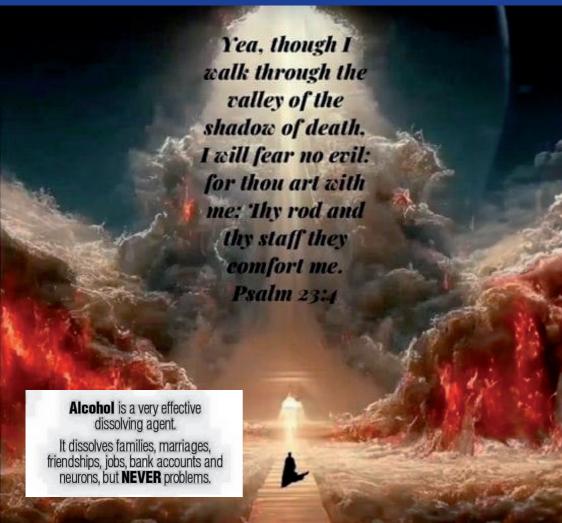
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January • February • March



Praise God for the NWCTU court case victory in the USA

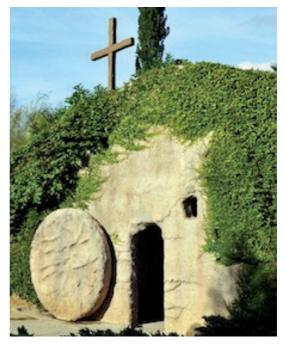


Easter Devotional

With Christ You Can

The women who buried Jesus on Friday returned to visit him early Sunday morning. They brought spices and perfumes to anoint the body. What they found is the substance of Easter hope: no stone in front of the grave, no body within the grave. They found an angel, clothed in white, seated on the stone. "He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Mt. 28:6 NKJV). When they did, they saw the first signs of the resurrection: a vacant slab, an abandoned burial cloth, a folded shroud, and a beaming angel. And, could we examine the empty grave with them, we'd find something else. Languishing in the corner, in the dust, doomed to be sealed and buried forever...your stack of I can'ts. God buried your I can'ts in the grave

of Christ. Every last one of them. You



say you can't forgive someone? You can't, but with Christ you can. Can't survive the struggle? You can't, but with Christ you can. Can't hang on any longer? Turn to Christ for help. "God's power is very great for us who believe. That power is the same as the great strength God used to raise Christ from the dead" (Eph. 1:19-20 NCV). The same steely, burly force that raised Christ from the dead will turn your "I can'ts" into "I cans": "I can do all things through Christ, because he gives me the strength" (Phil. 4:13 NCV).

With Christ you can face the struggles of Friday. Set your mind on the joy that awaits you. With Christ you can endure the silence of Saturday. Be patient. Christ will come.

With Christ you can celebrate on Sunday. The same power that defeated His death will give you life. Have you asked for it? Have you asked God to help you?

He will. He will give you strength in this life and eternal joy in the next. All you need to do is ask him. Make this prayer a part of your Easter celebration.

"Dear God,

Without you I can't solve my problems, remove my sins, or go to Heaven. But with you I can. I ask you to help me, cleanse me, and save me. In Jesus' name, Amen."

© Max Lucado, 2013





Noontide prayer
Around the world, someone is always praying

President's greeting

Dear all,

WE HAVE A LEGACY WORTH FIGHTING

I have the privilege of leading the WWCTU (World Woman's Christian Temperance Union) which was founded in 1883 and is the oldest continuously existing women's organization in the world. World WCTU has membership in 58 countries. WCTU in the United States is of vital importance as the anchor point which UNITES the world as one body with a legacy worth fighting for. This was clearly demonstrated by the firm leadership in the USA who successfully stood their ground when our WCTU properties were threatened by takeover. God bless all who gave their prayer support! Congratulations!



Margaret Østenstad WCTU World President

Our organization has a strong history of fighting for the protection of women at home and work; we have fought for women's suffrage rights, shelters for abused women, women police officers, and stiffer penalties for sexual crimes against girls and women.

Our alcohol and drug policies, as well as our policies to prevent domestic violence against women and children, are great examples of our organization's drive to love and protect our neighbours for "God, for Home, and every Land."

We now need new members to help us fight the continuing battle of all addictive substances. Frances Willard is quoted as saying: "God grant that we may be so divinely led that history's verdict upon our work shall be: By God's blessing they helped to make the world better for women and happier for all humanity."

