapel Room weekly re-stock Team.
8. Men's Shed support.

Potted Garden Sales: We have a number of mature Camellia trees, plus many flowering pots and succulents for sale. Can you help us water once a week during summer? We would be glad to advise you that we had a **No.9. Gardening Team**.

This month, we welcomed Beryl, who happily gave us a couple of hours by helping sort and wash our drinking glasses in the Chapel Room. They are now looking dust free, shiny and new and waiting to go to needy families.

Probus Club Tour of Chapel: We have received another booking for June when we will provide a morning tea welcome, share our refugee support story, and include a tour of the Chapel Collectibles.

Final clean-up after every Saturday sale day: Messy Church folk are right on the top of our thank you list when it comes to helping pack up the Lane Memorial.

Jaber Zaktiti works solidly helping put out and put away tools and furniture every Saturday morning. While Ari and Lena with their family drive in from Clifton Springs to help pack up



and return unsold items from within the Lane Memorial. We cannot do without this kind of support and help.

Maybe you have been thinking of helping on an ad-hock basis? Then, why don't you have a chat with Linda or Rae – to find out what is possible for you.

Linda Salamy and Rae Anderson (Collectibles Co-Ordinators)

Mobile: 0413 888 884

Pastoral Connections

Midweek Pancakes

In March St. Luke's Midweek service enjoyed sharing Pancakes for a worthy cause.

On 14th March the midweek congregation met together for worship and an afternoon tea of pancakes, with various toppings that included maple syrup, sprinkles, honey, lemon or jam.

This month a donation was made for the pancakes and the money raised will be used at the Norlane and Grovedale Uniting programs to support those in need. I am pleased to report that an amount of **\$140.00** was raised, and has been forwarded, for these worthwhile services.



The Midweek service comes under the joint umbrellas of the Pastoral Connections and Worship committees. Our services are led by Rev. Paul and include hymns chosen by those who attend, prayers and a reflection on the readings of the week. Every second month we share communion and services are followed each month by an afternoon tea of homemade biscuits, generously provided by members of the Sunday congregation, and are supplemented by Devonshire tea midyear and Hi tea at Christmas.

We always look forward to welcoming new members and specialise in making everyone welcome. If you feel you could help us with transport, prayer support or biscuit making please contact **Pam** on **0407 557 933**.

Prayer Points

Below are prayer suggestions for you to reflect on during your quiet time.

Praise and Thanksgiving

1. Gracious God, we are forever thankful for times of celebration. In March we celebrated the baptism of Rosie, Emma and Peter's daughter and Paul and Jenny's granddaughter, also a highlight this month was the wedding of Amin Safarnehad to Maryam, Amin is the son of Azadeh and Farhad members of St. Luke's. Amid lots of celebrations we acknowledged Shaghek Qassabyan for the work she does as a non-placement pastor, at St. Luke's Highton, working with newly arrived refugee families in Geelong. Two milestones were acknowledged at our midweek service in March. They were, 70 years of marriage of Mary and Eric Thomas and the 90th birthday of Lesley Gunning. Lesley's special day will be celebrated at Winchelsea where she is now residing.
2. We give thanks for much cooler days and rejoice as the leaves begin to change colour heralding the arrival of Autumn..
3. Lord, we are constantly reminded of the timeless flow of hope and peace that has its source in you, and we pray that you will use us to be your ambassadors to act with grace and love for all that we are concerned for.



General Prayers

1. We pray for the innocent people throughout the world who find themselves caught up in political violence, where leaders seek gain for themselves and seem to care little for the welfare of their people. Pray for people in Gaza, Iraq, South Sudan, Myanmar, Ukraine and so many others who live with famine and the consequences of living in conflict areas.
2. Lord, we pray for our own country. For our leaders, that they will govern wisely and acknowledge justice and equality for all, that they may have a wide vision for what is most needed by those struggling within our community.
3. Gracious God, give comfort and peace of mind to those in our St. Luke's community who are hurting physically and mentally. For all who are recovering from treatment, awaiting surgery, seeking answers following tests and those caring for loved ones at home.

All prayer requests are confidential, names are mentioned only when specifically requested.

EASTER REFLECTION

Three trees once grew on a hillside, and as they swayed in the breeze, they would dream what they would like to be.

"I should like to be cut down one day," said the first tree, "and be turned into a baby's cradle."

"I should like to be cut down one day," said the second tree, "and become a great ship sailing the seas, carrying treasure and precious stones."

And the third said, "I should just like to stand on a hilltop and point people to heaven."

One day the woodcutters came along and cut down the first tree. "Let's make it into a cattle stall," they said. "But I don't want to be a cattle stall," cried the tree. I want to be a baby's cradle, but they turned it into a cattle stall, and when the child Jesus was born, they laid Him gently in that cattle stall. And the tree said "Why, this is far, far more wonderful than I ever dreamed."

The woodcutters returned for the second tree, "Let's make this tree into a fishing boat." "But the tree said, "No, I wish to be a great ship. They turned the tree into a fishing boat and put it on an inland lake. A fisherman called Simon Peter bought the boat, and Jesus sailed in the boat and taught the people from it. And the tree said, "this is far more wonderful than I ever dreamed."

The woodcutters came back for the third tree, and they said, "Let's make it into a cross." But the tree said, "I don't want to be a cross – a thing of shame where men die, I want to stand on a hilltop and point people to heaven." But they turned the tree into a cross and Jesus was nailed to that cross. So down through the ages, people have looked at that cross, and it has pointed them to God.

And the tree said, "Why, this is far, far more wonderful than I ever dreamed."

The Three Trees, a story by K.D. Harvey.



Easter symbols by Dorothy Bath

Presbytery and Synod News

Pentecost at the Dome

Over the last few years, the Geelong Churches have combined to host a Pentecost service. Last year a beautiful service was held at Wesley. At the recent Regional Networking meeting, it was proposed that the combined Pentecost service this year be held in the Dome at the Geelong Library, as a special place where we can shine our light to the world. St Lukes' Council at their last meeting agreed to support this through contributing to the costs of hiring the facility.



The Pentecost Service will be held at **10am** on **Sunday May 19**. You are all encouraged to join this combined event.

News from St David's

As many of you may know The St David's community has been exploring using The Geelong College Chapel for their Sunday Services and our first Sunday will be this weekend. We would love it if you would pray for us as we make this change and if you are able to send representation to our first service as a show of support that would be wonderful.

We have run into a problem with our live stream as we have had to move to mobile internet from cable and Youtube requires at least 50 subscribers to use mobile internet. Our live stream supports elderly people who are often not as able to do things like subscribing and we are currently at 16. It would be a huge help if you could go to <https://www.youtube.com/@SDONewtown> and click subscribe.

*Grace and Peace
Rev Will Nicholas*

Readings for the Month

	1st Reading	Psalm	2nd Reading	Gospel
April 7 Easter 2	Acts 4:32-35	Ps 133	1 Jn 1:1-2:2	Jn 20:19-31
April 14 Easter 3	Acts 3:12-19	Ps 4	1 Jn 3:1-7	Lk 24:36b-48
April 21 Easter 4	Acts 4:5-12	Ps 23	1 Jn 3:16-24	Jn 10:11-18
April 28 Easter 5	Acts 8:26-40	Ps 22:25-31	1 Jn 4:7-21	Jn 15:1-8
May 5 Easter 6	Acts 10:44-48	Ps 98	1 Jn 5:1-6	Jn 15:9-17