

St Luke's Link

July 2019

Feature Article—'Small Groups Update'



Welcome to St Luke's Highton's Monthly
Newsletter for July-August 2019

We're glad you're here!



The Uniting Church in Australia

St Luke's Highton

Ph: 03 5244 2997 | email: info@stlukesuca.org.au | website: www.stlukesuca.org.au |



@stlukeschurchgeelong

Submissions for the next edition are welcome and due by 9am on Thursday 29th August.
Email your contributions to news@stlukesuca.org.au or leave in the church office pigeonhole.

A WORD OF REFLECTION

“Passing on the Baton”

The lectionary at this time of the year encourages us to read a bit about Elijah and Elisha the prophets of old ... who frankly strike me as rather scary! (Take some time to read the last few chapters of 1 Kings and first few chapters of 2 Kings if you want to see what I mean.

One of the fascinating stories recorded there concerns the handing of the prophet’s mantle from Elijah to Elisha. Elijah is taken up into heaven by a whirlwind which involved chariots of fire drawn by horses of fire. But when all the pyrotechnics are over there is something left lying on the ground. It is Elijah’s mantle. A mantle was effectively a wrap-around garment ... something like a cape. Elisha picks it up.

It is clear from this text that this mantle was a sign of the prophet’s office: as Elisha now wears this mantle, he is called to speak the truth ... to bring a word of God to all ... even the King. Wearing Elijah’s mantle places a heavy responsibility on Elisha.

I remember a friend of mine was inducted into the role of General-Secretary of the Synod. He was to have the role only for a few months. But as the blue scarf of the office was placed on him, he seemed to buckle a little: he knew that the role was a difficult and weighty one.

When I was young, I was never very good at competitive athletics at school, the few times I ran in a relay race I always had problems receiving or passing on the baton. But, of course, the whole point of the race is to receive and pass the baton on well!

Do you ever think about what you might pass on to others? Perhaps not mantles or batons, but the things that you see as life-giving.

What are the things that the next generations might look back in future years and say that these were important gifts from us to them?

We live in a time when many people have chosen not to be part of a community of faith.

There is much ignorance in the general population about what Christians really believe.

Part of our calling is to pass on the seeds of faith ... something of the core of the faith ... something about this God who comes to us in Jesus ... something of teaching and life of Jesus?

Maybe in our life-times we won’t see who might pick these up and how these seeds might grow. But the Holy Spirit can work miracles!

Rev. Paul Stephens
Minister



SMALL GROUPS AT ST LUKE'S

Pam Seller - Pastoral Connections Ministry Team

Whether you are 1 or 100, being connected is an important element of our everyday life and our faith journeys.

At St. Luke's our small groups have provided the network for this concept to evolve. Small groups are defined as a gathering of like-minded folk, who share an interest or hobby and welcome those who may share that same interest. Each group aligns with our St. Luke's Vision and Values statement. (See further pages in this Link).

In 2008, during an Elders meeting, it was decided that the visiting of individuals through the Zone system, although having served us well for many years, could not be sustained because of the increase in demand and reduction of available visitors, and so it was time for a review and new direction. This move was approved by the Congregation that same year.

With a renewed emphasis on pastoral care being the responsibility of the whole congregation, the concept of building on our already established 30 small groups or 'heart burst' gatherings, then became the avenue through which we could effectively keep in touch with each other in a more regular and intimate way. The pastoral care and support, shared within these groups, has led to life-long friendships.

Our Ministry Teams and Church Council are part of the network of support and fellowship along with the small groups which are listed below.

Over time, Pastoral Connections, under the guidance of our incumbent ministers, has attempted to fine-tune the above concept, to ensure that everyone who is not able to attend worship, is not in a small group or is newly arrived, are pastorally cared for by the Pastoral Connections team members. They are:

- Judy Clark
- Valerie Grills
- Isabel Tattersall
- Carole Findlay
- Jenny Pooley
- Joy Hicks
- Beth Allen
- Barbara Murphy
- Rev. Paul Stephens
- Pam Seller

Midweek High Tea



Pastoral care is also provided through the relationships other Ministry Team members create with the people we connect with.

It has however, been recognised that as communication is the key to successful pastoral care work, it is the responsibility of each small group, leader to contact Rev. Paul if there is an illness or concern within their group, that requires further follow up.

The Pastoral Connections Team are always open to exploring new ideas and concepts, to updating our

(Continued on page 4)

SMALL GROUPS AT ST LUKE'S (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 3)

present small group format and to welcoming *men* onto our team.

It is important that everyone is 'connected' in some way, enabling a vehicle for caring and sharing, building one another up in faith and love, and together reaching out to impact our wider community, as agents of God's love.

SO – regardless of age, level of time available, or interest, there are many opportunities at St. Luke's to **BE CONNECTED AND STAY CONNECTED.**

Information regarding how to become connected with one of our small groups is available from Robyn in the office, through our Information Booklet, or from Pam on 0407 557 933 or Barbara on 0409 037 190.

