

Weekly Pew Sheet

The Uniting Church in Australia

ST LUKE'S CONGREGATION, HIGHTON

Sunday 23rd December 2018 (Includes January 2019)



Worship Leader: Paul Stephens

'Mary: the First Disciple'



Are you new to St Luke's?

If you would like to connect with us, complete a pew card or please let one of the pastoral connections team know so that you can be included in our contact list and invited to join in.

The monthly newsletter, St Luke's Link, is published on the first Sunday of the month. The deadline for submissions is the last Wednesday of the month. Brief, interim notices are published in a single page weekly bulletin, deadline Thursday 9:00 am, and announced prior to services.

e-mail items to news@stlukesuca.org.au

Office administrator: Robyn Hodge. Office open hours: Tuesdays and Fridays 9:30-12:30pm

JESUS' BIRTHDAY PARTY – TOMORROW AT 3-4PM

We are celebrating Jesus' birthday on Christmas Eve at St. Luke's. Bring a plate of afternoon tea to share and be ready to join in and help us re-tell the Christmas Story! A special family-friendly event especially for young children and the young at heart.

CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH – 25TH DECEMBER – TUESDAY

Join us here at St Luke's for a Christmas Day Lunch at 12 noon on Tuesday 25th December. Bring food to share and BYO festive Drinks. If attending worship, you can leave your food in the kitchen. *Rae Anderson*

ADVENT CONSPIRACY

This week we are "Loving All"!



WORSHIP FULLY



SPEND LESS



GIVE MORE



LOVE ALL

For more information and free resources visit ADVENTCONSPIRACY.ORG

GIVING AT CHRISTMAS

A reminder that Christmas Bowl envelopes for donations are in the foyer, Jean is selling Uniting Word gifts in the hall, and we have free Christmas storybooks for anyone to give to the children in their lives.



Christmas story books to give



Uniting World Gift Cards



Christmas Bowl Envelopes

MODERATORS REFLECTION FROM SHARON HOLLIS (CROSSLIGHT)

'LOOKING TO JESUS WITH A SENSE OF ADVENT-URE'

I'm writing this column just a few days after one man's actions in central Melbourne's Bourke St brought death, fear and anxiety to so many people. Also on my mind is a personal anniversary that causes me sadness and an awareness that many people are carrying sadness, anger and despair.

And while all this is going on the Church offers us the gift of the season of Advent. The season of Advent is the season that invites us to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ so we might see him at work in the world today and be ready to greet him in the Christmas season.

This season invites us to ponder where we see Christ coming in the present, how Christ was at work in history and from this to have hope about how Christ might be present in the future. Advent begins with a gospel reading that gives us an image of the second coming of Jesus, an event that will usher in the end of the world.

This year, the reading is from Luke 21 and has images of the Earth in distress, people fainting and the heavens being shaken. Such images can seem strange or even frightening with its focus on destruction and death. They can invoke fear and cause us to become anxious about our own salvation, the salvation of those we know and the salvation of the church.

I don't believe this is the way we should read such a passage. This reading about destruction arises from the prophetic tradition that warns against spiritual blindness. This blindness prevents us from seeing God's ways in the world and holds us back from participating in God's actions. The prophetic scriptures wake us up and reassure us that God's love will redeem and sustain us and all creation.

So often God's action in the world happens in places and with the people we least expect. God's reign, which is among us but still coming, does not conform to the ways of this world. It upends the norms with God's glorious, loving redemptive actions. The remaining gospel readings for the season of Advent take us back to the beginning to help us understand what the reign of God was like and how we can participate in God's loving redemptive action in the world.

In the opening chapters of Luke's gospel we hear God chooses the overlooked ones to bear God's child and speak of God's transforming love. Elizabeth, childless and old, and her husband, Zechariah, are given the gift of a son who will bear witness to Jesus and prepare people for his coming.

Mary, young, betrothed and ordinary is chosen to be the God-bearer, the one in whose body the baby Jesus will grow and be born, and in whose body the pain of grief at the end will be felt. Elizabeth, Zechariah and Mary show the wider implications of their being chosen. God's is a way of loving redemption which lifts up the powerless, feeds the hungry, scatters the proud and remembers God's promise to God's people.

God's way brings light where there is darkness, forgiveness of sin and hope for salvation. This is way brings judgement on those who use power to exclude and exploit, on those who lack mercy and those who do not feed the hungry and empower the poor.

These readings, which take us back to the beginning, show us what the end is like. At the end what will prevail is God's way in the world. This is a loving transformation of our ways so that they become God's way. This is why we should not fear the end, but be filled with hope for God's coming.

So, as I turn my mind to Advent conscious of despair about events in our city, aware of the hurt many are feeling and continuing to live with my own grief, I turn in hope towards God whose coming brings a word of judgment against the prevailing powers that is in fact a word of love.

I turn in hope towards the child Jesus, whose birth brings the good news that God's love is at work in the world renewing, saving and transforming us.

This Advent let us stay alert for God's love which will likely surprise us by revealing itself in unlikely people and places. And let us keep our hearts open to being renewed by love which holds and remakes the world.

