



# where love comes to life

## Background Statement to the Tagline of the Lutheran Church of Australia

When people fall in love, it's as if they come remarkably to life. Their eyes sparkle with special lights, their breath comes more urgently and they seem somehow to be straining forward to meet life. Love breathes life into the everyday ordinariness of our existence.

Actually, love changes people. The experience of being loved, at any stage of life, brings with it a kind of newness that brings out the best in us. We become more open to the gifts of life and the needs of others, and we live in a new way, a renewed way. Love brings life.

Of course, we can hardly think about love or life without thinking of God. God is love (1 John 4). Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14). In the very beginning God brought life to the world, reshaping the primeval chaos into a habitable planet (Genesis 1). God breathed his own life into our human bodies and brought us to life (Genesis 2).

God even entered human life at a depth which no-one could have anticipated, becoming a human being and filling our humanity with his own life. This flesh-taking (incarnation) was not an interesting experiment but God's own project to rescue us from death and futility, and to renovate the whole world. In spite of our worst efforts, even when we killed him, God succeeded in bringing love back to life (John 1).

To continue his work on earth, God created the church, whose task now is to celebrate love and life, and to be the vehicle for God's continued work of bringing love to life in the world. The church lives on the gifts of God – God's forgiveness, God's love, God's own life.

In its worship the church experiences the love of God in words and actions of forgiveness and of empowerment. Infused with the real presence of Jesus Christ, love comes decisively to life every time the people of God gather.

Life in the church is really a preparation and empowerment for a life of love in the world. As we hear the good news of Jesus Christ, as we receive his body and blood, we become new people, with new potential for good, with new energy for a life of love wherever God gives us the opportunity. Our families and our communities, our workplaces and our cultural settings might well experience through us something of God's love as it comes to life again in us. That's the plan. The life of a Christian is a life of faith active in love (Galatians 5), empowered by the love of Christ himself (1 Corinthians 13). Indeed, we have no other obligation, except to participate in this world transforming gift of God's love (Romans 13).

Where does love come to life in your congregation? Can a visitor feel it, taste it? Is there a deep and genuine experience of God's tangible love in the life of your congregation? Something to make God smile? Could our congregations be places where love comes to life?

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*NOTE: The Bible chapters sprinkled throughout this article in brackets are not optional extras, but are provided to point you to some passages that you might want to explore for yourself.*