Our currently active **small groups** meeting outside our larger regular worship gatherings are:

Devotional & Discipleship	
Monthly Mid Week Worship	Monthly
House Church	Monthly on Sundays
Praise and Worship	Monthly on Sundays
Trekkies	Weekly on Fridays
Seekers	Monthly on Wednesdays
	Weekly on Thursdays (currently in recess)
St Luke's Choir	
Faith and Families	Ad-hoc on Sundays
Day 41	Monthly on Mondays
Faith in Action	
Refugee Sewing Group	Fortnightly on Fridays
Highton-Belmont Uniting Social Issues Group	Monthly on Mondays
St Luke's Mens Shed	Tuesdays and Thursdays Weekly
Repair Café	Monthly on Saturdays
Environment Action Group	Monthly on Mondays
Friendship and Shared interest	
Coffee and Chat	Monthly on Wednesdays
Walking Group	Weekly on Fridays
Book Group	Monthly on Tuesdays
Church Leadership	
Church Council	Monthly on Tuesdays
Pastoral Connections Ministry Team	Monthly on Wednesdays
Resourcing Ministry Team	Bi-monthly on Tuesdays
Mission Outreach Ministry Team	Monthly on Mondays
Worship and Education Ministry Team	Monthly on Wednesdays
Communications Ministry Team	Ad-hoc as required

VISION AND VALUES STATEMENT

Many of you will be aware that a number of the leaders of our congregation gathered at Queenscliffe early in June to reflect on our progress as a community, the insights the Rev Paul Stephens has gathered from his time with us so far, and our thoughts for the future. As a result we crafted revised Values and affirmed the elements within our mission.

On 27 October, many of us came together again in the Fellowship Room to review that work, and commence some planning for 2019. We have agreed to ask the Congregation to approve the following Vision for St Luke's:

“To be a community that grows Christians, knows Jesus and makes him known to others.”

We have also recrafted our Values for Congregational approval. These are below, with a simple phrase to remember each one, and a brief explanation under each.

1. We live loyal to Christ, and all he taught *(We follow Christ)*

As a congregation of the Uniting Church in Australia, we have committed ourselves to be part the worldwide Christian church (the body of people), with Jesus Christ as our head and leader. We aim to learn from everything we know of and were taught by Jesus, through the Gospels and the Holy Bible generally.

2. Our community must be a safe place; welcoming and respecting diversity, living out Jesus command to love one another *(and create a safe place...)*

Our community, and the Uniting Church in general, has committed itself to being a safe place for all of God's creation, in particular God's children. We recognise that God created a diverse world, and each of us is different. Our behaviour will be welcoming and respectful for all who seek God's love and grace, and the well-being of one another. We will ensure that our community protects each other (and others who connect with us) from harm or abuse in any form.

3. God has given us many resources and talents; an investment that grows through sharing and use *(to share and grow together...)*

We have many blessings at St Luke's – our people and their gifts/talents, the buildings and facilities, and money to meet our costs and be generous to others. We will be good stewards of these gifts of God, but our focus is to share these gifts because we know that in giving generously to others we receive more than we could imagine, and build treasure in heaven.

4. Each of us seeks to understand and connect with God more closely and deeply.
(drawing closer to God)

We know that without God we are nothing. Our hope comes from God who, through the risen Jesus Christ, ushered in the Kingdom of God on earth. We want to walk closely with God, as true disciples of Jesus, listening and learning through the power of the Holy Spirit, until God's kingdom comes in all its fullness and sin and death are no more.

If we put together the simple phrases in italics above, we have a sentence that we will put up in our foyer to inspire those using our buildings (including the wider community) to understand us a little better:

***We follow Christ, and create a safe place to share and grow together,
drawing closer to God.***

CHURCH NEWS



Congratulations Joyi!

Bellaire Primary School annually presents a citizenship award to the student who has shown leadership and / or excellence in receiving the Aussie of the Month award.

At the Grade six 2018 Graduation Ceremony I was shocked when they announced my name as the winner of the Bellaire Primary School 2018 Citizenship Award.

Many people congratulated me, and this made me feel very happy.

Joyi Chol

الابتدائية سنوياً جائزة المواطنة للطلاب Bellaire تقدم مدرسة الذي أظهر القيادة و / أو التميز في الحصول على جائزة Aussie of the Month.

عام 2018 ، صدمت عندما أعلنت اسمي كفائز في جائزة المواطنة 2018 لمدرسة بيللاير الابتدائية.

هنأني كثير من الناس وهذا جعلني أشعر بالسعادة.

جوي تشول



INVITATION

You are invited to the PASTORAL CARE/PRAYER seminar led by Rev. Paul Stephens, @ St. Luke's, on Sunday 11th August 11.30 - 1.30pm.