Quotes by Frances Willard:

- Mother-love works magic for humanity, but organized mother-love works miracles.
- The three requisites for success are ability, availability and responsibility.
- Alone, we can do little. Separated, we are the units of weakness; but together we become battle warriors

Dear God, Thank you for your great gift of love and sacrifice so that we can live free. Help us to free others. Thank you for the power of the Cross and the Resurrection. We ask that the truth of Easter sinks deeply into our hearts and changes us forever Fill us with your Holy Spirit today, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Blessings, love and prayers,

Margaret

BANK DETAILS:

IBAN NR: NO03 3361 1549 526

SWIFT CODE: DNBANOKK

Bank Name: DNB Bank ASA,

Postboks 1172, Sentrum, 0107 OSLO

Account Name: Det Hvite Bånd Haugesund Int.

HOME PROTECTION DEPARTMENT 2024

Director - Anna-Mari Laine

There are many attacks against the Christian family institution nowadays. I suppose nothing else is under greater attack than the family. It is the social institution created and designed by God. It is the basic unit and the heart of our culture, the power for building healthy societies. The creator created male and female. The biblical family produces children. The marriage was created to be a beautiful, living picture of Christ and the Church.

The increasing rates of divorces

We face more and more divorces. The common feelings among separated parents and their children are ANGER, CONFUSION, SHAME, ANXIETY, DEPRESSION AND BITTERNESS. Many mental and physical problems!

We need more and more skills, knowledge and wisdom when helping and loving these crushed near-ones of ours. Psalm 147:3 says: "He heals the broken- hearted and binds up the wounds." James 1:5 says:" If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to you."

In Helsinki the professional White Ribbon therapists help families and individuals. There are 12 therapists who take clients regularly. But everyone can be a loved one. "Love your neighbour as yourself". Love for all people was at the very centre of Jesus `message.

The increasing sexual freedom and immorality

Christian freedom is freedom through knowing God who is eternal and everlasting truth. It is being his, and having him as ours. John 8:36 says: If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed".

Sexual freedom without the biblical principles have led many youngsters into many difficulties, pain, remorse which cause depression and loneliness. Abortions, the gender ideology, polyamory in marriages and many other forms of sexual life are considered acceptable and they are often recommended and advertised as the great freedom. Laws are being changed into the more and more liberal direction of this sad situation. This is our deep prayer that families, schools, churches, and societies show the right way of living to children and youngsters and we Christians should be good examples to follow.

Addictions

Drugs, alcohol, smoking, and many new forms of addictions tie youngsters and even their parents. Family life can't flourish if there are addictive bonds as addiction to substances leads to destruction. What I am happy about is that our WWCTU from the beginning has foreseen the great dangers and the members' labor has not been in vain. We try to alert people. I am proud of that. I thank God for guiding us for decades and decades. We are as if in a war. The enemy always finds new ways of penetrating into people's lives to destroy them in one way or the other. Addictive takes different forms in different countries!

Vaping is a new problem. Teachers here in Finland sometimes ask for advice and help when it is not the smell of nicotine but the pleasant scents like strawberries and other fruit hovering in the air in schools. Younger and younger kids are starting to vape. I was very happy to read about the White Ribbon work and Anne Bergen's leaflet on vaping. The state of Australia takes the problem seriously and wants to stop this trend among youngsters. I asked Joy Butler to write about the measures they have taken in Australia and I translated the text into the Finnish spe-

cial bulletin on different substances, treatments and studies. This is a part of Anne's leaflet: "IS IT BETTER TO VAPE THAN SMOKE CIGARETTES? Vaping was originally promoted as a harmless way for people to stop smoking, harmful cigarettes. However, vaping is also dangerous and most vapes contain addictive nicotine like cigarettes do."

Vaping affects the lungs, the brain, the mouth and the heart. The kids and youngsters need a healthy brain. It affects their whole lives: The relationships, learning, memory, impulse control, emotions...All the development should be healthy without addictive ties. That's why I am very worried about vaping which in soft, imperceptible ways is causing and will cause a lot of harm and destruction. I'm sending our Finnish White Ribbon bulletin and Anne Bergen's leaflet in English to schools so that the youngsters can read English and have useful knowledge concerning vapes. I sent all the material to our Social Security Minister Sanni Grahn- Laasonen as well.

