



LONGEST LUTHERAN LUNCH

A special celebration liftout

where love
comes to life

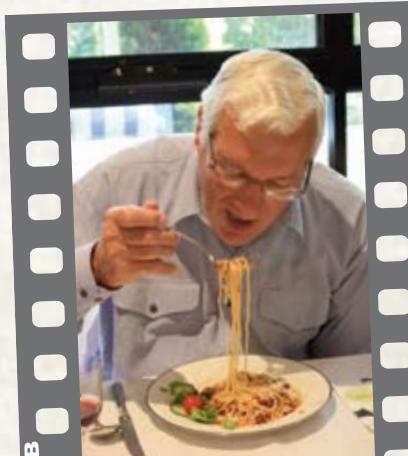


*E*verybody
eats...

... and, what's more, most people love to eat. That's why food is such a great way of connecting people. Eating together is pleasurable, it's relaxing, and it's the perfect complement to lingering conversation.

Over lunch, people will tell you things they'd never tell you after church. Eating together breaks down barriers and builds bridges.

On or close to 30 October, over 130 congregations, two schools and one



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The Longest (way from home) Lutheran Lunch

by Jonathan Krause

The Longest Lutheran Lunch has been part of my life most days for the last 18 months ...

... so it's strange being on the other side of the planet when the Lunch actually happens.

While you were at your German buffet, Chinese smorgasbord, hangi, barbecue or picnic, I was sitting in a tent in the compound of a Catholic aid agency in Torit, deep in southern Sudan.

Our **Longest Lutheran Lunch** – and, yes, we did celebrate it – was pumpkin leaves, stew with a meat that might have been beef, beans and ugali (a stiff maize porridge you cut with a knife).

Torit is on the way to Ikotos, where drought and conflict force people to survive without food production for months each year. They call this the 'hunger gap'.

Through Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS), Lutherans from Australia and New Zealand are helping to fill this gap. Together we've provided seeds, tools and bore-holes and training for farmers. Because of your



action, families here will have a 'lunch', too.

All this might seem a long way from your **Longest Lutheran Lunch**. Yet, as the church of Jesus in this world, we seek to be a community where

people are welcomed with friendship, hospitality and care.

Food gives us a simple way to connect with people and helps us understand people's deeper needs and real hunger.

The person you connect with might be living next door. Or a colleague at work. Or the quiet couple at bowls.

My prayer is that this year's Longest Lutheran Lunch has given you the taste of a church **where love comes to life** — the first course of the heavenly banquet to which we're all invited

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Or they might be the lady I met yesterday in a South Sudan village, whose child had died unexpectedly. And who for seven months of the year does not know what she will feed her surviving children.

For many of us, that person might be our own kids or grandchildren, maybe even our life partner – people we love with all our heart who don't yet know the love of Jesus as we do.

The **Longest Lutheran Lunch** is not meant to end when the last crumbs are brushed from the table and the dishes washed and dried. I hope that in the months to come, each one of us can find ways to connect more closely and deeply with our community, our family and our neighbours. You're welcome to visit www.operationconnect.org for ideas and action-starters.

My prayer is that this year's **Longest Lutheran Lunch** has given you the taste of a church **where love comes to life** — the first course of the heavenly banquet to which we're all invited.



Jonathan Krause (second from left) sits down to his Longest Lutheran Lunch in South Sudan with Chey Mattner (ALWS), Gamal Nyaragi (Caritas Switzerland/Luxembourg), Glenice Hartwich (LCA Board for Mission) and Arie den Toom (LWF Sudan)

27-member family took a leap of faith — they held a **Longest Lutheran Lunch**.

They stepped out together, believing that the simple acts of offering hospitality and sharing a meal together would open up some arms, do some healing, welcome some strangers, make some new friends. And that's exactly what happened.

For every **Longest Lutheran Lunch** there's a story of God at work. These pages carry only a tiny entrée of them. Nevertheless, we hope you'll relive some special memories here.

And that you'll feel part of a big and exciting LCA, and not feel so little and alone anymore.

And that you'll grab some ideas that will ignite your plans for next year's **Longest Lutheran Lunch**.

