

Together

JUNE 2020

The
HOPE
issue

**Gratitude for
volunteers**

Beyond
church walls:
**new ways
to worship**

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Front cover: Attendees at Renew 2020 camp at Walker Flat. Image: supplied.

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Publication deadline

Editorial and advertising copy for the next edition of Together closes on Friday, August 7th. The magazine will be distributed in September. Online news content is published between editions on our website, Facebook page and eNews. To subscribe to our eNews 'Online Together', visit www.sant.lca.org.au/news/enews/



Editor's note

Welcome to the winter edition of Together magazine. When I wrote my last note to you all a few months back we couldn't have foreseen exactly how different our lives would become in the short period of time between then and now. I pen this piece at home, rather than in the office, and I am missing the familiar faces of colleagues and extended family as I'm sure you all have been, too. Thankfully technology has filled a gap here, and despite the physical church buildings being closed our community has quickly found new and innovative ways to connect and communicate, some of which you can read about on page 6.

Although our anticipated Synod gathering in May was forced to be cancelled, we wanted to remember its theme – 'The hope we have' – and its relevance to our lives in this moment, by dedicating this issue to the hopeful and optimistic stories from our community and the resilience and innovation shown by members of the church as they successfully worked to serve others during unprecedented circumstances.

As we go to print, restrictions are easing in South Australia with very low cases recorded over several weeks. While I pray that this positive trend continues not only here but globally, we can be reassured that, no matter what the circumstances, God's love is never quarantined and we can access it freely.



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Pastor David Altus
Bishop SA-NT District
Lutheran Church of Australia

A word from your Bishop...

I have found it encouraging and inspiring that in a time of crisis you as God's people have stepped up in all sorts of ways. You have mobilised teams, learnt new skills and used each other's gifts, reached out creatively, and looked for opportunities to make contact and show care for people, especially those who may have been impacted or are struggling the most.

I have witnessed a new energy and a passion to make sure everyone has access to the word of God in their hands, homes and on their screens, in order to sustain faith and life outside a church building – how good is that! Some aspects of our pastoral care for each other have even been enhanced during this time, as has our witness to our communities in new ways with new creativity. All of that has taken a lot of energy and in some cases brought with it new stresses. I have also been encouraged that at a time of crisis people have literally looked to what we have been offering as churches on-line, for comfort and hope. Churches all over the world have wondered what we may be learning from that for the future. I thank you, and I thank God for you, and for your faith, hope, love and witness during this challenging time. The church historically has often thrived in and through crisis, so it shouldn't surprise that God is working among us and through us at this time too.

What will all that mean once we start to reconnect physically, even in smaller numbers initially? Will it be 'business as usual?' As I write these words, some restrictions have just been lifted in the NT and are about to be in SA as part of the pathway back to some sort of normality (whatever that means) by some time in July. The Premier indicated that the way back into our churches will need to be cautious and staged. Thankfully more can be present at funerals, but even there I was able to 'attend' a funeral interstate on-line that I would not otherwise have been able to, which was a blessing. I am confident you will all handle the road ahead with the same faithfulness, responsibility and creativity that you exited our buildings with. Along the way please look out for those who may be most vulnerable for all sorts of reasons as time goes on.

I write this the week before the Pastors Conference and Synod that we had planned for mid-May in the Barossa, but won't be going ahead. Our Synod theme was an appropriate choice, not anticipating today's context when we chose it. **"The hope we have"** – 1 Peter 3:15.

"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect"

God bless you as you continue to share Jesus as the reason for the hope you live with, and as we share together as his church, whatever our circumstances. I look forward to seeing you again as soon as we are able in various regions of the District. I can't wait to hit the road again!

From the Bishop's diary...

Bereavements

We thank God for the life and ministry of **Pastors Paul Albers and Neil Hampel** who died recently and we pray for their families. Both Paul and Neil were wonderful "foot soldiers" who loved the Lord and people, and took every opportunity to give witness to Jesus, Paul particularly to the elderly and Neil with prisoners and among indigenous communities. We also remember before God **Dr John Strelan** who died in Northern NSW recently and who was a former Vice-President of the LCA and ALC lecturer. We pray for his family and especially for his son John Strelan who is the pastor at Adelaide St Stephens.

Calls accepted

Pastor Robin Zadow to Alice Springs.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT?

