

St Luke's

RESPECT | HOPE | FAIRNESS

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Christmas 2009

It's that time of the year again; Christmas is nearly upon us!

The celebration of Christmas in Australia is quite unique with:

- the coming of Summer
- the end of the school year
- holidays for many people
- the 'end-of-year' round of events.

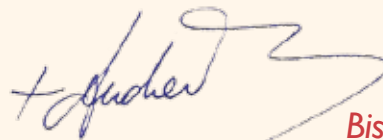
Interestingly, in many other parts of the world, Christmas decorations are in the stores for quite some time in advance, but the real celebration of Christmas doesn't begin until about a week beforehand, and continues until New Year.

Wherever we are, Christmas is a special time of year and it is probably the one time when goodwill abounds.

However, as St Luke's staff know, Christmas can be a very trying time for many people. It's hard to feel a sense of goodwill and joy when you are homeless, or have an intense gambling problem, or there is simply not enough money to meet expectations.

In current times in Australia, Christmas is largely celebrated with an over-abundance of materialism. The paradox of this is that the first Christmas was celebrated in poverty—with a poor unmarried servant girl, a young man passionately in love with her and the birth of a baby in a pub stable. It was stark and bereft of nearly all necessities. But amazingly, to this birth of a baby boy, God revealed himself to humanity.

Every blessing for Christmas,



Bishop Andrew Curnow

President St Luke's Board

May the Joy and Peace of Christmas be with you now and throughout the new year.

Snap and Brush Exhibition

The Snap and Brush Exhibition staged in Albury as part of Mental Health Week grew out of the talent and hard work of the Day to Day Living Photography Group. Initially, group participants simply wanted to enhance their photographs and learn more about using a digital camera. Meeting on a weekly basis, they went on field trips around the district to find and capture images that appealed to them. After several months one photographer suggested showcasing the group's work in an exhibition. At this point another group formed and the title 'Photographic Exhibition Group' was coined.

The new group was excited about the idea of planning and staging an art exhibition. They developed a flyer and other advertising material, and they made contact with local radio and television stations. A particularly enthusiastic client emailed the local newspaper, resulting in media coverage to further promote the exhibition. The group decided to invite Audray Banfield (who until recently had held the position of curator of the Albury Fine Art Gallery) to open the exhibition. They also worked on securing exhibition space and were able to obtain a gallery free of charge through the Charles Sturt University in Albury. These activities enabled the group to develop a sense of ownership of the exhibition and pride in their own contributions to the project. Through these combined efforts photographs and paintings were hung and the exhibition was prepared for viewing. On the opening night group participants found themselves conversing with



"Multiple Feathers 2008" painted by Sharon Edwards

others about their art work and some were lucky enough to sell photographs.

The art exhibition was a valuable opportunity to nurture the self-esteem and talent of budding artists.

Angela Buxton

Mental Health Recovery Worker

Singing from the Heart

There has been a revival in community singing around Australia in recent times. Singing is a great way to bring people together and at St Luke's we're convinced of the importance of people participating in their communities and feeling socially connected, so this is great news.

St Luke's and Reclink have established a community choir for the benefit of people who might not normally have opportunities to sing with others. People join the choir for many reasons; they may come with a friend, they may want to make new friends or break the bonds of isolation and depression by being with others. Whatever the reasons for getting involved, participants find the benefits of community singing reach far beyond the time spent together each Tuesday.

Most choir members are not musicians—many can't read music and some claim they can't sing, yet together they produce delightful music which makes their spirits soar and resonates with others.

The choir has held a number of public performances including singing at local service clubs and the Bendigo Combined Choirs Festival (as pictured). They recently completed a whirlwind tour performing at the Good Mood and Food Festival in Bendigo and then travelling on to Castlemaine to sing with the Peace Choir.



Choir members talk of feeling much better within themselves as a result of participating in the choir. One participant said, 'That feeling of self-worth and knowing people will be depending on me to be at practice is incredibly powerful and such a wonderful motivator when you feel like staying at home. Despite the energy required to sing out aloud, the activity actually refreshes you and restores not only your physical energy but people's sense of hope and belonging.'

The choir meets every Tuesday from 4.30—6.00pm at St Paul's Choir Room and consistently has 15—17 people in attendance. Currently, the group is working on a number of non-Christmas classics which promote values of peace and harmony.

New members are always welcome. For further information contact James Rigby at St Luke's on (03) 5448 1100.

Andrew McSwain

Practice Leader, Whirrakee Recovery Focused Mental Health

Foundations for Change

Over the past two years the Board and management of St Luke's have been following a plan of action we call 'Foundations for Change'. We know that unless we have strong foundations as an organisation, we will be unable to support our staff and clients on their journeys towards recovery and change.

