

NEWS FROM BENDIGO

December 2021



From the Editor

Blessed with ideal weather for the Christmas Market the community enjoyed a wonderful day on November 28th. It was great to have such a range of stalls and the entertainment and music providing such an enjoyable carnival atmosphere.

In addition the day was very successful financially with a sum of over \$12K now available for the work of L'Arche. Whilst this was a great community effort we are most grateful to Maureen Connelly and the fundraising team for all the organisation that went into the day.

Thanks to Laurie Whelan for making his premises available. The Good Loaf is a wonderful central location which provided the opportunity to share information with the wider community about the work of L'Arche. Thanks also to our many donors and those who came along to support us on the day.

Jim Rolfe

Reflection



It is strange that while the pandemic has been with us – in all its challenges – for almost 2 years, I think for many, it has invited us to reflect on the ways in which we have lived and now live. Someone – and I can't remember who – was interviewed on the ABC, and they spoke of feeling as if they were not only living with the possibility of Covid 19, but that they were also living with 'Covid uncertainty.' We have longed for the pandemic to be over; we have wondered about our individual and collective future. What will life look like when things get back to some semblance of normality? Indeed, we have been invited to live in a state of permanent waiting. We have been waiting for holidays or dinner with friends or a return to routine. The financial and mental health issues for some have been extremely difficult. And then there are those – like me who cannot even name that 'thing' for which they are waiting.

But, as I write this, Advent is already upon us and we wait for a very significant event. We wait for Christmas, the birth of Christ and all that this might mean for us. We wait for the child who was born in poverty and, in his humanity experienced a lifetime of uncertainty.

A very dear friend gave me a book called 'Voices from the Heart'. It was published by the Jesuits and the sisters of Charity a couple of years ago, and contains a reflection for every day of the year. The reflection for the first day of Advent adds another dimension to what I've just written. The author writes, "We talk of Advent as a time for waiting for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. But do we ever think that Advent is perhaps the time when God is waiting for us? December is the time of year when weariness can overwhelm us. The weeks leading up to Christmas are anything but quiet..." And yet every Christian on the planet whatever their gender, race, ability, is being called to wait for the birth of Jesus as our Creator waits for us. How might we respond?

Angela Allen
L'Arche
Spiritual Life Group

Contents

From the Editor	1
Reflection	1
Board News	2
Council News	2
Information of Note	2
Prayer Points	2
Member Profile	3
Assistant Profile	3
L'Arche Wisdom	3
Dates	4

Board News

The AGM of the Board was held via Zoom on November 23rd. It was wonderful to have so many of the Melbourne, Bendigo and Shepparton communities able to participate. Highlights for the 2020-2021 financial year included: the resilience and creativity in response to the pandemic, growth in Bendigo, Melbourne and Shepparton, Bendigo's application to become a probationary L'Arche community, changes in how we work with Shared Services, successfully completing the NDIS audit and an improved financial position. The future priorities are to explore ways to better operationalise the two mandates and support the Shepparton community with its development.

Thanks to Ray Winn, Nicole Butera and Donella Fisher for their leadership and presentation on the evening.

There will be an opportunity to go through the Bendigo Community report in more detail at the February Community gathering.

Council News

During October application was made for the Bendigo Community to be recognised internationally as a L'Arche Probationary community. This is the second last step in being recognised as fully credentialed community in the L'Arche Federation. The Community Council is in receipt of a report compiled by David Treanor, The National Leader of L'Arche Australia, Silke Carter, Community Leader L'Arche Mt. Tabor NZ and Michael Hutchinson, Quality Coordinator L'Arche Brisbane. The report sets out community achievements and suggestions in eight key areas. These will be included in the planning process for the future growth of L'Arche Bendigo.

Information of Note

Welcome to Jaye Brealey who is studying Disability at Bendigo TAFE and is currently on placement with us.

L'Arche has communities in all the capital cities with the exception of Darwin. The only two regional communities are Bendigo and Shepparton. It is wonderful to note that there are plans to establish a community in Alice Springs.

There is a growing interest in the L'Arche communication group. More willing hands to keep an eye on the gardens and buildings would be most welcome. Call Jim (0407554263) if you have a talent in and time for either.

There will be a working bee in January to make preparations for the memorial area at Grandview Crescent. The details will be circulated when plans are finalised.

Prayer Points

- For those suffering persecution especially in Afghanistan and Myanmar.
- In thanksgiving for the many blessings of 2021.
- In thanksgiving for the advocacy and range of community activities which emanate from the International Day of Disabled Persons (December 3rd).
- For those whose livelihoods, safety and wellbeing are being impacted on due the flooding in Eastern Australia.
- In thanksgiving for the peace, understanding, goodwill and community acceptance generated through the work of Bendigo's Interfaith Council.
- For those members of our community who are ill

Member Profile & News



Hello from Andrew Ransom

For my first 31 years I lived with Mum and Dad (Bernadette and Kieran) in Neale Street, Kennington. On October 3rd 2020 I moved into my new home 'Bethany' in Spring Gully with my longtime friends, Matthew and Yvonne. I have 2 brothers, Pete and Mike who live in Melbourne. Pete is married to Denise and they have 2 children – Oscar and Edith (Edie) and Mike is married to Stephanie. I attended school at St. Kilian's, Catholic College and Bendigo Special Developmental School.