I wonder what you have learnt so far during this challenging season of life - about yourself, your family, neighbours, our country, about your relationship with God, and about life in his church?

- ▶ What have you missed about your 'old life', and why?
- ▶ How have you experienced 'being' the church when you couldn't 'go' to church?
- ▶ How have you experienced worshipping in different ways?
- ▶ What have you learnt that you would you want to keep and take with us into the future in our life together?
- ▶ What has caused you to think differently?

The District Mission Directors have been facilitating an ongoing conversation in the background about what we may have all learnt from God through this time. We want to hear from you.



District update

By Angela Rogers
District Administrator

District Office staff have recently spent many hours talking with congregation and parish leaders over the past few weeks. This has been a real blessing to us in that we are hearing about the ways that you are all connecting with your members and worshipping together, though apart. The connections that have been made with people are real and appreciated by so many. We have heard some innovative ideas that we are sure will continue when all of this is over. God is working through so many people in so many ways and you are continuing to share the love of Jesus with each other. Thank you for all that you are doing and will continue to do as we move forward.

As the District Administrator, much of my time recently has been spent supporting congregations and parishes through the financial challenges that COVID-19 is presenting. I am amazed at the number of people that have told me how generous their members have been and what a blessing this has been to their congregation. Thank you for supporting the ongoing work of your pastors and the congregations. There is much to be done.

The Australian Government was quick to recognise the needs of not-for-profit organisations and implemented a number of support packages which our congregations and parishes have been taking up. I sincerely thank all of those who have been involved in this for the work that they have done in this space – please thank your treasurers for their efforts. The District Administrators from all over our Church have been meeting twice weekly to support each other and ensure that the communication we provide to the Church is clear and accurate. Our leadership have been working very hard over recent weeks to ensure that we meet all the compliance requirements of the JobKeeper program and other initiatives. We will continue to provide guidance as information comes to hand. Please watch out for the Together Online eNews and other updates on Facebook.

District Office staff have been working remotely in the majority of cases and have appreciated the technology that has allowed us to connect with each other and you. We encourage you to continue to phone or email the District Office if you need us.

We pray that God will continue to bless you as you embrace our new ways of worshipping and being together.

SAVE THE DATE

2021 DISTRICT CONVENTION OF SYNOD

15 - 16 May 2021
Venue and other details to be confirmed
All enquiries to the SA-NT District Office
administration.sa-nt@lca.org.au or 08 8267 5211

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Please contact Richard and Alice Hoffmann
aliceandrichard2016@gmail.com

Coronavirus pandemic

HOPE IN STRANGE TIMES



Tanunda Lutheran Home residents show letters they've received while in isolation.

Comfort and connection: Chaplains

Buoying spirits and helping residents to feel comforted and connected are tasks that Chaplains at our District's Lutheran aged care and retirement living facilities undertake every day, but their role recently became even more crucial given the lockdown measures in place due to the global pandemic.

Ian Lutze, Tanunda Lutheran Home Chaplain, said most residents had taken the isolation from their family and loved ones in their stride, but that extra support was offered to those who needed it.

"All staff have been more attentive to our residents' emotional needs at this time and our organisation has given more hours to our assistant chaplain, Helen, to do more regular social visits and identify residents at emotional risk," he said.

While combined worship with independent living and care facility residents at the home has not been possible, alternative small-group worship or an individual devotional program has been arranged.

"Hope and comfort is provided through our regular worship, lots of conversations and more frequent visits," said Ian.

people or make people 'wake up', and instead we invite people to look sideways - to find God and Jesus in the loving care of staff, in the great decisions that have to be made, in the costly sacrifices of some people at this time, in the threads of wisdom that help people ponder this incredible time, and even in the jokes, because we all need a bit of a laugh to let off steam!"

Tim Kowald, Fullarton Lutheran Home Chaplain, said in many respects it had been 'business as usual' for chaplaincy at the home, and that he felt blessed to still have opportunities to minister to the residents and staff in person on a daily basis. Worship was still taking place, albeit in a slightly different format.

"I lead a Sunday service in our chapel, using an adjusted liturgy and recoded hymns, telecast both via the home's CCTV system to residents' rooms and online for our independent living unit residents," said Tim.

"I still feel awkward being the only one in the chapel, but the reactions from numerous residents and some staff are of appreciation for this way of worship.