The climate change and the environmental challenges

God is the Creator of all the earth and nature. He created a perfectly beautiful world. But we have spoilt and destroyed it a lot. It is not easy when we as believers want to show respect for God and advise young people and their families to prefer ways of living which are not greedy and selfish. We can eat in healthy ways, choose local fruit, berries, meat, grain, and other products that are produced locally.

Many youngsters are worried about climate change. If we have not enough knowledge and information, it is difficult to communicate effectively with the younger generation. Jesus asks his listeners to consider birds and their behavior. We can follow many things in our environment: animals, plants, trees, dying fish, plastic litter on beaches, the quality of the air etc. Can we do something? Countries are very different. Our worries are different.

At our WWCTU Conference in Helsinki in 2019 Irja and Kaija Erkkilä told us about litter picking. Now they have picked up 2 million cigarette butts in the streets, in the nature. They like to visit schools. The students are usually very eager to work with them. Litter picking is a perfect meaningful activity that gives quick and rewarding satisfaction. Litter picking provides anyone with the ability to drive positive change in the environment.

God has reserved many good things for the planet earth. We can read many interesting things in the Bible. But now it is crucial we do our best to show gratitude to our Creator and His creation. These habits are formed at home.

Anger, wars and fears

The covid time was a big challenge to mankind. Many young people could not understand many difficult stages. Some needed special help. But after that two big wars have broken out. Russia wants to conquer more and more countries. After attacking against Ukraine millions of Ukrainian refugees are escaping to European countries. Russia has threatened words Finland. There was a merciless attack against Israel by Hamas. More and more violence and more and more anger between people and nations in the world. More violence, wars, deaths, and riots in the streets! As believers when reading the Bible we can understand, but to many people this is a very difficult new time. Prices go up; the confidence in the future has disappeared... families are facing many challenges in this chaotic world.

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10) Our important task in these difficult days of our history is to be God's witnesses, the sources of mercy and love. We have the good message to tell everybody. BEING IN CHRIST SAVES YOU. It does not prevent all the suffering and problems, but it makes you free from your crippling fears.

Christians and persecutions

Our member countries are very different. Christians are being persecuted in some countries. In other countries it is not possible very openly to arrange meetings, children's clubs or summer camps and tell people about Jesus. We in our local union decided to start to support Open Doors, the non-denominal mission supporting persecuted Christians around the world. The Christians are the most persecuted group in the world. We do not want to forget our brothers and sisters in other countries. It is important that families and children know the facts.

So far, we have supported, and I suppose the members in the other countries as well have supported, so many forms of work helping and loving all the people around the world: Girls' education, suffering women, earthquake victims, refugees, those suffering in war, mission organizations etc. We want to support and help all. Corinthians16:4 say: "Do everything in love." We pray for those persecuting and killing Christians but also for those who are victims as well. Teach families to think above themselves.

LET'S PRAY FOR EACH OTHER, THE WWCTU MEMBERS AND COUNTRIES

We felt God's love and mercy and all of us could learn so much from each other. In the Bible, unity is seen in the marriage of a man and a woman, the unity of believers through the Holy Spirit, and ultimate unity among all believers through Jesus Christ.

I was thinking of all the work in our member countries. I am praying for everybody's new ideas, to have endurance in this very challenging situation in the world and to reach more and more children and adults.

Recently I visited South Korea and was much encouraged to witness the KWCTU work. Dr. Young Joo Kim's prayer was that new countries could be reached in our WWCTU work. Only the Holy Spirit can open paths in our very different WWCTU-countries, in the new and the old ones. We are praying for each other. We have not seen each other for a long time, but through prayer we are together in spirit.

Please see what you can do in your country for the welfare of families.

- Counseling of families in loneliness and depression with prayer is very effective.
- Make effective pamphlets on the facts and bad effects of vaping smoking alcohol and other addictive substances.
- Teach to nurture and sustain the environment and Country and its resources from the beginning.
- Insist that families give good Christian values and create good Christian God-given boundaries as a life style to our children.
- Families play an important role in making or breaking the country so we need to be healthy and happy, which can be possible only following God's command.
- We need to reach out to people and families with love and good solid fact- based advice.
- Teach the children to save water and keep their surroundings clean.