BYO lunch - soup provided

This is an opportunity to support the vital role that small groups and congregational members have in ministry with in our fellowship and the wider community.

The session will have a practical focus and is designed for everyone, not just people involved in formal pastoral roles.



Community News

1st Belmont Scouts
TRIVIA Night
Saturday
August 17
7PM

SILENT AUCTION
LIVE AUCTION
COUNTRY AUCTION
GAMES

ENTRY COST: \$10

SCOUTS AND THE COMMUNITY

Barrabool rooms, One Hope Baptist Church 4-32
Province BLV Highton

BYO Food and Drinks- Non-Alcohol Event

Please contact 0448 714 569 for more information

The Speare family (Messy Church) invite their St Luke's friends to join them for a Trivia night in August to raise funds for their Scout Group.

An Unexpected Blessing—Gaby's Story

Beth Allen

In the weeks since Ken passed into God's presence, I have been upheld in so many ways by the prayers, words and actions of comfort, sympathy and compassion extended to me, and I am very grateful. Along the way I have experienced many unexpected blessings.

To relate this recent blessing, I need to go back to 1999, when Ken was invited by Gideons International to be part of an International team of 30 to travel to Peru to assist the local Gideons with their aim to present New Testaments in Spanish to school students, hospitals, those in prison and to places of accommodation.

It was not a tourist visit to wonderful places like Machu Picchu, but to the somewhat dirty, grimy city of Lima and other cities where there is much poverty. It was while Ken was staying in a hotel that he met Gaby, who was employed by the hotel. Gaby had a reasonable grasp of English and Ken very little Spanish, but Gaby saw in Ken someone she could trust to share her very troubled life. Ken was not only able to offer friendship and counsel but to offer her a little New Testament and to speak with her about God's love for her and to introduce her to Jesus.

Ken returned to Australia, but the friendship with Gaby continued, and I also got to know Gaby through emails. Gaby's situation gradually improved and she was able to get employment in a mining company working the Peruvian mines. It was here she met the love of her life, Dimi, and eventually they were able to leave Peru and settle in Switzerland, both obtaining work. We were invited to their wedding, although unable to attend, and later were thrilled to hear that a baby was on the way. Our contact with Gaby was lost at about that time, and we presumed that life had just become busy and fulfilled for her.

Jumping now to this week to continue the story of Gaby. I was thrilled to receive an email from her, saying they were doing well in Switzerland and that their son was 9 years old. Gaby said she reads

the Bible every week with a small group, and attends church every Sunday. I then wrote back to her with the sad news that Ken had died, but that he would have been so happy to hear her news and to know she was continuing in her faith journey.

She replied to this email with the following words (her exact wording): *"May God have Ken in his holy glory. I would have loved to be able to contact him before to tell him how God was always with us too and allow that my son know him since he was a very small child. To tell him that I am very grateful for his prayers, very grateful that God makes that we cross each other in our lives' path. They all are steps to plant a seed in our heart."*

What a wonderful blessing I received when I read these words. To think that that short encounter led Gaby to follow Christ in her daily living. We probably will never know the result of building a bridge of friendship, love and encouragement with another person, but as Gaby says "They are all steps to planting a seed in our hearts."

Beth Allen

PS: To all those I have not been able to personally contact since Ken's passing on April 13th . and his funeral on April 23rd, my heartfelt thanks for your love, your prayers, your attendance at the funeral and all your expressions of sympathy.



Gaby and Dimi

JULY AND AUGUST AT A GLANCE

Monday 1st July - Mission Outreach Meeting 7:30pm

Wednesday 3rd July - Pastoral Connections Ministry Team Meeting 1pm

Sunday 7th July - Praise and Worship Group 7pm

Thursday 11th July - Midweek Worship Service 2pm

Saturday 13th July - Repair Cafe 12pm

Friday 19th July - Messy Church 3pm

Monday 22nd July - Environment Action Group 7:30pm

Wednesday 24th July - Coffee & Chat 2pm

Tuesday 30th July - St Luke's Book Club 2pm

Sunday 4th August - Praise and Worship Group 7pm

Monday 5th August - Mission Outreach Meeting 7:30pm

Tuesday 6th August - Resourcing Ministry Team Meeting 3:30pm

Wednesday 7th August - Pastoral Connections Ministry Team Meeting 1pm

Thursday 8th August - Midweek Worship Service 2pm

Saturday 10th August - Repair Cafe 12pm

Friday 16th August - Messy Church 3pm

Thursday 22nd August - Link monthly submission deadline 9am

Monday 26th August - Environment Action Group 7:30pm

Wednesday 28th August - Coffee & Chat 2pm

Is something missing from this list? These are the activities that are registered in our "St. Lukes Activities and Events" online calendar. If you know of an activity or event that is missing, please let Robyn know in the office - info@stlukesuca.org.au



Soup and More
Tuesday Lunch \$8
11:30-1:30
Welcome!

***Children Free**