"Our good Lord is faithful and has promised to remain our strength and shield, and our community has indeed experienced His faithfulness in these days."

"We also consistently carry a message that the Coronavirus is not happening because God wants to punish



At **Valley of Praise Retirement Village** in Lobethal residents kept their spirits up when their activities were cancelled and the resident centre was closed down, arranging amongst themselves an ice-cream delivery service with a difference, sing-a-long included!



Staff at **Tanunda Lutheran Home** worked hard to inject some fun into the atmosphere, with a regular Friday staff dress-up day.



A pen-pal program designed to unite **Tanunda Lutheran Home** residents with school children and other community members helped everyone to feel more connected with the world outside their four walls.



Loxton Lutheran School made this banner to remind their friends at **Riverview Lutheran Rest Home** that they were thinking of them and missing them.

Images: Penpals/The Leader Newspaper/Barossa Valley, all others supplied.

Photos: supplied

Supporting the struggling: LCC

Lutheran Community Care has continued to support thousands of people during the COVID-19 crisis, with many needing help now more than ever.

Only a few months ago, LCC opened counselling and financial counselling services in Woodside to support people affected by the devastating Cudlee Creek fire. Now the economic fallout from the coronavirus has left more across the state unemployed, struggling to feed their families or looking for a safe place to shelter while self-isolating.

LCC CEO Rohan Feegrade said the organisation had recently assisted families and individuals who have never had to ask for help before.

"Our vision of building strong, caring communities inspired through the love of God has never been more poignant or more challenging," Mr Feegrade said. "In times such as these, we need to support and care for each other more than ever."

Though some services, such as LCC's op shops, were forced to close in March*, its essential services have adapted to the current climate and many are being delivered over the phone or through Zoom.

"It has been reported that children in foster care are in general really enjoying SKYPE and Zoom connection with their birth families," Mr Feegrade

said. "An example that was explained to me was of a child happily using Zoom to show his birth parents his new bedroom and toys at the foster care home which they had not seen before."

Another service, Family Zone Ingle Farm's home visiting program, has been increasingly busy with high referral numbers. Staff and volunteers have made dozens of children's craft packs, which have been gifted to the families to help in this time of social isolation.

Emergency relief services have also assisted clients with food parcels and navigating Centrelink, while financial counsellors have supported a number of new clients, including international students who have lost their part-time employment in hospitality.

Mr Feegrade said the pandemic had caused significant stress for many people who don't know where to turn for support.

If you know someone struggling at this time, LCC can help through its free counselling, financial counselling and emergency relief services. Please see contact details in the breakout box below.

This winter, the demand for Lutheran Community Care's services has never been greater. If you are in a position to help, please donate and support your neighbours in crisis. Call (08) 8269 9333 or visit www.lccare.org.au/donate-now

**At the time of writing, LCC's op shops were expected to reopen in late May.*



LCC Barossa's Helen Walker (left) received a delivery from Calabria Family Wines' Janelle Atkins in April. The winery donated 30 care packages filled with food and essential items, which were distributed to local families and individuals affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

Emergency Relief:

Blair Athol (08) 8269 9300
Barossa (08) 8562 2688
Alice Springs (08) 8953 5160

Financial Counselling:

Northern Adelaide & Adelaide Hills (08) 7070 6717
Barossa (08) 8562 2688
Morphett Vale (08) 8326 4688

Counselling:

Blair Athol (08) 8269 9300
Magill (08) 8331 3111
Barossa (08) 8562 2688
Adelaide Hills 0438 890 256
Murray Bridge 0490 660 158

In brief: Finding new ways

Despite physical church buildings being closed and social distancing implemented during the coronavirus pandemic, our community quickly found innovative new ways to connect, worship, love and lead. Here are some examples.

In addition to online Easter church services, **St Peter's Lutheran Church in Loxton** invited those in the area to visit individually and add flowers to the cross they had set up outside the church, resulting in this glorious display.



A big shout out to anyone who is in the Woodside Lutheran Church for delivering food for us fire affected community. Considering everything else that's going on in the world they still delivered cooked meals to me today. Wish I was home to thank them personally ❤️
**
Just when I was feeling totally demoralised about how we'd been forgotten on the outskirts of Charleston, these beautiful human beings showed up and helped to stock our freezer. They couldn't have timed it any better. We had been to shops and pretty much everything had been hoarded. To say that they were lifesavers is no exaggeration!!!