Remember that God qualifies those he calls. If you feel that God is calling you to a ministry and you feel that you are not good enough or master "that type of ministry", then remember that God qualifies those he calls. It's not about our skill. Exodus chapter 4, which is the story of when God called Moses to a specific mission. Here God appeared as a burning bush in the desert. Moses made excuse after excuse as to why he was not the right man for the job to which God had called him. But God had an answer to each of the excuses Moses made. When Moses wondered if he was the right man, God promised to be with him. When Moses asked what he would do if the Egyptians did not believe him, he was given a sign. Moses thought he was not good at speaking, and then God equipped him with words and learning. He even sent a helper. Aaron was the brother of Moses and he was to speak for him. So go for what you know God is calling you to, and trust that He will give you everything you need at the right time. A

And you - remember that everything you do, do it for God and not men!



A New Year's Plan

I tried to think of a clever new phrase - A slogan to inspire the next 365 days, A motto to live by this coming New Year, But the catchy words fell flat to my ear.

And then I heard His still small voice Saying, "Consider this simple, daily choice: With each new dawn and close of day Make new your resolve to trust and obey."

"Don't look back, caught in regret Or dwell on the sorrow of dreams unmet; Don't stare forward anchored by fear, No, live in this moment, for I Am here."

"I am all you need. Everything. I Am. You are held secure by my strong hand. Give me this one thing—your all in all; Into my grace, let yourself fall."

By Mary Fairchild

News from around the world



Anne Bergen, WWCTU Organization Secretary



May God guide and bless your efforts for WCTU as we move into 2024. We have four very different, but encouraging, countries to share with you.

TOGO

It is exciting to report that our most recently planted WCTU has been started by Korean missionary, Christine Kim, in Togo, West Africa.

She has three prayer requests for us:



- -We have been praying and planning, and we are going to have a Revival Meeting for an Awakening and for a Call to Repentance.
- Please pray that the fire of the Spirit may fall upon all the youth and adults to be burning as beacon of the Temperance Movement.
- " CONSECRATE yourself to IMPACT the Next Generation "

We earnestly appeal you to encourage and intercede for the youth and the adults in the West Africa.

FINLAND

News from new President, Marjut Ropo-Lyytikäinen

Unfortunately, due to many negative changes in the operational environment here in Europe, our work in the Finnish White Ribbon Union has to face up to many new challenges as well: Financing is unsure. It is sometimes difficult to find funding sources to support our work. Some may cut the amount of support, the others may limit it. In order to maintain established activities and services we need funding sources.

In 2024 our special goal is to increase the awareness and visibility of the Finnish White Ribbon Union and the local chapters. We try to intensify the cooperation with our long-term partners and make the effort to achieve prominence among financiers and foundations. These measures are crucial, if we want to provide good high- quality therapy services to our clients now and in the future.



Solomon Islands together with Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga and Vanuatu, will benefit from a recently signed MoU between@UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji and ANZ Bank to help people, in particular youth, women and vulnerable groups develop financial literacy (money management skills, knowledge and confidence) and have resources to establish a solid basis for implementing their innovative ideas and solutions. With these activities, this partnership will contribute to #SDG 1 (No Poverty). SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality). We at UNDP Solomon Islands are humbled to be part of this cooperation!!







Lee Mihae, the new President of **CAMBODIA WCTU**, has reported some exciting new developments in her country during recent months. A Cambodian lady, Sina, is helping CWCTU by arranging temperance lectures in public schools again and had the largest audience, 450 students, in our 10 years' history.

God also expanded CWCTU's ministry through connecting with 3 important groups:

PMCI (People for Medical Cooperation International), agreed to deliver the temperance education whenever they hold the mobile medical services for 400 - 500 people in countryside towns, 2 –3 times monthly.

We have 3 nurses from Hebron Medical Center as our new local members. They play very important roles in our lectures.

Okto Mission Center provides the Gospel animations that are distributed with the temperance pamphlets. For this ministry, CWCTU recently sent to PMCI 5,000 temperance pamphlets and 3,000 booklets of the Gospel animations, printed in Cambodian, to be distributed by PMCI.



Social Service Department 2024 - 2026

Rhona Theodore

Social Service aims to promote the welfare of others.

