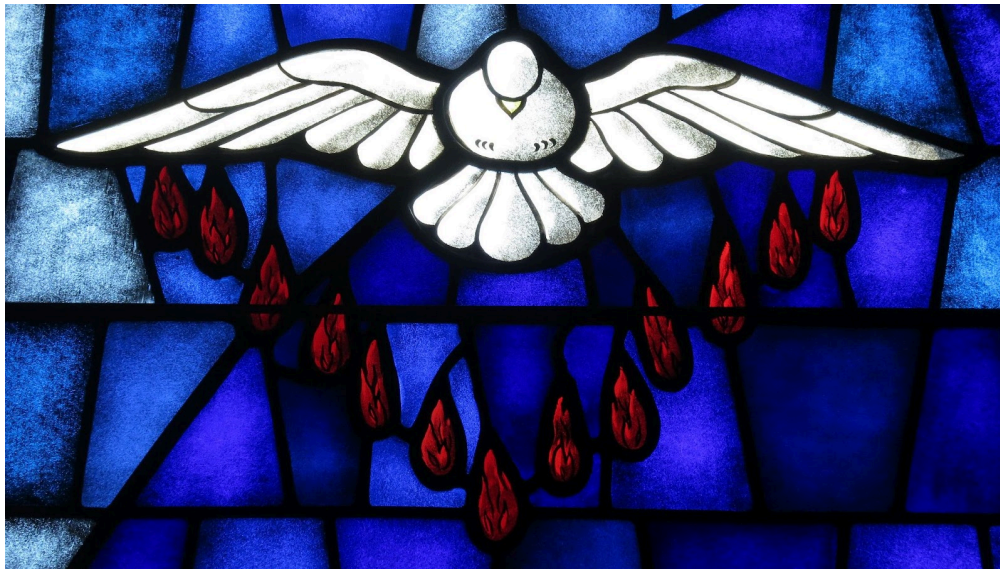


Monthly update

The Uniting Church in Australia

St Luke's Congregation, Highton

May 2024



PETER'S PEN

The month of May brings us to the end of the season of Easter where our bible readings have been exploring what it meant for the early church and for us today to live knowing that Jesus did not abandon us at the Cross. Because of the resurrection we live knowing that Jesus is present among us, sustaining and empowering us to live as a sign of God's presence in the world.

In the gospel of John Jesus told his disciples that while they would no longer see him, the Holy Spirit would be their advocate and comforter. I wonder if we could pause and reflect on those two words and just what it is that Jesus is promising us.

- Think for a moment about those times in your life where you have known real comfort?
- Think about the people who have offered that comfort to you, but also think about the people you have comforted and the impact that has had on you....

The word 'Comfort' comes to us from the Latin (com... fortis) through old French (confort), meaning to strengthen greatly.

- Where have you been strengthened, by whom and in what way?

The message of the Incarnation, of God entering our world in human form, is all about God coming to share our lives and working through friends, neighbours, strangers, teachers, mentors... to touch our lives in such a way as to draw us into the fullness of life. God at work in ordinary everyday ways, often hidden, but very much at work.

The second word 'Advocate' adds another dimension to this unseen work of the Holy Spirit. The Advocate is someone who stands up with us and for us, sometimes to shield us from harm and to speak on our behalf. It's a powerful role that implies both courage and strength. Is this a role you have embodied or offered? Is this something someone has done for you?

These are ways the living God holds us and guides us to live his vision and purpose in the world.

In May we celebrate Pentecost and often the focus has been on the dramatic accounts recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, that inspired the disciples to overcome their fear and go out into the public square to speak boldly of Jesus' resurrection. That's a vital and important aspect of Pentecost, but I have always been drawn to John's account of the giving of the Spirit. Its gentle, yet equally powerful, as Jesus breathes his spirit into his disciples, and with that breath implants his peace in their hearts. As people who are God-breathed, Jesus commissions us to be people of reconciling love. That's no mean task, no easy fix, for it demands the very best we have to offer and holds within it the promise that as we take up that baton and run the race set before we will grow more closely into God's image and likeness.

Rev. Peter Gador-Whyte

Coming Up

Services:

Sunday 5/5	9:30am	Sunday Service with Rev Peter Gador-Whyte.
Thurs 9/5	1:30pm	Mid-week service.
Sunday 12/5	9:30am	Mother's Day Sunday Service.
Sunday 19/5	10:00am	Pentecost Service at Geelong Library Dome. No service here.
Sunday 19/5	7:00pm	House Church
Sunday 26/5	9:30am	Sunday Service with Rev Peter Gador-Whyte

Activities:

Wed 1/5	1:30pm	Coffee & Chat
Wed 8/5	7:30pm	Seekers
Friday 10/5	12pm - 2pm	Sewing group
Friday 17/5	12pm - 4pm	Collectibles
Sat 18/5	9am - lunch	Collectibles