In building the key planks for our 'foundational' work, we have focused on our operational systems, IT, management and training. Property is another major challenge for us. Having the right buildings from which to deliver our programs is a big hurdle currently being faced in Bendigo. We now have nine locations in the CBD from which we conduct services, on top of the four residential facilities. Multiple venues can lead to cost inefficiencies, and significant challenges to communication and service coordination.

We are now seeking support from the community and government to help us purchase a building from which to deliver a range of youth services.

A central Youth Resource Centre located close to our Hargreaves Street offices, to BRIT and to Centrelink would provide a significant boost to vulnerable youth. It would allow us to co-locate our:

- Youth Enterprise program, 'Chutzpah'
- Youth Activity programs
- Tutoring program 'AddsUp'
- Our 'Deemed Enrolment' alternative school program
- Arts activities such as 'Smart Art'
- Early School Leavers linkage workers
- Leaving Care support programs.

One of the challenges we face is that governments have often funded us to employ youth workers but have never provided us with the funds to purchase suitable venues from which to deliver programs.

We know that the Bendigo community is proud that St Luke's is working tirelessly with young people to help them turn their lives around, make lasting changes and reconnect with family and opportunity. Our new Youth Resource Centre will make a big difference to Bendigo's most vulnerable young people - the homeless and those disconnected from school at an early age.

We need to raise \$300,000 from donors towards the purchase of the building and this Christmas we hope to raise an initial \$50,000 from our Christmas appeal. Visit our website or call (03) 5444 8100 to make a donation

For more program information visit www.stlukes.org.au



David Pugh
CEO St Luke's Anglicare

*Christmas
Appeal*

St Luke's \$50,000 Christmas Appeal

Help us to raise
money to
establish a Youth
Resource Centre

A woman on a mission

Doreen Fergusson first came to St Luke's last year when she began donating knitted items and toys for children coming into care. Doreen saw so many efforts aimed at overseas needs (to which she also contributes) but she was stirred up enough to say, 'We have people in need here and charity begins at home.' Thus began her quest to get others on board.

When asked what it was that motivated her, she talked about having worked in Winlato (youth training centre) until it closed in the late 80s. She said she got to know what kids went through, 'I've never forgotten; I felt we could do things in our local area.'

Doreen started whispering in people's ears and now she has people from everywhere contributing their time and goods, including the Bendigo Sowers Group, Eaglehawk Uniting Church Reachout Group, Eaglehawk Community 'Our Place' Relief Centre, Women's Aglow Bendigo and Hymns Alive – an inter-denominational hymn singing group.

In looking back at the amazing growth of this endeavour over the past year, Doreen said 'It has overwhelmed me how many people want to help. It's incredible and it's everywhere I go. People are so willing. Some give a little, some give a lot and all the little bits add up to a lot.'



Staff at St Luke's always look forward to Doreen's monthly delivery, usually consisting of several boxes of items for St Luke's clients. She conducts monthly drives on various items including pyjamas, tracksuits, socks, undies or toiletries. Doreen always includes a 'pamper pack' for staff to pass on to someone who needs it such as a struggling mum or grandma caring for their own families, or one of the many valiant carers looking after children or young people in home-based care.

Doreen Ferguson is a dynamic, community-minded individual, a quiet achiever. She is someone who is changing her world locally, item by item, day by day, through her personal relationships and her broader networks. She has an amazing capacity to galvanise the resources that are right here in our community and focus them on supporting the work of St Luke's ... as we endeavour to support vulnerable children and families in our community.



How You Can Help

You can help St Luke's continue its commitment to practices that promote justice, dignity and hope, and challenge actions that devalue, and disadvantage and discriminate.

More than 400 people across the region support St Luke's in its quest to assist people to develop choices in their lives and contribute to their communities. Their commitment to the wellbeing of young people and families in north central Victoria is vital and truly appreciated.

Ways you can make a difference

Financial donations

Donations can be made to St Luke's online by visiting our website at www.stlukes.org.au Alternatively you can make a donation by filling out and posting the form provided which includes your credit card details, or send a money order or cheque payable to St Luke's Anglicare.

Bequest

A bequest is simply a gift made through a Will. By including St Luke's in your Will you'll be making the gift of a lifetime. Your legacy will continue to support people in our community. If you have an affinity for a particular area of St Luke's work you can specify this in your Will. For more information about how you can help, please contact St Luke's Anglicare on (04) 5444 8100 or email info@stlukes.org.au