Bushfire-affected families have not been forgotten in all that is happening. **Woodside Lutheran Church** has been continuing to coordinate delivery of meals provided by the Meals for Fire Affected Families community group, and recently received these messages from recipients as way of thanks.



A family from **Mawson Lakes Community Church** took inspiration from a sermon by Pastor Chris Mann and went out with some care packages to bless their neighbours.



This sign, outside **St John's Lutheran Church in Tea Tree Gully**, sent passers-by a message to remember.

Little Town Productions provided many creative and thought-provoking Easter resources for those confined at home. Partnering with historical site Kaesler's Landing, the group arranged a virtual ChristWalk, using photographs to guide people through Jesus' last ten days on earth, with biblical references providing a chance to reflect. Little Town also made their three previous Easter productions available on YouTube, along with Easter monologues and kids talks filmed over the last ten years.

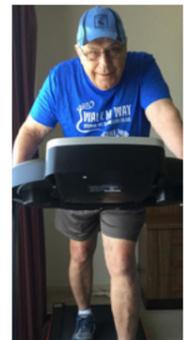


Virtual Easter services and gatherings were the order of the day for many of our members, including those at **Cummins Lutheran Church**, who stayed in touch by sharing photos of their Easter experiences with each other via the church Facebook page.

Lutheran school staff worked hard to plan and deliver different modes of teaching to their students. The staff at **Our Saviour Lutheran School at Aberfoyle Park** found creative ways to run their morning devotions outside, while maintaining social distancing. The school also hung a number of bible verses and butterfly artworks on their perimeter fence to bring joy and hope to the local community.



Images: Cross with flowers at St Peter's Lutheran Church Loxton/Margot Smyth; ChristWalk/Little Town Productions; all others supplied



Community event **Walk My Way** was reimagined as 'Walk Your Way', with people finding their own ways to complete the 26km in their own time, to raise money to support the education of refugee children. David and Leanne Jaensch from St John's Unley completed their walk over 24 hours, following trails in the Adelaide foothills (complete with koalas along the way), while Pastor Rob Voigt raked up his kilometres on the treadmill. **"God wants us to care for people in need," said Pastor Rob. "Education has the potential to lift these refugee children out of the seemingly impossible trap of hopelessness."**



Albert and Pastor Peter Traeger by the baptismal font



Image: supplied

Albert Noll and his siblings following his baptism anniversary service. From left: Desma Kleeman, Evelyn Morgan, Richard Noll, Olga Olsen, Albert Noll, Rhonda Oates.

90 years for Albert

There aren't many people who can say they've worshipped in the same church for ninety years, but this is exactly the milestone that Albert Noll recently celebrated, in a joyous and very special service held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Murbko.

Church members, family and friends gathered to take part in the service, held exactly ninety years (to the day!) after Albert was baptised as a baby on February 2nd 1930. Standing by the very baptismal font that wet his head as a child (and that he, as an adult and skilled woodworker had made improvements to), Albert was asked by Pastor Peter Traeger the questions posed to his Godparents ninety years ago – this time Albert could respond himself.

A much-loved and valued member of the Murbko church, Albert has served the community in various positions over the years and is currently the church committee chairman and treasurer. Skilled in wood and metal work, there are many items in the church and hall crafted or improved by his hand.

Albert has remained faithful to his Christian upbringing and, despite moving to Waikerie in 1978, he has always attended Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Murbko (which in recent years has had an alternating weekly service with Blanchetown), making the trip with his wife Gladys.

Lutheran women gather in Port Lincoln

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Port Lincoln was host to a gathering of Eyre Peninsula Lutherans, who had travelled from as far as Ceduna, Yaninee, Cowell and Springton to attend the 53rd Eyre Peninsula Lutheran Ladies Fellowship Zone Rally. The March event was an opportunity for the ladies to worship, share and learn together with the day greatly anticipated by many.

"Rally day is always looked forward to as we catch up with friends we sometimes only see on this day," said attendee, Julie Magnay. The theme of the day was *'Learning to follow in His steps'* (1 Peter 2:2a), with guest speakers including Steve Jude, (Navigator College principal), Andrew Waldhuter (LLL), Tony Peters (principal of Crossways Lutheran School at Ceduna) and Grace Kroehn (president of Lutheran Women of SA-NT). Port Lincoln group LIFT (Living In Faith Together) also attended and told the gathering of their bible study and fundraising activities.