Readings for the Month

	<i>1st Reading</i>	<i>Psalm</i>	<i>2nd Reading</i>	<i>Gospel</i>
May 9 Ascension	Acts 1:1-11	Ps 47	Eph 1:15-23	Lk 24:44-53
May 12 Easter 7	Acts 1:15-17,21-26	Ps 1	1 Jn 5:9-13	Jn 17:6-19
May 19 Pentecost	Acts 2:1-21	Ps 104:24-34	Rm 8:22-27	Jn 15:26-27; 16:4b-15
May 26 Trinity Sunday	Is 6:1-8	Ps 29	Rm 8:12-17	Jn 3:1-17
June 2 Pentecost 2	1 Sm 3:1-10	Ps 139:1-6,13-18	2 Cor 4:5-12	Mk 2:23-3:6

Congregation News

St Luke's Chapel Collectibles

Our next opening is on the 3rd. Friday and Sat in May: **Friday 17th May** between 12 noon and 4.30pm.; **Sat 18th May** between 9am and lunch time.

In April our weekend 'helpers' responded with so much energy as we welcomed, chatted with and listened to the large numbers of people who came to our opening. We welcomed many first time visitors which gave us the opportunity to share the story of our Ministry to Refugees, Asylum Seekers and people in need. We raised almost \$6,000.

We displayed lovely collections of: Royal Albert porcelain, Australian pottery, Stuart Crystal, Limoges porcelain, original works of Art, dinner sets, kitchen trays, kitchen chopping boards. The list is never ending, and of course 'Grannies Cupboard' is everyone's viewing delight when precious memories come to the forefront.

Potted Garden Sales: The potted plants are looking good as they come into flower ready for sale. Thank you to Carol, (part of the Helpers Team) for re-arranging the display and attending to the watering. We have two mature Camellia trees at \$70 each for sale

This month, we welcomed Jeannine, another new volunteer from the community, whose task it will be to constantly restock the Chapel Room – last week we had 8 refugee families visit, in one day, and we had an urgent need to restock the bed linen, doonas, crockery and cutlery.

Thank you to Catherine who returned a box of beautifully cleaned silver ware. And thank you to Alison and the 2 Nolas who spent a couple of hours sorting out boxes of kitchen cutlery ready to find a new home amongst refugee families.

Probus Club Tour of Chapel: We have received two new bookings for July and August when we will provide a morning tea welcome, share our refugee support story, and include a tour of the Chapel Collectibles.

Donations – decluttering, downsizing..... The Chapel is open to receive donated items every Wednesday morning between 9.30 and 11.30am.

The Collectibles Team will be ready to welcome you. We receive household items from kitchen cupboards, linen cupboards, linen, bedding, blankets, cushions, lamps. The list is endless.

If you would like to find out more about how you can help, please phone us for a chat.

Linda Salamy and Rae Anderson (Collectibles Co-Ordinators) *Mobile: 0413 888 884*



Pastoral Connections

Beginnings of the Mother's Day Tradition

On May 10th, 1908, Anna Jarvis sent five hundred white carnations (her late Mother's favourite flower) to a church in West Virginia, where her mother had attended and taught Sunday School, as a tribute to the church, her mother.

Later that day 15,000 people attended a service organised by Anna in her hometown to honour mothers everywhere. And so, Mother's Day was born.

Ironically, some years later Anna campaigned against Mother's Day as it had grown from flowers, a handmade card, a baked item, a personal poem, or a visit, to a commercial goldmine for retailers. Today Americans spend between \$200 to



\$500 each year on gifts for their mothers.

Originally carnations were the flower of choice as they were readily available in the Northern Hemisphere. Tradition has it that the colour of this beautiful flower represents different meanings. For example, white carnations represented a mother who had died, pink carnations celebrated the love and appreciation of a living mother and red carnations signified respect and honour for all mothers that we are fortunate enough to meet and whose company we enjoy.

Origins of Mother's Day in Australia

Mother's Day was first celebrated the Australia way in 1924, when Sydney woman Janet Heyden was inspired to collect charitable gifts for the lonely, elderly mothers who were in hospital and had lost their husbands and sons in WW1. Because the Australian Mother's Day occurs in autumn, carnations were not as plentiful, so Janet sourced an alternative and chrysanthemums were selected as the preferred flower, and so the tradition of giving a white chrysanthemum on Mother's Day was born.

This was inspired by three factors:

- 1) Seasonal - chrysanthemums are readily available in May in Australia.
- 2) Symbolism - the meaning embraces the idea of long life, joy, and rebirth.
- 3) Spelling - the word chrysanthemum ends in "mum." 😊

On average in Australia, \$80 is spent on buying a Mother's Day gift which equates to \$1 billion nationwide.

Footnote: The gift of love via a phone call or a visit is priceless.

