

Reclaiming Christmas in the Local Community:

*This is a summary of Leigh Wilson's sharing at SACC General Meeting,
29 April 2018*

Before I re-joined the Gawler Inter-Church Council, where I represent Gawler Salvation Army, I asked to speak to the meeting of the Council In July 2016.

I shared a dream God had given me, that we should attempt to regain the essential meaning of Christmas in the wider community.

I suggested that we should adopt an idea which had been used by the churches in Geelong which involved folk in the churches making small objects relating to the Christmas story and placing them in the shop windows. Children collected passports which they had stamped at each shop which displayed the object. One year the object was sheep and another year it was wise men.

The Churches had noted increased interest in their Christmas programmes.

The idea was eagerly accepted by the members of the Council and a small working group was formed. We met regularly to plan our approach and were blessed to have a graphic artist who prepared our publicity. We visited the shops in Murray Street, Gawler, Inviting them to be part of the project. We agreed that if even five or six shops were interested we could go ahead. To our delight 20 shopkeepers agreed to take part. We invited folk in our churches, and school children, to make wise men and we were amazed at the number and quality and variety of the Wise men we received.

Children were issued with printed passports which they took to each of the shops and received a sticker. They then took the completed passports to the Christian bookshop where they exchanged them for a gift pack which included a list of the Christmas services in each of churches. When the passport process had finished, we were able to display all the Wise Men, over 80 in number, in a large shop window.

The highlight of the project was undoubtedly the enthusiasm of the shopkeepers and their willingness to be involved on future occasions. Unfortunately we did not have the people resources to repeat the project for Christmas 2017. We hope however to do something similar for Christmas 2018.

For any further information please contact Leigh at leighwilson07@gmail.com