With many of the local guild members becoming older and less able to travel the group was thrilled to note that attendance at the rally was up this year, with a younger

generation of members genuinely interested in learning about what the guild ladies do for the wider church. It is hoped that they will continue to be involved at next year's rally, to be held in Tumbay Bay.



Images: supplied

Outside: changing the atmosphere of worship



In late 2019 the congregation of St Stephen's Lutheran Church in Adelaide began to explore different ways of gathering as a church community and decided to bring to life a vision of an outdoor worship experience. In this article **Karl Schenscher**, Chairperson at St Stephen's, shares the journey the congregation took to bring the service to reality and the beauty of trying new things. We hope this may inspire others who are looking for fresh ways to worship.

During 2019 we were exploring ways of gathering as a church community that might differ from the usual. The ideas were beginning to ferment, and the concept of an outdoor worship experience became an interesting and challenging opportunity. We nominated October 29, 2019, and thus, an interesting and somewhat complex journey began.

The primary issue was to find a suitable location. Being a CBD congregation, it was logical to limit our choice to the city centre and parkland periphery. The green belt offers unbounded opportunity for gatherings, so reference to the City of Adelaide was the first essential. There are many matters for consideration, access, parking, shelter, amenities, visibility and safety to name a few. Once the appropriate checks had been done and sanctioned by the PSD of the LCA, and the booking confirmed with the City Council we were ready to move on the details to build a truly memorable experience.

With plenty of advanced advertising and encouraging promotion we rallied a large, robust cross section of our community. To meet outside of the church precinct in a somewhat more casual atmosphere in no way diminished the sense of occasion and worship. To sit with our fellow believers in a fully public environment, following a typical liturgical process ably led by Pastor John and other lay leaders was an enriching experience. To be outside of the comfort zone of the church

building was a good thing to sense. And yet no one seemed at all perplexed or anxious about the moment, or what might develop as the public wandered through the parklands and found us in various attitudes of prayer, praise and listening.

Communing under a trio of aged pine trees was perhaps the high moment of this experience. Pastor John invited us to sit and be still, quiet and at rest, and to listen to the elements around us, and within us as we held eucalypt leaves in our hands for aromatic reference. To detach from the busyness of the technologically driven world around us, to hear and feel the chill westerly wind blowing across us, and to inhabit, for a time God's gracious expansive space. It was a moment of reverence without formality or limitation. Children were sharing this space with us, grandparents and young parents, singles, couples, the fulfilled and the distressed, we were all there in our need and longing for another glimpse of the ways of God.

Following worship, we gathered around shared food. Time to talk and to listen to our community, our other family. We were sharing an abundance and we were really blessed.



Residents' art on display

A colourful, expressionist art work created by residents at Tanunda Lutheran Home was on display at Wanderlust, an outdoor gallery of visual arts, as part of the Adelaide Fringe earlier this year.

The Circles of Life was a project conceptualised by volunteer Art Therapist and Assistant Chaplain Helen McNicol and volunteer Alison Cockram, along with Tanunda Lutheran Home residents. The piece was created as part of art-therapy classes at the home, attended by up to ten residents once a week.

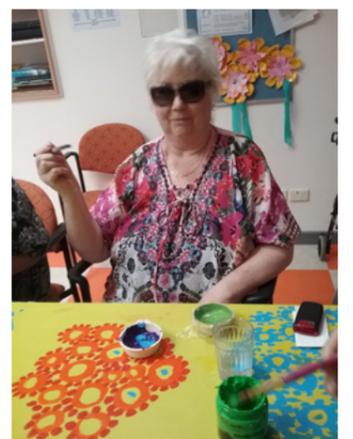
"Art therapy recognises the value of every work created as a unique expression, even for those with little or no experience in the art arena," says Helen.

"This is a unique opportunity that can enable people to express visually what they are unable to do in words. In this memory support area that has great value, especially as language skills diminish and verbal expression becomes more challenging."

Helen says the creation of the work was exciting, with each artist interpreting the theme differently but able to interact with one another and respond to each other's work.

"The most enjoyable part for the residents was looking at the whole finished product when it came together," she says.