Thank you, every one of you, for being part of something deliciously wonderful.



'WE MIGHT BE A SMALL CONGREGATION with only fifteen regular members, but when we sit down at the Longest Lutheran Lunch on Reformation Day, we'll remember that we belong to a 60,000-strong family of Lutherans in Australia and New Zealand, many of whom will be lunching and munching at the same time as us. That's a real blessing and encouragement to small congregations like ours' (Tracey Woidt, Buccleuch SA).



IT ALL STARTED IN NEW ZEALAND. We can't say exactly where, though, or pinpoint the precise moment. That's a closely guarded Kiwi secret — because all the New Zealanders want to collectively share the glory of being the world's first Longest Lutheran Lunchers. And if that's not enough to puff out Kiwi chests, the LCNZ District also boasts the highest percentage of congregations to hold a Longest Lutheran Lunch. Only by a pinch, though ... Western Australia came in a very close second. Follow the filmstrip through these pages, and enjoy again our Longest Lutheran Lunch — all eight hours of it. On this page: Botany Auckland (Chinese) NZ, Summerset Retirement Village (an outreach event of Palmerston North NZ), Tauranga NZ, and Moorabbin's (Vic) long cream-covered chocolate log.

Right: Was Jens Meder of Mountainside Auckland the world's very first Longest Lutheran Luncher? ... or just the loneliest?



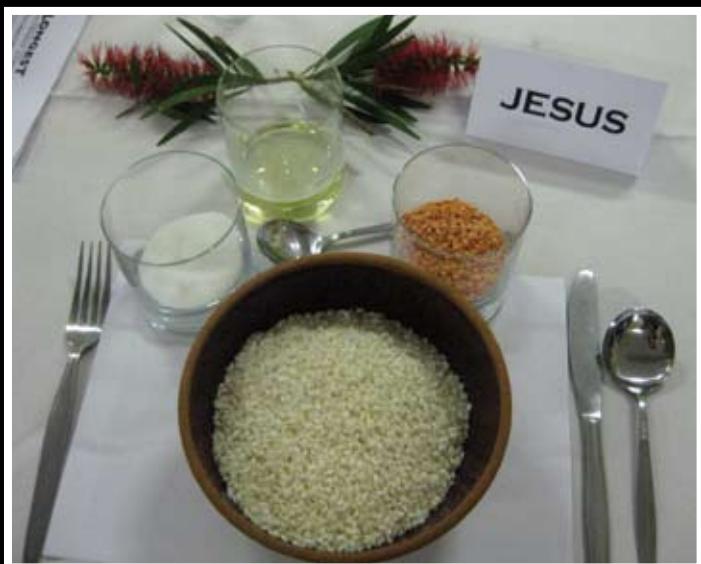


LIBERAL LASHINGS OF LAMB AND LENTILS: Only foods starting with L (lasagne, lettuce, lemon desserts, lemonade ...) were on the lunch menu at Tuggeranong (ACT). Well, not quite. The organisers relented a little — if the food didn't start with L, it would still be accepted if it was made with Love. They even wrote a fantastic L poem for the occasion. You'll find it on the LCA website (www.lca.org.au) along with all the other Longest Lutheran Lunch stories.



Gary Rollans and Philip Preis man the barbecue at Narrabeen (Sydney), where guests outnumbered members.

Melbourne congregations didn't let the cold and drizzle dampen their lunches. They rugged up, moved indoors and enjoyed potfuls of warm conversation. Ringwood/Knox (above left) adopted an Italian theme, and Outer Eastern kept their picnic hopes alive by moving inside their rustic church and using tartan rugs as tablecloths.



"WHEN I WAS HUNGRY ...": A number of you set a place 'for Jesus' (Angaston's pictured here), with measured portions of rice, lentils, sugar and oil — the daily ration for an adult refugee. Elsewhere the plight of refugees was highlighted in placemats depicting food rations, or by placing bowls of porridge on tables. And as a way of connecting with and caring for God's people in less privileged parts of the world, some of you also raised funds for the ALWS East Africa Famine Appeal.

