

CHOOSE A DATE TO CELEBRATE *Christian Care Sunday*



Dates that are most suitable from the **common lectionary** (for those churches that choose to follow it) and the accompanying texts include the following.

This document complements and expands on the yearly planner.

In every lectionary year:

- **The greatest commandment or golden rule reading is shared from one of the gospels.** In Year C, the story of the Good Samaritan accompanies this reading from Luke. Details of these Sundays are included in each lectionary year list below (A, Proper 25; B, Proper 18; C, Proper 10).
- **Fourth Sunday of Easter – Good Shepherd Sunday** (always accompanied by a reading from John 10 and Psalm 23):
 - *These readings answer the questions:* what does good pastoral care look like, and who is looking after us who care for others? Jesus, the Good Shepherd.
 - *Year A provides the complementary reading* Acts 2:42–47 – a description of the early church life, including the sharing of wealth, eating together and general goodwill.
 - *Year B provides complementary reading* 1 John 3:16–24 – we will be known by our love and deeds, not just our words.
 - *Year C provides a reading* about Dorcas, who was devoted to good deeds and charity.

Lectionary Year A (2023, 2026):

- THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
 - **Luke 24:13–35** – the road to Emmaus. Jesus walked with his grieving disciples, alongside them on the road after a significant event, until they had clarity about what had happened and had found hope again. Jesus offers us hope in a crisis and walks with us as we walk with others.
- PROPER 6 (11) *Third Sunday after Pentecost*
 - **Genesis 18:1–15, (21:1–7)** – the story of Abraham entertaining heavenly guests – a focus on hospitality, welcome and embrace.
- PROPER 25 (30) *Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost*
 - **Matthew 22:34–40** – the greatest commandment: loving God and loving your neighbour as yourself.
- THE LAST SUNDAY IN THE CHURCH YEAR – PROPER 29 (34)
 - **Matthew 25:31–46** – finding the face of Christ in vulnerable people; care as concrete acts, such as clothing, feeding, providing a drink of water, visiting, healing, and welcoming the stranger.

Lectionary Year B (2024, 2027):

- PROPER 18 (23) *Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost*
 - **James 2:14–26** – faith without works is dead. It is not enough to say to people, ‘Go in peace – be warm and well fed’ but do nothing about their physical needs. This reading can be linked to the current phenomenon of ‘thoughts and prayers’ as an empty platitude in the media.
- PROPER 26 (31) *Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost*
 - **Mark 12:28–34** – the greatest commandment: loving God and loving your neighbour as yourself.
- ALL SAINTS DAY
 - **John 11:32–44** – the resurrection of Lazarus. Care grieves with people and feels pain; Jesus overcomes death and gives hope for new life. This Sunday could be particularly relevant for aged-care settings or communities who have experienced significant loss.

Lectionary Year C (2025, 2028):

- NEW YEAR'S DAY
 - **Matthew 25:31–46** – finding the face of Christ in vulnerable people; care as concrete acts, such as clothing, feeding, providing a drink of water, visiting, healing, and welcoming the stranger.
- EASTER EVENING
 - **Luke 24:13–49** – the road to Emmaus. Jesus walked with his grieving disciples, alongside them on the road after a significant event, until they had clarity about what had happened and had found hope again. Jesus offers us hope in a crisis and walks with us as we walk with others.
- FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
 - **John 13:34,35** – a new commandment: love one another. An easy link to the LCA NZ tagline ‘where love comes to life’.
- PROPER 10 (15) *Fifth Sunday after Pentecost*
 - **Luke 10:25–37** – the greatest commandment: loving God and loving your neighbour as yourself, and the story of the Good Samaritan.
- PROPER 11 (16) *Sixth Sunday after Pentecost*
 - **Luke 10:38–42** – Mary and Martha. Care ministries are grounded in love and listening, not just doing. It is easy to become overwhelmed with the pressure to meet every need. Jesus invites us to come and sit and listen to him first as a priority.
 - **Genesis 18:1–10a** – the story of Abraham entertaining heavenly guests with a focus on hospitality, welcome and embrace.

You will find worship planning ideas inside the Worship Planning Page at www.lca.org.au/worship/wpp

You can use the worship planner for the lectionary day to plan your service.

Alternately, you can use the ready-to-go worship service found at www.lca.org.au/christian-care-sunday-resources/ for a Christian Care Sunday on any day of the year.

Other significant church celebrations

The celebration of saint days is not strongly practiced in Australian Lutheran churches, however, these exemplary Christian witnesses from history can inspire us toward love and good deeds as we remember their lives and examples. We have chosen four such feast days that might intersect with Christian Care Sunday for your church community. Choose a saint day that resonates with the care work your congregation or organisation does or is inspired to do.

29 July – Celebration of the Saints of Mary, Martha and Lazarus

These were the friends of Jesus. Martha exemplified hospitality and faithful witness; Mary remembered to be fed first with the word of God; Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus. Jesus spent his life with these people, eating meals with them. He felt grief and compassion for them in their hardship. Their relationship with each other teaches us about Christian care, friendship and walking together through life.