Playing sport is a very important part of my life - especially Basketball and cricket. I even met Ricky Ponting while on a trip to Tasmania with Interchange! While attending SDS I participated in the Great Victorian Bike Ride for 3 years. I am an avid Geelong Cats supporter. My favourite hobby is music. I play the guitar and drums and I like to sing along with music on the computer, especially



the Bee Gees.

I am very grateful to Mum and Dad for all the opportunities they have given me and I am thankful for all the Assistants at 'Bethany' and all those who support me with my daily activities.

Christmas is my favourite season – HAPPY CHRISTMAS everyone!

Assistant Profile



Hello my name is Von. My husband and I worked and travelled around Australia for 3 years before returning to settle in Bendigo in year 2000. We started a family and were grateful to be able to raise our 2 sons in a country lifestyle. The boys are now young adults, wonderful, hard working and independent. We are most proud of them. We have a small hobby farm where I absolutely love living. To be in the garden or in nature is truly my happy place. Sunset is my favourite part of the day. The simple things in life, Health, Happiness, Love, Close Family and Great Friends are what I appreciate most. I started



working as an Assistant with L'Arche in March 2021. I also studied Certificate 4 in Disability at Bendigo TAFE. I have now completed the course. It has been a very busy 9 months.

I really enjoy working with L'Arche and value their philosophies. I am so proud and grateful to be part of such a wonderful organisation.

Von McDonald

L'Arche Wisdom

Hope along with Faith and Charity (Love) are foundational to Religious understanding. Hope matters and we cannot live without it. Times of adversity (the pandemic) teach us that Hope is not only a wish or a desire for things to be different it is a course of action, a combination of the mind and the heart. The future can be better and can be brighter and we each have the power within to make it so. There will be challenges to face along the way to which there are many solutions. There is a source of resilience deep within all of us.

We are here, we are now and we are every breath we take.

Every day is a gift.

Dates

- Wednesday February 9th-Community Gathering incorporating Bendigo AGM.
- Wednesday April 13th-Community Gathering incorporating Washing of the Feet.
- Please note there will be a Community Gathering in March at a date to be fixed.

*Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and
every best wish for the New Year.*



Donations

Donations to L'Arche are tax deductible and can be made directly the L'Arche Melbourne/Bendigo Bank Account

BSB: 633-000
Account: 152536827

L'Arche Identity

We are people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in Communities belonging to an International Federation.

Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our journey together.

We celebrate the unique value of every person and recognise our need of one another.

Mission

To make known the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities revealed through mutually transforming relationships.

To foster an environment in Community that responds to the changing needs of our members, whilst being faithful to the core values of our founding story.

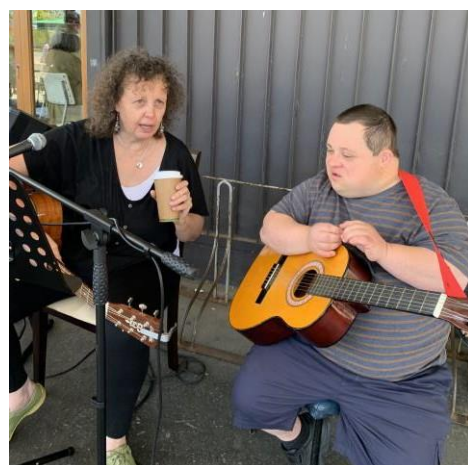
To engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society.

Life at L'Arche Bendigo



Our recent Christmas Market

- Helen and Carmel on the Preserves stall.
- Our beautiful plants and garden display.
- Cindy and Isaac providing great music for us all.
- L'Arche Artisans stall – Liz displaying some wonderful Christmas decorations.



Contact L'Arche Bendigo

8 Grandview Street Kennington VIC 3550

E: Bendigo@larche.org.au | W: www.larche.org.au | P: 03 5444 3956

Life at L'Arche Bendigo



L'Arche Members

- Matt and Yvonne planting some seedlings at Bethany
- Ryan, at programs, feeling very pleased with himself – puzzle complete.
- Yvonne, Matt and Andy visited the silos enroute to Echuca for the weekend.
- Mary has decorated the Christmas tree.



Life at L'Arche Bendigo

- Our Christmas Gathering at Grandview.
- L'Arche Assistants enjoying a Christmas meal.
- The Fundraising Group – meeting up after the Market.