The artwork was hung along with pieces by 45 other local artists in the main street of Greenock, attracting over 3000 visitors. *The Circles of Life* now takes pride of place in the main corridor at Tanunda Lutheran Home and Helen hopes it reminds us all 'that you're never too old to get involved.'



Images: Helen McNicol

Family Faith Trail

by Jeanette Mann
Blueprint Ministries Team Leader

Do you know what a Family Faith Trail is? You may have heard of it last Christmas or perhaps you saw references to it around Easter time.

SA-NT District Blueprint Ministries (Children, Family, Youth & Young Adult Ministries) along with the Intergen Team (SA Uniting Church) produced a resource for people to use in their own home to promote and support family faith practices. The pilot project was trialled at Christmas 2019, followed by the Easter 2020 resource.

The Family Faith Trail was produced as an opportunity for families to explore a variety of activity stations and discover new ways to grow faith at home. The stations were based on the events of Holy Week and the first Easter, as recorded in the Bible. A Bible passage, some questions for discussion and a suggested prayer and activity were provided for each station. Families could pick and choose from the stations and the variety of activities that particularly suited their children's ages and interests. Many of the activities involved the senses - using things you could feel, smell, taste, see and do. The activities were designed to be done in different locations, both inside and outdoors.

The initial concept of the trail was to set it up at one location and invite families and ministry leaders to come and experience it, with the view that they could take the trail back to their local congregations. Families could then implement some of the ideas in their own homes. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, this did not take place, but we were able to distribute resources via Facebook and email. We hope that some of you had the opportunity to try the Family Faith Trail and we pray that it was a blessing to you.

We would love your feedback regarding this resource and whether you might like to see further Family Faith Trails produced for other seasons of the year. If you would like to share your thoughts or would like further information about this resource, please feel free to contact Blueprint Ministries at admin@blueprintministries.org.au



Renew Young Adults camp

By Felicity Hampel, Renew camp director

Renew camp was held on the weekend of 7-10th of February 2020 at the Ankara Campsite, Walker Flat. We had over fifty young adults and a support team drawn from churches across South Australia attend, with a focus on building relationships with one another and renewing our hearts, minds and souls, ready for another year of what God has planned for us.

The weekend was filled with relaxing activities such as board games, hammocking and the biggest hit – water sports. A workshop was run by Kim Crawford on self-checking our bodies, minds and hearts on how we are moving forward in these areas to best support our mental, physical and spiritual health and wellbeing.

We had the lovely Roxanne Weichert and Janet Hazel serve food across the weekend and Lisa Thiele supported our young adults over the weekend as our camp chaplain.

Images: supplied



Renew was a wonderful time to connect with a group of beautiful young people and to be guided in our exploration and personal application of Scripture (wisely and carefully led by Pastor Damien). As a 'first-time-renew-attende' I felt that the culture of this camp exuded inclusivity and warmth and I'm so glad I decided to join!
– Libby Anderson



It was so encouraging to spend a weekend getting to know such a diverse range of other young Lutherans who were all so welcoming, eager to learn, passionate for the Gospel, and open to deep conversations about life and faith! It was a great reminder of how bright the future is for our church!
– Jeremy Smith

Teachings from Renew

The overarching teaching for Renew was focussed on the question of sustainability in ministry. Pastor Damien from Barossa North Parish helped us to journey through both the first and third commandments, putting forward that God and God alone is the source of our strength.

The first commandment is more than a demand, it is an invitation. God is our God – he created us and knows us in a way that is more intimate than any false idol ever could. Furthermore, as the creator and source of all life, God and God alone is capable of giving to us what we need. A false idol cannot give to us what we need, a false idol doesn't care for us like God does. When we turn to a false idol for replenishment, it has nothing to give us (or at the very least what it does give us only supports us for the short term and has no lasting value), as such we begin to burnout. When we turn to God in his loving graciousness we are refilled.

This understanding is then linked to the third commandment. In the third commandment we are reminded that God desires we spend time with him, not for himself, but for us. When we rest in God, we are renewed and strengthened. What is more, expanding on the third commandment and seeing this in light of Jesus' proclamation that he is the Lord of the Sabbath: it is not just rest in God but also work in God where we can be renewed. Rest doesn't have to happen just on Sunday, for if Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath, than any time we spend with God can lead us into rest.