Tradition of Mother's Day at St. Luke's

Each year, Pastoral Connections organise and offer a hand crafted white 'chrysanthemum.' These are created by Jenny Patchett and Joy Hicks and are available to all those attending worship on Mother's Day, as a symbol of love for all mothers. Past, present and future.

Pastoral Connections Updates

Have you changed your address, your home phone number (or no longer have a land line), mobile number or email address lately?

If so, please update you details on a pew card located in the holder on the back of each pew and place it in the offering bowl, see Pam Seller after church with details or phone Pam on 0407 557 933.

Prayer Points

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

Praise points

1. Praise God for the blessings of Easter and the joy of hearing and celebrating the resurrection story another time.
2. Jesus makes a difference – Lord, sustain in each of us a willing spirit to make a difference as we live our lives within families and communities, where the opportunity to share the story of Jesus occurs.
3. We are thankful that family and friends who have recovered from surgery and are resting at home. We thank you Lord for the skills of the surgeons and nursing staff.
4. We give thanks and praise for the positive outreach offered by Shaghek, through her ministry with newly arrived families to the Geelong area.
5. Gracious God, we thank you for those volunteers and organisations who are supporting the homeless, unemployed and those going through hard times financially.

6. We give thanks for the life of Val Tantau who passed away earlier this month. Lord give her family comfort as they grieve the loss of a mother and friend.

Prayer points

1. We pray for safe travel for Paul and Jenny as they enjoy their long service leave, and we welcome Rev. Peter Gador-Whyte as he ministers to our congregation during Paul's leave.
2. Protect those living in war torn countries. Give them shelter and safety, and protect the aid workers who risk their lives to support the injured and displaced.
3. We ask for prayer for young people who maybe struggling with an identity crisis and find themselves caught up in street violence. Give the police wisdom and patience as they deal with all forms of violence.
4. God of mercy and grace, strengthen and uphold those families, known to us, who have recently suffered tragedies through illness or the loss of loved ones. We particularly think of the families caught up in the Bondi Junction attacks on April 13th

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



Presbytery and Synod News

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Christian churches in Australia will mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from **12-19 May**. The theme has been chosen by a working group from Burkina Faso,

"You shall love the Lord your God ...and your neighbour as yourself..." (Luke 10:27).

The National Council of Churches in Australia has [released resources](#) including material for promotion, a full worship service and eight daily reflections.

Image: WPCU feature image, 'Good Samaritan in Tibet' © by artist Frank Wesley



Sign Up: President's Anniversary Message



On 22 June this year, the Uniting Church in Australia will celebrate 47 years since Union. A video message from President Rev Sharon Hollis will be available later in May for congregations and communities to mark the anniversary, as well as some liturgical resources inspired by the message. [Sign up now](#) to receive the message straight to your inbox as soon as it's available.

Uniting in Prayer 19 May - 22 June

Sign up now for [Uniting in Prayer 2024](#), 35 days of prayer and connection for the whole Uniting Church.

The Act2 Project has moved into the third and final phase, Recommendations for Action. From December 2023 the Project has been working through hundreds of responses from across the Uniting Church and developing recommendations for the 17th Assembly in July 2024.

Uniting in Prayer is a time to pray and reflect on our past and present as the Uniting Church and what God might have in store

for our future. All who call the Uniting Church home are invited to join together in thanksgiving and hope to pray and seek the leading of the Spirit for the years ahead.

This year we will be drawing on the [upcoming Assembly theme](#), “Threads of Love, Weaving Christ’s Love Across Cultures and Boundaries” as a catalyst for reflection.

During these days of prayer we will join together to pray and reflect on our past and present as the Uniting Church. Seeking to acknowledge and honour our shared humanity in God our creator, and act upon our shared call to shape a world that mirrors the love and unity Christ has for us all.

Daily Prayers

We'll be sharing [daily prayers](#) over the 35 days drawn from people across the breadth of the Uniting Church and our faith tradition. Sign Up using the link above to receive them each day by email, or find them on Facebook and Instagram. The full set of prayers will also be available as a pdf to download on the 17th of May.

Gathered Worship

The Act2 Project Unit in partnership with the Assembly Transforming Worship Circle has provided some rich resources, including a [full service of worship](#), prayers, intergenerational activities and creative worship ideas. Biblical reflections are also available to aid your reflection or preaching.

Pray at Home

The Act2 Project Unit has offered an [intergenerational resource](#) written for young children and families to take part. Each day has a short reflection, question for sharing and a prayer. This is a great conversation starter around the dinner table, in the garden, heading to school, or wherever you spend time together! Although aimed at a younger age range, it’s easy to tweak for whoever is around your table.

Prayer Chain

Through Uniting in Prayer different parts of the Uniting Church will be connected to each other through a national prayer chain. The prayer chain has been sent by email and is now [available in full](#) below.