FROM PAUL STEPHENS (MINISTER)

The core message of the celebration of Christmas is one of genuine hope for the world; that we are not on our own in all we experience in this thing called 'life' and that this 'life' has meaning, for God has actually come to us in the person of Jesus. Jenny and I wish everyone a blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Prayer points for this week

Prayers of Thanksgiving

“Ever renewing God, thank you for leading your people into the new life that is your gift of grace in Jesus Christ.”

- Give thanks for the opportunity during this Advent season to spend time reflecting on God’s amazing gift of love to us, in the coming of the Christ Child, and for the four weeks of Advent to be able to focus on Hope, Peace, Love and Joy.
- Give thanks for the children in our midst.
- Give thanks for the generosity of people during Advent and Christmas to give time, money or goods to those in need.
- Give thanks for opportunities during the Christmas period for families to gather together.

Prayers for others

- Pray that each of us may share the real meaning of Christmas with someone else
- Pray in this season of Advent for peace in the world.
- Help us to respond to God’s call in a world where there is a never-ending storm of conflict and natural disasters.
- Pray for agencies such as the Christmas Bowl and Uniting Barwon who seek to help those in need overseas and locally.
- Pray for those who find Christmas a difficult time, through loss, bereavement, or family crisis, and for those who are alone at Christmas.
- Pray for those who are sick, anxious, frail, facing or recovering from surgery,
- Pray for safety on the roads as so many are travelling over the Christmas period.

EPIPHANY GIVING TREE - GIFTS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

The Christmas tree that has been placed at the front of the sanctuary, is for the collection of gifts for less fortunate young people around us (books for primary level and soft toys for preschoolers). **The opportunity to place gifts under the tree will remain until Epiphany, January 6th.** For more information please contact Pam on 0407 557 933.



What's On this coming week

What's on @stlukeschurchgeelong 24th to 30th December					
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Weekend
	Christmas Day Worship 9:30-10:30am				Sun - Worship 9:30-10:30am
Jesus's Birthday 3-4pm	Christmas Luncheon 12-2pm				

Sunday Worship 30th December		Lectionary Readings
Worship Leader:	Paul Stephens	1 Sam 2:16-20, 26 Ps 148 Col 3:12-17 Lk 2:41-52
Welcomer:	S Hunter	
Ushers:	H Swan & P Seller P Gill & M Baum	
Sound:	I Lawrence	
Powerpoint:	I Pooley	
Reader:	J Daw	
Morning tea:	L & M Robertson	
Connections:	I Tattersall	
Driver/s:	M Robertson	
Sharing the Journey:	N Patchett	
Vestry Prayer:	B McClelland	

What's On over January 1 of 2

Sunday Worship 6th January		Lectionary Readings
Worship Leader:	Paul Stephens	Isa 60:1-6
Welcomer:	J Smith	Ps 72:1-7, 10-14
Ushers:	I Allan & M Baum (Collection only)	Eph 3:1-12
Sound:	I Lawrence	Mt 2:1-12
Powerpoint:	M Seller	
Reader:	D Younghusband	
Morning tea:	S Crowe & E Nicholls	
Connections:	J Hicks	
Driver/s:	P Gill	
Sharing the Journey:	I Speare	
Vestry Prayer:	B McClelland	

Sunday Worship 13th January		Lectionary Readings
Worship Leader:	Paul Stephens	Isa 43:1-7
Welcomer:	B Ballagh	Ps 29
Ushers:	A & F Safarnejad (Collection only)	Acts 8:14-17
Sound:	K McAvaney	Lk 3:15-17, 21-22
Powerpoint:	N McMillan	
Reader:	S Anderson	
Morning tea:	I Tattersall & P Seller	
Connections:	L Robertson	
Driver/s:	J Hicks V & J England	
Sharing the Journey:	I Speare	
Vestry Prayer:	B McClelland	

What's On over January 2 of 2

Sunday Worship 20th January		Lectionary Readings
Worship Leader:	Lloyd Walker	Isa 62:1-5
Welcomer:	I Tattersall	Ps 36: 5-10
Ushers:	P & I Petersen (Collection only)	1 Cor 12:1-11
Sound:	C McAvaney	Jn 2:1-11
Powerpoint:	I Pooley	Communion
Reader:	K McAvaney	H Swan & E Nicholls
Morning tea:	B & M Murphy	B Tattersall & P Seller
Connections:	J Pooley	
Driver/s:	C & D Manks	Set up - D Bath & J MacRobbie
Sharing the Journey:	I Speare	Bread - B Tattersall
Vestry Prayer:	B McClelland	

Sunday Worship 27th January		Lectionary Readings
Worship Leader:	Paul Stephens	Neh 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
Welcomer:	B Murphy	Ps 19
Ushers:	D Youngusband & P Gill (Collection only)	1 Cor 12:12-31a
Sound:	P Phelan	Lk 4:14-21
Powerpoint:	J Daw	
Reader:	L Walker	
Morning tea:	H Swan & M Baum	
Connections:	A Lyons	
Driver/s:	J & G Boehm I Petersen	
Sharing the Journey:	I Speare	
Vestry Prayer:	B McClelland	

Please note - The weekly bookings calendar is updated and displayed on the noticeboard facing the Sanctuary. Church volunteers can check online or on this noticeboard to see when spaces are available for setup etc.