Special feature: gratitude for volunteers



Minda volunteers Gail Donaldson, Marg Boehm, Margaret Gueue, Janet Sheffield

60 years of volunteer ministry at Minda



A relationship spanning six decades between the Ladies Guild and congregation of St Paul's Lutheran Church in Glenelg and Minda is ongoing to this day, thanks to a team of loyal volunteers connected through generations – in fact three of the current volunteers have each given over 48 years to the ministry.

The congregation's very first visit was in 1959 to what was then known as Minda Home, a residential institution where children with intellectual disability as young as six years old were educated and lived on site. The church's Ladies Guild, responding to a request for visitors to Minda Home, established a monthly schedule to 'take cheer' to the children residing there, offering a program of reading bible stories, activities, afternoon tea and occasional outings to interesting locations such as the airport and beach. As the years went by the range of activities increased, with the Guild encouraged to regularly take the children out and about. By the early 1980s, when Minda had expanded to incorporate adult residents, a large group of some 40-50 participants of varying ages, from school aged children to the elderly, were attending the popular monthly volunteer-led sessions, affectionately labelled 'Sunday School', despite being held on a Wednesday. 'Sunday School' remains a beloved fixture to this day.

A monthly Lutheran worship service was 'accidentally' formed in the mid-1960s when some of the St Paul's

volunteers were invited to attend a Minda-organised church service. When the group got there they were told that no-one had arrived to run the service and were asked to 'start' something for the 300 waiting Minda residents and staff. Off-the-cuff, the group managed to pull together a worship service, including hymns played on the piano and an impromptu sermon. It was reported that the singing was enthusiastically loud and God was indeed 'present with His people' – and so began a regular Lutheran service, held on the first Sunday of each month. The church services have evolved since their inception, initially run by St Paul's until a chaplain was appointed at Minda, but to this day the services are supported by members and musicians from the Glenelg and Warradale Lutheran congregations.

In the early 1990s the Ladies Guild found additional ways to support and encourage their friends at Minda, many of whom were avid football supporters. The Guild began a project of knitting blanket squares in football team colours and many wheelchair-bound Minda residents were able to proudly display their team allegiance during the 1993 AFL finals, with Adelaide Crows rugs on their laps.

While there has been an army of loyal volunteers throughout the years who all deserve commendation, it was St Paul's member Maureen Gilbertson who was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for her volunteer work as an advocate for people with a disability in 2003. In 2012 the Glenelg congregation signed the Minda Ministry Covenant, stating: *'We commit ourselves to support the Lutheran Ministry at Minda as part of the South-West Lutheran Ministry Network. We will regularly pray for this ministry; promote it amongst our members and encourage them to become actively involved in it.'*

Gail Donaldson, a current volunteer and coordinator of the program, says that while the project is incredibly rewarding to be a part of there are fewer and older volunteers today, with some individuals having served for decades.

"Although largely unsupported financially by St Paul's congregation, the ladies have faithfully given of their time and provided resources continuously for the past six decades," she says.

"Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will guide and direct a new generation to serve in this ministry.

"It is indeed a blessing to be with the people who are so confident in Jesus' love for them and their salvation. May God continue to bless our ministry and our friends at Minda."

[Special feature: gratitude for volunteers]

Passing on the blessings: A volunteer's story



the usual 'how are you?'"

As well as breakfast club at three different schools, Carmel is also a Meals on Wheels coordinator, conductor of the Probus choir, Gideon's Auxiliary treasurer, a primary school volunteer and works with the local newspaper as a reader to create

Volunteering is simply a way of life for Carmel Wuttke. A member of Waikerie Lutheran Church, Carmel serves her community through a list of volunteer activities that is almost as long as it is full of love.

Within the church, Carmel is a pastoral and home communion assistant, Ladies Guild president, music roster coordinator, singer in the church band, as well as volunteering with Mainly Music and Messy Church. On top of this she takes on the tasks of privately visiting people in need across the church community, and organising family baptism gifts to celebrate these special occasions.

"I began volunteering when I retired in 2008," says Carmel. "As I'd been on the frontline as a secretary and was used to interacting with people all the time I wondered what I would do when I retired, so I am very thankful for the things that God puts in my path."

Carmel's love for people is evident in the numerous volunteer activities she also undertakes within the local Waikerie community, where she is a very well-known and much-loved figure.