"The Social Services Department reaches out to the community and individuals who are neglected, suffering or in need, without any prejudice of race, religion, age or gender by sharing the love of Jesus Christ through giving our love and support". WWCTU

We all breathed a sigh of relief with the end of "COVID" but in its wake, people who were living alone are still finding it difficult to resume their activities. They have lost the urge to leave their homes and are finding it difficult to pick up the threads of friendship.

What we can do:

Make a list of names (friends) and phone, visit, take them out (especially if they do not drive). Would they like a lift to church? Do they need help to visit the doctor? Groceries? Or just to sit with them and watch TV!

(tip: don't wait for them to contact us)

Prior to working with children and adults, we need to be aware of the 'why' people take drugs in the first place. Everyone knows that drugs are dangerous and a difficult habit to break... but everyone THINKS that they are different, and it won't affect them. People turn to drugs and alcohol for a multitude of reasons; understanding these motives may be what it takes to help someone overcome addiction:

To fit in

To escape or relax

To relieve boredom

To seem grown up

To rebel

To experiment

and please add to this list as needed for each area/country

They think drugs are a solution. But eventually, the drugs become the problem. Difficult as it may be to face one's problems, the consequences of drug use are always worse than the problem one is trying to solve with them. The real answer is to get the facts and not to take drugs in the first place.

But, let's start from the beginning: in a Newsletter FARE: Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education, states "It is not just the nine months of pregnancy that should be alcohol-free: prior to conceiving, while trying to conceive, while pregnant, while breast feeding it is safest not to drink alcohol. Ensuring breastmilk remains alcohol-free is crucial for infants, as their developing brains are more susceptible to the effects of alcohol harm than adults."

In Victoria, Australia, our Drug Education in schools continue to be well received. It is important and one way to try to educate and influence young people. In addition to the range of excellent information leaflets, that we have used in over the 25+ years, we introduced games for students based on snakes and ladders called 'vapes and ladders' and 'smokes and ladders', which have proved very popular with the staff and students in schools visited. Vaping is very harmful, and I have attached a leaflet, (prepared by Anne Bergen) about it which you can download and



adapt for your needs. The Australian Government is trying to enforce a new ban on the sale and importation of vapes.

Let us be vigilant to promote and protect our Christian values in our homes and communities. Other issues we might include as we work to promote the welfare of others include moral issues, family violence, and gambling.

At the local level, let us work to strengthen and develop work in the local branches and to take good care of the members and continue membership recruitment.

Merciful God, You hold heaven and earth in a single peace. Have mercy on those who suffer in this world because of war, civil strife, persecution, and poverty. We particularly pray for the peoples of the Holy Land, Palestinians and Israelis.

We pray for every land with its own special needs.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to HIM be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21

Let's resolve to make 2024 a year of building trust and hope in all that we can accomplish together. – Antonio Guterres, in his message for the New Year. Antonio Guterres is Secretary-General. United Nations.

VAPING AND THE HUMAN BODY

Effects on lungs

Studies show that vaping irritates lungs. **E-VALI** (ecigarette and vaping acquired lung injury) is now a recognised medical problem caused by smoking vapes containing nicotine.

Studies suggest that even nicotine-free vaping can irritate the respiratory system, cause cell death, trigger inflammation and harm blood vessels.

In 2019, research through multiple studies by Johns Hopkins Medicine reported a link between e-cigarettes and increased odds for developing asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. January 21, 2020, the CDC (Centre for Disease Control) had confirmed that vaping was associated with 60 deaths in the United States and more than 1000 cases of E-VALI. The symptoms of the lung disease resulting from vaping include coughing, shortness of breath, chest pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, and stomach pain.

Daniel, 17, in USA, had been vaping several times a day and developed severe lung problems as a result. He required a complete lung transplant to save his life.

Poisoning, seizures, and burns also occur with vaping.



Effect on the brain

The brain continues to change and pathways develop until a person is in their mid-20s. Nicotine is very addictive, and nicotine use during adolescence can change the structure and function of the brain. It affects the developing attention, learning, memory, mood, impulse control, and mental health. The habit of puffing on a vape develops, becoming an addiction.

Effect on the mouth: Vaping can increase the risk of tooth cavities and gum disease.

Effect on the heart

Some studies have shown that taking a puff of a nicotine e-cigarette can cause an immediate increase in heart rate and blood pressure. Different studies in 2017, 2018 and 2019 found that vaping did increase a person's risk of heart disease.

