



Blessed to be Church

Popular Report of the 50th LCA SA-NT District Convention of Synod, Encounter Lutheran College, Victor Harbor 20-21st May 2023

The theme of District Convention of Synod was "Blessed to be Church" and we sure were blessed with wonderful anecdotes of how God is working in and through our people with the sharing of good news stories throughout the weekend.

Convention opened with worship with First Assistant Bishop Andrew Brook preaching and Bishop David Altus as liturgist. We finished and began each day with either a devotion lead by lay people or a worship service.

On the Saturday morning we launched the vision of "Real Grace, Real Life, Real Community" for our District. This is about local faith communities recognising and celebrating the ways we experience God's **real grace** that impacts and changes our experience of **real life** as we extend God's love to our world in **real community**. A video was shared and we engaged in discussions on our tables around what this looks like in our community. Resources will be shared to keep this conversation going throughout our District.

Bishop David provided his final report to the synod. He spoke about the things he has learnt about the Church and as Bishop, his hopes for the future and five special experiences during his tenure. Assistant Bishop for Mission, Pastor Stephen Schultz presented the Mission Report, speaking of regional collaborations, the changing landscape within our Church and the changing ministry availability and requirements. He also provided commentary about the National Church Life Survey results for congregations in the District.

The synod received information about the new Ministry Reviews which are being trialled within our District and how to complete this with our pastors. Each congregation was provided with a brochure to assist in this process. Additionally, we were told about the Ministry Futures Project which is looking at ministry supply within our Church and how we can better serve our congregations with the pastoral support they require.

A highlight of convention was the welcoming of Grace Chinese Lutheran Church into membership, with some of their members joining us for lunch and a blessing. Please pray for this new congregation as they grow and for Tim Chen who will join the SMP program later this year as their pastor.

Synod approved a new Assistant Bishop for the Northern Territory position which will be based in Alice Springs to support all ministries within the NT. A call committee will be formed, and it is hoped that a pastor would be called to this position before the end of the year. The District and FRM have committed to a four-year funding partnership for this position.



An appeal for Deaf Ministry was launched which will support the training of Julian Mazzeo as an SMP specifically for the Deaf community. Adelaide Deaf Community Church have been worshipping at Pilgrim Magill with Pastor Michael Prenzler as well as live streaming their services which are reaching Deaf people throughout Australia. For more information, please click [here](#). To support this appeal, donations can be made electronically to: LCA SA-NT District Albert Geisler Fund, BSB 704942, A/C 100 969 623.

Convention elected a new leadership team of Pastor Andrew Brook as Bishop, Pastor Adrian Kitson as First Assistant Bishop, and Pastor Joel Cramer as Second Assistant Bishop. Pastor Andrew will be installed as Bishop later this year, after Bishop David has retired.



Throughout convention we heard from Aboriginal Ministry, Administration and Finance, Lutheran Disability Services, Aged Care, Lutheran Care, Lutheran Education SA, NT and WA together with LCA Bishop and LCA Executive Office. These reports provided delegates with an overview of ministry within the District and how we can assist these services.

Before our closing worship an acknowledgement of service ceremony was held for Bishop David who will retire in the next few months. He was thanked for his dedicated service, gentle demeanour and beautiful pastoral skills. Synod also acknowledged the wonderful support of David's wife, Carolyn and their family. Pastor Matthew Bishop, who is their local pastor prayed for them before delegates sang a blessing over them.

Delegates enjoyed time catching up with people either in the queue for coffee which was sponsored by LLL Australia, or over food, as well as at the LLL Australia sponsored Golden Hour event. The expos were also popular with delegates whereby they learnt about the various ministries of the LCA and other exhibitors.

The LLL sponsor the Mission Outreach Grants with \$15000 being provided to Victor Harbor Lutheran Church to assist with their Intergenerational Engagement Project and \$10000 to Trinity Pasadena to assist with their Wayside Chapel refurbishment project. We pray that both projects will be a blessing to these congregations.

The synod also approved changes to the District constitution to ensure this remained consistent with the LCA constitution as well as the Associations Incorporation Act of 1985. Delegates also approved updates to the Delegations Policy for DCC. These were approved as written in the Book of Reports.

Please speak with your delegate for additional information about any of the topics mentioned in this report.

The District Office gives thanks to God for all the staff and volunteers who assisted in making this event so uplifting and encouraging. Many thanks to Victor Harbor Lutheran Church and Encounter Lutheran College for their assistance in hosting District Pastors Conference and District Convention of Synod.

It was lovely to welcome lots of first-time delegates, and we noted that many of them were our younger members, so a special thank you to them. We also thank our delegates for being engaged in the conversations and supportive of the new initiatives that are being undertaken within the District. We ask that everyone continues to pray for these projects.

Please watch out for more stories and photos on our Facebook page (click [here](#)), our e-news Together Online (register [here](#)) and in the Together magazine.