"I personally have served breakfast club beside Carmel to the students at Waikerie Lutheran Primary school and commented in awe of her willingness to give of her time," says local Tamara McPherson, a Waikerie Lutheran Church member.

"I have also followed Carmel through the supermarket and I don't think she walks more than half the length of an aisle before asking with genuine interest how another person is. She recalls family facts relative to those individuals and warmly engages on a level that is far deeper than

a talking version of the publication. Local seasonal events in the Riverland are another opportunity that Carmel relishes.

"I love being able to help and I love it when God opens a door and shows me someone I can help," she says. "I love hearing people's stories – everyone has a story and if we ask the right questions we can hear them."

Carmel says one of her favourite activities is working with the elderly in the community.

"I think it's the people thing – finding out how they are, how they're coping, sometimes they just need a word of encouragement and a bit of a lift, and if I can be that lift then it's passing on a blessing."

While Carmel admits that recent times have been challenging with quarantine measures in place and being unable to be physically present for most of her volunteer work, she has still been in touch with people on the phone constantly, 'making sure everyone is OK.'

Tamara McPherson can vouch for Carmel's seemingly everlasting energy when it comes to caring for those in her community and recalls a classic Carmel quote - 'I wasn't born to stay at home and clean, so if I'm out and about doing God's work in the community then I couldn't be happier!' – that she feels sums up Carmel's ethos perfectly.

"Carmel has a deep love for her fellow community members," says Tamara.

"She reaches out with the warmest of smiles, laughter and hugs in times of joy, grief and uncertainty – her compassion is truly boundless."

Professional Standards Department Updates

By Dave Biar and Holly Koning
Professional Standards Officer &
Professional Standards Assistant

LCANZ Safe Church Training is now available online in lieu of face-to-face workshops. A number of people have already worked through this training which is provided in partnership with Australian Lutheran College. Safe church training at all levels remains valid for three years. Those who last completed training before 2017 will need to complete full training as soon as possible, but those who have completed training since the beginning of 2017 will only need to complete refresher training, which we hope will be made available very shortly. If you're unsure about what you need to do, please talk to your SP3 Coordinator or call the District Office.

Working with Children Checks (WWCC) are required for most in leadership positions, and also for those who would normally work with children. If you have a current police check, this is no longer sufficient. Please don't wait until things get back to 'normal'. We need to be ready for that time which means acting now. Members cannot start working with children without a current WWCC. For our Northern Territory members a WWCC is an Ochre Card.

Stay safe online: COVID-19 has meant that many of us have looked at staying connected via various forms of technology. A reminder that the LCA has a Social Media Policy and we have been working on Social Media Guidelines and guidelines for safe online ministry. Even though most congregations have now already set up online ministry events it's not too late to review what is being done and how it is being done. As with any ministry event it should be planned well, risk assessed and managed, and formally approved by your governing council (possibly through the SP3 system and Permission to Proceed). Please do not underestimate the need for this or dangers present. Unscrupulous persons have already been taking advantage of the current situation. Please call or email to discuss your situation. We can provide information that assists in keeping your people safe.

What a way to Walk My Way!

Photo: ALWS



WALK MY FAIRWAY

Sandy and Paul Fiebig, from St Luke's Lutheran Church at Meningie, walked on Lake Albert Golf Course, which backs onto St Luke's. Over four days, they really did walk a fair way!



WOOF MY WAY

Colin Krause, at age 84 one of the two most senior Walkers, did his walk in Nuriootpa over a week with best friend Oscar. Looks like Oscar prefers walking to having his photo taken!



WALKING FOR THE LLL OF IT

Heather Gillings, who many know from front counter at LLL, completed her walk in shorter bursts. "We are so amazingly blessed here in Australia and I feel this is a small way of giving and helping those in such need!"



26 WAYS NOT TO WALK

Amanda Tschärke, Principal's Assistant at St Jakobi Lutheran School in Lyndoch, did 26 activities with daughters Katie (on left) and Ella – games, cooking, collecting. "It is a perfect time to help these refugee children who live their lives with such uncertainty."

More than 150 people across SA and NT took up the challenge to **Walk your Way** after COVID-19 forced ALWS to change **Walk My Way** to a DIY event. Together, enough money was raised to support 1,370 refugee children to go to school!

Donations are still welcome at \$26 to support one year of school for a refugee child. 1300 763 407 * walkmyway.org.au

Walking together to bring love to life! - Thank you!