THE LONGEST LUTHERAN LAMINGTON (left): Even though close to 200 people were involved in devouring Rochedale's (Qld) 13.8 metre lamington, there was still plenty left over for the freezer. So Rochedale members will be enjoying their Longest Lutheran Lamington for many months to come.



At Stawell (Vic), confirmation day was no reason not to hold a Longest Lutheran Lunch. Confirmees invited their families and friends, and everyone celebrated together.

At Lobethal (SA) they managed to barbecue the Longest Lutheran Sausage all in one piece! And pictured right is the proud winner of their longest-hair competition.



LONG STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION: You let your creativity run wild when you were brainstorming interpretations of 'long'. There was long food — long bread rolls (Moorabbin's pictured here), long vegetable sticks, long spaghetti and long chocolate logs. We think the prizes for the most creative long food, though, go to Rochedale's Longest Lutheran Lamington (13.8 metres) and Lobethal's Longest Lutheran Sausage (14.33 metres). Then there were 'long' competitions — the longest boot toss, the longest football kick, the longest unbroken strip of Mintie wrapper, the longest stretched snake (lolly ones, not real ones!) ... And Epping (Sydney) stretched their long lunch skywards, claiming the prize for the Loftiest Lutheran Lunch (above right).

We held our lunch at the footy club, as people might not come into a church building ... We were able to reach out to them by using a community facility (Helen Schiller, Pinnaroo SA)

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**Just one of
the dishes
from Botany
Auckland's
finger-licking
Chinese banquet**



The Footscray (Vic) congregation is likely to have hosted the most culturally diverse Longest Lutheran Lunch, with members and friends from over 20 nations.

MENU

There was plenty of sauerkraut stewing and beer brewing in preparation for Reformation Day Longest Lutheran Lunches, with many clever chefs proving that 'gourmet' and 'German' really can be used in the same sentence!

But while German cuisine was the most popular, it certainly wasn't the only cuisine on lunch menus across New Zealand and Australia.

Our Chinese congregations and those with large African memberships covered Longest Lutheran Lunch tables with the sorts of dishes that had never been heard of in the LCA only a decade or so ago. We know of at least one hangi. And there was a strong dash of Scandinavian flavours in the smorgasbord, too.

What a multi-cultural church we've turned out to be!

Our tastebuds thank you, one and all!



Lunch styles and venues were as diverse as the menus. There were some stunning settings, notably the Barossa Combined Churches (cover page) and St Johns Southgate (back page). Some of you hosted formal sit-down affairs, while others packed up picnic baskets and headed to the park. A lot of church halls were decked out for the lunch in the sort of splendour they haven't seen in years. Quite a few pigs ended up on spits. (Mannum's pig, above, made a real ham of it.) And many of you opted for a Reformation Day feast the Australian way — steak and snags on the BBQ (the Dodt family, Ropeley Qld, pictured).



FOOD DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE. People of every size, occupation, colour, culture and theological persuasion need to eat. Our Longest Lutheran Lunches brought together at one table people who wouldn't normally have opportunity to share a meal together —and we suspect that God was busy at work there, mending and building his church. Here are some of us who make up the church in the LCA (left, from top): Littlest Lutheran Luncher Ruby Stark, 4 days old (Angaston SA); Longest Lutheran Lunchers Otholi Okwot, 197 cm, and John Zeppel, 198 cm, being measured by standing-on-a-box Kathy Hamilton, 152 cm (Salisbury SA); Oldest Lutheran Luncher Frank Kahler, 98 (Maryborough Qld).

At Narrogin's (WA) picnic in the park (below), even the children's talk, 'Green Eggs and Ham', had a foodie theme.



At South Kilkerran on the SA's grain-growing Yorke Peninsula, the pastor and chairman door-knocked every home in their community, inviting everyone to a no-strings-attached lunch — 'You don't have to come to church first'. The result? Twenty non-members came to the lunch, including twelve who'd had nothing to do with the church before.