News from Australia

News from New South Wales

Joy Butler and Tanja Curcic, visiting from Uganda, combined forces at the Cooranbong Mini Fair on Sunday, **February 4**. Tanja displayed the Little Blue Shed products made by women in Uganda who she cares for and provides Christian training. A WCTU display invited people to visit our booth where we shared literature and our new look cards.

New South Wales



The small Newcastle Circle group met on **February 5** and Helen Palmer read a beautiful devotional about Being Humble - A Foundational Virtue. In the Bible we see that God lavishes His favour upon and grants wisdom to the humble. We shared how this small group has prepared so many Care Bags for various places in Newcastle where people are sick or in great need. We discussed our vision for an expansion of WCTU in NSW. Pray for our future.

The Cooranbong group met on **February 6** at Sunnyside convention centre where 16 women came to hear Tanja's story. Tanja Curcic, from Sydney, found God after a breakdown in her life because of many years of smoking, alclohol and drug use. God found her and delivered her from a miserable life. She ended up in Uganda where she has built The Little Blue Shed programme to help vulnerable women and hurting people. Jesus has been the answer to her troubles and to hundreds of others in that central part of Uganda. She shared and sold her products made by the women and we enlisted some new members to WCTU. A worthwhile and blessed morning.



Tanja Curcic



Joy and Tanja at the Mini Fair



Cooranbong group

News from South Australia

South Australia



Greetings from S.A. Well we have hit the ground running already in 2024! We were invited to host a WCTU promotional stand at a Christian conference in the Adelaide Convention Centre which saw 2,000 people in attendance. We connected with some wonder people, including our new sister Grace (pictured below). We had no idea at the time, that we have supported Graces community Yuendumu in several ways through our

precious member Sharon Bird in Alice Springs. Grace visited our tea rooms during her visit to Adelaide and is considering becoming a WCTU member. We believe that some of the old WCTU wells will be re-dug throughout the NT.



Live to Love Convention Adelaide

Our 'We Care Box' ministry has been going for several years, since the death of my son Nathan. The boxes are distributed through Major Crime to the families of homicide victims. These boxes contain a Christian book on grief, tea, coffee, long life milk, biscuits etc.

We have recently been approached to provide more boxes to other Victim Support Officers who deal with victims resulting from other trauma crimes. Statistically many criminal offences are caused while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.





Vice President Sue Langberg, Grace Yuendumu, President Karen Edwards, Jayne Crichton our sister visiting from WA

It is a blessing to let these unfortunate people who are victims of such terrible circumstances, that we care and pray for them.

'We Care Box' ministry



Our wonderful new property that is accommodation for remote workers, is gradually being transformed room by room. Some of our men who are long term guests appreciate our WCTU Quarters, and always help with the garden and planting plants

Promoting Non-alcoholic drinks

We have been selling and promoting these lovely drinks for decades. We are pleased to say that prior to Christmas, we sold 60 bottles of sparking juice to customers that chose to use them for Christmas celebrations and gifts.

We also serve glasses of these drinks in our tea rooms, and people pleasantly surprised at how delicious and refreshing they are. Many buy some to take home!

We had a story from a man who said the drinks saved his wife's life. She was an alcoholic, and he used to tip half the champagne bottle out & fill the other half with sparking grape juice. She was gradually set free from her addiction. Such a wonderful story of this man's love for his wife



WCTU Teatotallers Tea Rooms drink display

May the Lord bless and keep us strong to serve Him and give Him the Glory in all things. Blessings Karen EdwardsWCTU SA

News from Victoria

WCTU Victoria Report for Connector February 2024 Anne Bergen

The main activity in Victoria during the holiday period has been the renewal and updating of our FASD warning advertising.



We have also had FASD warning ads on the back of three buses and have been changing the location of these regularly. This year we have signed a contract with Go Transit to have our advertisements on buses in Mildura, Latrobe Valley, Bendigo, Geelong and Shepparton. The total cost for the year will be nearly \$23,000 + GST but we feel that it is a good use of our money. I have attached a photo of one of these new ads.

Our new website is complete and can be accessed at https://drugfreelifestyles.com.au



Bus Advertising in Victoria









Say NO!

Choose right!

Good habits, friends and decisions!



Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders