



# REAL GRACE

is where our relationship with God is restored.

## REAL LIFE

is where God's love changes the way we live.

### *Real Community*

is where we extend God's love to others and learn to bring the good news into each other's lives.

### **This vision has been modelled by Lutheran heroes from our history.**

**Real Grace** was modelled by Martin Luther who was gritty, and open, and honest, and real.

**Real Life** was taught by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who challenged us to live in selfless community together.

**Real Community** was modelled by those who began the LCA NZ journey in our countries. They put up with each other. They forgave and moved on. They cared for each other in the hard times. They taught real grace and 'real faith' not only on Sundays, and in school rooms, but at camps and picnics, and throughout the week – in real life.

We are proud of our focus on **Real Grace**. That is, grace that heals hurts, grace that accepts the lost, grace that welcomes and restores our lives.

We are not afraid to embrace **Real Life**. When things don't look perfect, we know that grace and love will see us through. **Real Life** is acknowledging our mistakes and learning from our challenges. Real life is trusting in God in the midst of the struggles.

We do **Real Community** as we live in grace together. The church is a place where you can belong, where you can make real friends. Where you can discover your calling as we work together.

We pray that this vision will enable us to tell a new story of who we are. As we share with one another what Real Grace Real life and Real Community looks like may we encourage one another as we see what God is doing today.



**SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
NORTHERN TERRITORY**



# REAL GRACE

## REAL LIFE

### *Real Community*

A VISION FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH  
IN SA-NT



**SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
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## Why church?

Do you find yourself asking this question? Don't be surprised if you do, you're certainly not alone.

Data from the recent National Church Life Survey (NCLS) tells us that gathering for worship is the most important thing to us, and we value Holy Communion, preaching and worship style.

But why do we gather? Why do we celebrate the Word and Holy Communion? We seem to be stuck with a mindset that being a Christian is mostly about going to church and being spoon-fed. Can this be right?

Do we need to get back to basics and remember who we are in God, listen to what He is calling us to, and be reminded about that 'Great Commission', to make disciples of all nations?

Do we need to think about how we are answering God's call? Can we answer it sitting in a church building? What is the story that we are telling ourselves in our weekly practices?

Do we need to repent, that is, to return to God, acknowledge our mistakes, and give them over to Him?

## So, who are we?

We are a remnant Church. We no longer operate from a position of power in society. Our strength is Jesus. Through Him, we are here to answer the questions of the world – questions of the decline in mental health, and the loneliness epidemic; questions of belonging and purpose. Churches are not events-based clubs. We are hospitals for the broken, here to provide real Biblical community. The church is a place where people can belong and find meaning, restoration, comfort, and strength in Jesus, through grace alone, and where they can also find acceptance by real people.

## What do we need to repent of and return to?

One thing we can repent of is that we have often become self-serving. Another is our fear about getting things wrong and not knowing the right answers. And then there's the fear of the church closing and our wanting to keep the doors open to our local church expression.

What would it look like if we began to educate and equip ourselves to be Church in the world? Reading God's Word and devoting ourselves to prayer. These are learning areas that remind us of the 'why?' that motivates us to be the Church in the world in the first place.

## What is God calling us to?

The LCA NZ sums up our purpose well in its goal:  
**Gather. Grow. Go.**

## How do we answer God's call?

How do we move towards church communities that will grow in their faith and live a life worthy of the calling that we have received? Growing and going!

Our working group at the District office would like to hear about what Real Grace looks like in your local community. We are preparing a bible study that you can use to get into the scriptures and help you think about what **Real Grace Real life and Real Community** looks like at your place. Keep a look out for that later in 2023 and we will look forward to hearing your stories.