Two schools held Longest Lutheran Lunches: Prince of Peace, Everton Hills Qld (Argy Schofield and Sarah Wilson pictured wearing crazy hats) and Redeemer Nurioopta SA. 'This event has the potential to be very powerful in assisting students to build connections with the church and the community', said Redeemer teacher Darren Altus.

The Longest-Way-From-Anywhere Lutheran Lunch: Kalgoorlie WA is 400 kilometres from the nearest Lutheran church, Esperance. Perth is 600 kilometres to the west. 'You couldn't do lunches all the way across the LCA, from New Zealand to Perth, without going through the Goldfields', Karen Crouch said. 'So we needed to be involved.'



Congratulations!

History will record that the following congregations* (and two schools and one big family) were part of the LCA's very first Longest Lutheran Lunch. We hope you feel proud of yourselves. Take a bow.

* Fine print: The list below indicates those congregations that registered pre-lunch or have contacted us since. If you held a Longest Lutheran Lunch but aren't listed below, please tell us about it at <http://www.operationconnect.org/LLL/register.html>

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland - Mountainside
Auckland - Botany
Hamilton and Bay of Plenty
Parish (Kawerau, Whakatane, Tauranga)
Manawatu Parish (Palmerston North, Feilding)
Summerset Retirement Village

NEW SOUTH WALES

Belconnen
Epping
Gerrogy
Gosford
Henty
Narrabeen
Orange
St Marys
Sutherland
Tamworth
Tuggeranong

QUEENSLAND

Beaudesert
Bethania
Bethany/Raceview
Biloela
Bundaberg
Cairns
Dalby
Eveton Hills - Prince of Peace Lutheran College
Gladstone
Kumbia/Taabinga
Maryborough
Miles (with Wandoan, Chinchilla, Downfall Creek and Meandarra)
Mt Gravatt
Murrumba Downs
Nambour
Neldner family
Oakey/Norwin (combined with

Pittsworth Parish)

Pialba
Pittsworth Parish (Pittsworth, Millmerran, Nobby, Yandilla)
Redlands
Rochedale (with Redeemer Lutheran College)
Ropeley
Rosewood
Toowoomba (Good Shepherd)
Toowoomba (Redeemer)
Toowoomba/Highfields
Townsville

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Aberfoyle Park
Adelaide (Bethlehem)
Albert Park
Angaston
Barmera
Balaklava
Blackwood
Blair Athol
Bordertown
Bucklech
Carlsruhe
Cleve
Cowell
Freeling/Rosedale
Greenock
Hallett Cove
Gawler (Zion)
Golden Grove
Hahndorf (St Paul's)
Kapunda
Keith
Lobethal
Lock
Loxton (St Peter's)
Magill
Mannum
Morphettvale
Mt Barker

Mt Gambier

Murbko/Blanchetown
Murray Bridge
Nairne
Nuriootpa - Redeemer Lutheran School
Para Vista
Paringa
Pinnaroo Parish (Pinnaroo, Murrayville, Walpeup)
Port Lincoln
Rowland Flat
Salisbury
South Kilkerran
Tanunda - combined churches
Waikerie
Warradale
Woodside

VICTORIA

Ararat
Box Hill
Footscray
Geelong (St John's)
North Geelong
Outer Eastern (Croydon/Lilydale)
Hamilton
Moorabbin
Rainbow/Pella/Hopetoun
Ringwood/Knox
St Albans - combined churches
Southgate
Stawell
Wodonga Parish

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Albany
Duncraig
Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Katanning
Morley
Narrogin
Parkwood (with Perth Finnish)
Perth



From top: At Parkwood (WA) a lunch engagement! (Pastor Paul Hannola and Karen Martin); Southgate's (Vic) stunning lunch setting; Barossa Combined Churches (also the main cover picture), a huge community event at Faith Lutheran College, Tanunda (SA)



A feast of inspiration!

Still not full? Stories and photos for many Longest Lutheran Lunches (perhaps even your own) are on the LCA website www.lca.org.au Check them out — for fun, for inspiration and to encourage each other by making a 'Comment' at the bottom of the stories. If you're into social media, make sure you 'Like', Tweet and all that, so that the Longest Lutheran Lunch family will keep on growing ... and not just around the waist!