5 September – Teresa of Calcutta, best known as Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa worked tirelessly on behalf of the poor. Her love knew no bounds. Nor did her energy, as she crisscrossed the globe pleading for support and inviting others to see the face of Jesus in the poorest of the poor. She is known for forming the Missionaries of Charity and for her work with the poor in India. Mother Teresa formed schools for orphans and cared for the most vulnerable in her community and people known as untouchables, such as people dying from leprosy.

4 October – Feast Day for Saint Francis of Assisi

Saint Francis is remembered for his generosity to the poor and his willingness to minister to the lepers. He is remembered for his love for animals and nature. The Prayer of St Francis is a wonderful call to extend care to others and our world.

18 October – Feast Day for Saint Luke, doctor and gospel writer

Liturgical supports are available for this feast day at the Commission on Worship, 'Minor festivals and other days' tab found at www.lca.org.au/worship/wpp/liturgical-resources/sunday-by-sunday-worship-resources/

You might like to highlight and celebrate the work of doctors and nurses in your community on this day or the work of Lutheran nurses (www.lca.org.au/lutheran-nurses) and pastoral care nursing (www.lca.org.au/parish-nursing).

Local dates that might be relevant

- The birth date/opening anniversary of any significant care organisation or ministry in your community or congregation, for example, a Lutheran service or aged-care facility
- A date that coincides with a local appeal being run by your Lutheran service or aged-care facility or another local service that helps vulnerable people in your community. Please be led by the local service as to the assistance they need: financial or practical. At times, food, essential sanitary and hygiene products or toys may be required for hampers. If in doubt, please contact your local service to ask what assistance your congregation or ministry group can provide to help them in their work.

Dates to consider from the Australian cultural calendar

These dates are suggested if you wish to highlight a particular vulnerable people group in our communities, and/or the work that is done by government and non-government (including faith-based) organisations.

- Harmony Day 21 March – a day for respect, inclusiveness and belonging for all Australians, celebrating the multicultural nature of our country <https://www.harmony.gov.au>
- Each May, Queensland marks Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month (DFVP Month)
- National Volunteers Week 17–23 May <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/get-involved/nvw>
- National Sorry Day 26 May 2021
- National Reconciliation Week 27 May – 3 June <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/national-reconciliation-week>
- NAIDOC Week, first to second Sunday in July <https://www.naidoc.org.au>
- Refugee Week 20–26 June <https://www.refugeeweek.org.au>
- R U OK? Day 9 September <https://www.ruok.org.au>
- National Police Week 18–29 September 2021 <https://policeweek.org.au>
- Sexual Violence Awareness Month, October
- National Carers Week 10–16 October 2021 – a time to recognise the 2.65 million Australians who provide care and support to a family member or friend with disability, mental health condition, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue or who are frail or aged <https://carersweek.com.au>
- Anti-Poverty Week 17–23 October <https://antipovertyweek.org.au>
- White Ribbon Day, the last Friday before 25 November every year in Australia. This is a time where communities come together to stand up, speak out and act to say ‘no’ to gendered violence in Australia. In 2021, it is 21 November <https://www.whiteribbon.org.au>

Dates to consider from the New Zealand cultural calendar

- Race Relations Day 21 March 2021
- NZ Volunteering Week 19–25 June 2016
- Youth Week 8–16 May 2021 <https://arataiohi.org.nz/youthweek>
- Samoan Language Week 30 May – 5 June 2021
- Disability Awareness Sunday, third Sunday in June
- Māori Language Week 13–19 September 2021
- Mental Health Awareness Week 21–27 September <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/our-campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week>
- White Ribbon Day 25 November – this is a time where communities come together to stand up, speak out and act to say ‘no’ to gendered violence in New Zealand
- AIDS Foundation Red Ribbon Day 1 December

International dates of relevance

The year 2021 has been designated as the International Year of Health and Care Workers. Choose any day to highlight this celebration of health and care workers in your community and the world.

- Law Enforcement Appreciation Day 9 January
- World Day of Social Justice 20 February
- Social Work Month, March
- Children's Day, first Sunday in March
- International Women's Day 8 March
- Won't you be my Neighbour Day (in honour of Fred Rogers) 20 March
- Doctors' Day 30 March
- World Fair Trade Day, second Saturday in May (8 May in 2021)
- International Nurses Day 12 May
- UN World Refugee Day 20 June
- World Day Against the Trafficking in Persons 30 July
- Aged Care Employees Day 7 August
- International Day of Indigenous People 9 August
- World Youth Day 12 August
- Random Acts of Kindness Day 1 September
- World Mental Health Day 10 October
- International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 17 October
- World Day for the Prevention of Abuse and Violence Against Children 19 November
- UN's International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women 25 November
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities 3 December
- World Volunteer Day 5 December
- World Human Rights Day 10 December

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