

AGENDA 4.2.3

Commission on Worship

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND KEY RESULTS AGAINST PLAN

- Planning and managing the 2020 Ordination Service
- Planning and managing the 2021 Synod worship and visual arts plan.
- Providing copyright information on use of music, video, images etc., in public worship (including data projection and online streaming/recording).
- Providing specific resources for times of crisis including drought, the 2020 Bushfires and Church@Home during COVID-19.
- Increasing the promotion and resourcing of visual arts in worship.
- Engaging in education and encouragement in Liturgy.
- Providing a video sermon resource for weekly Lectionary use.
- Renewing our hymnody via a new publication to be released at Convention.

SUCSESSES

- New Terms of Reference: The simplified and leaner structure is working efficiently.
- Ordination: Wider conversation about how ordination services might be conducted in future.
- Funding via Subscription: Wider discussion about funding for COW by subscription.
- Worship Service Builder: Wider conversation about developing the resource delivery into a "Worship Service Builder" option.

LESSONS LEARNT AND CHALLENGES

- We are aware that there is a constant need for more areas of work to be done within the LCA office that may or may not be within the Worship Planning Page Administrator's role. We therefore need to continually ensure that the Commission is clear on how it supports and keeps accountable the Worship Planning Page Administrator role so that the paid staff person is well supported and accountable via the Commission and the Secretary of the Church.
- The need to engage with a younger leadership at a policy/strategy level, based on some research.

MAJOR IDENTIFIED RISKS

1. New Terms of Reference: There are generally fewer people involved in the Commission's work resulting in a higher dependency on the paid Administrator. Ensure the recruitment of a full membership for 2021-2024. Increase effort to engage people in the work of COW when and where possible. Keep the Administrator role clear, within Role Description.
 - Funding via Subscription: There are no mechanisms to gain funding through subscriptions. This could be a lost opportunity for some funding for the Commission. Seriously consider and research a mechanism to gain funding through subscriptions.
 - Staffing: Post-COVID, we are uncertain as to the future of this role. Maintain the role at the current level.
 - Younger Leadership Engagement: We are not always engaged with a young leadership. Research this and develop a policy and strategy to engage with younger local/District leaders more fully.

MEMBERS

Currently 9, of whom 5 are pastors, plus consultants

Andrew Brook, Adrian Kitson (Chair), Tim Klein, Christine Matthias, Tom Pietsch (ALC Representative), Matthias Prenzler, David Simpfendorfer, Mark Simpfendorfer, Christine Theil Alan Collyer (Consultant), Libby Krahlung (Administration Coordinator and Minutes Secretary), Mark Whitfield (College of Bishops representative)

BACKGROUND

The Commission's purpose is to:

1. prepare materials for worship as requested by the Church, the College of Bishops or the General Church Board and
2. give guidance, in conformity with sound Lutheran principles, to the Church, its pastors, congregations, institutions, auxiliaries and other organisations, in the theology and practice of Lutheran worship.

ACHIEVEMENTS/RESULTS AGAINST PLAN

MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

The Commission has carried out these two purposes in the following ways in this synodical term.

- New Terms of Reference – CoW has written new Terms of Reference in line with the LCA's direction to develop new Terms of Reference in 2018/19. There have been fewer people regularly engaged in COW's work in more frequent meetings, using digital and in-person means. We currently meet quarterly for one day in person/via Teams.
- Upgrade to Worship Planning Page. Thanks to LCA Communications and funding from the General Church Board, a complete overhaul of the Worship Planning Page has been achieved with improved functionality and usability. Much positive feedback has been received and access to the resources has remained very strong.
- Liturgy Education – COW has worked with ALC in providing an accredited unit on worship. With funding from the LCA, COW has worked at developing a project to publish short instructional videos on the rhythm of the liturgy online so they are accessible to all local communities.
- Video sermon production. COW initiated a pilot project in Western Australia to provide lectionary-based video sermons. With demand high, COW and Lutheran Media received funding from GCB to re-publish archived video sermons as part of the weekly service resources.
- Renewing Hymnody – With the support of COB and GCB, COW has initiated a project to renew many of our most well known and loved hymns by publishing a robust, easy to use volume of hymns for musicians. The first volume is to be released at Convention 2021.
- Visual Arts Encouragement – COW has strengthened its Visual Arts function by recruiting skilled people, particularly focussing on digital publication of art, and developing a social media presence. The Visual Arts team initiated a church-wide simultaneous art exhibition, "Living Water" in August 2021.
- Ordination Service 2020 – COW worked with ALC and COB to plan and enact the COVID-restricted ALC 2020 Ordination Service.
- Synod worship Planning - COW is working with COB in planning and managing Convention 2021 worship and visual arts.
- Copyright information management - With LCA staff, COW has provided up-to-date information on copyright for liturgical/music resources, in person and digitally. A new Copyright Guidelines booklet has been published.

- Resources in times of Crisis. COW has responded to COB's call to provide a timely response and appropriate resources in times of crisis (January 2020 bushfires, Church@Home during COVID-19).

PROGRESS AGAINST PLAN/OBJECTIVES

The Commission has prepared materials for worship as requested by the Church, the College of Bishops or the General Church Board by;

- Planning and managing the 2020 Ordination Service
- Planning and managing the 2021 Synod worship plan.
- Providing copyright information on use of music in public worship (including data projection and online streaming/recording).
- Providing specific resources such as resources in times of crisis associated with the 2020 Bushfires and COVID-19.
- Providing resources and advice in support of other LCA bodies such as the Reconciliation Action Plan, Local Mission and International Mission.
- Increased the promotion and resourcing of Visual Arts in worship.
- Engaged in education and encouragement in Liturgy.
- Provided a video sermon resource for weekly Lectionary use and expanded the provision of sermons edited for lay-reading.
- Renewing our hymnody via a new publication to be released at Convention.

In all of the above, in dozens of Worship Planning Page responses to questions or expressed needs, and in work with other LCA Boards on various projects, the Commission has given guidance, in conformity with sound Lutheran principles, to the Church, its pastors, congregations, institutions, auxiliaries and other organisations, in the theology and practice of Lutheran worship.

SUCSESSES

- New Terms of Reference: The simplified and leaner structure is working efficiently. Challenge is to identify and invite skilled people into the Commission's work with less ongoing connectivity now in play.
- Ordination: Effective support for COB re the 2020 Ordination Service led to a wider conversation about how ordination services might be done in future – *en masse* or in the local congregation the ordinand might choose.
- New, upgraded WPP: A completely new WPP was developed to improve security and allow for the increased provision of resources.
- Funding via Subscription: Major upgrade in the delivery of resources via the Worship Planning Page has led to a wider discussion about how this might become a source of funding for COW by inviting overseas users to subscribe for the use of resources we provide.

“Worship Service Builder”: Major upgrade of the Worship Planning Page also led to a wider conversation about developing the resource delivery into a “Worship Service Builder” kind of option as the U.S. Lutheran churches (and other denominations) have done in recent years.

LESSONS LEARNT AND CHALLENGES

There is a difficulty at times for the paid Worship Planning Page Administrator in terms of accountability and support. This comes from a lower connectivity to the working of the LCA office since the person to which the Administrator reports and upon whom the Administrator relies for support does not work in the LCA office as a paid employee (CoW Chairperson). Our solution has been for the Administrator to have an additional level of accountability and support

through the LCA Secretary. For the most part this has worked well, but it does mean the Administrator has 'two bosses' which can add to the complexity of the role in communication, accountability and support.

Through the Worship Planning Page, the LCA is producing excellent worship resources that are mainly used by our most prominent demographic (an older age group). This is needed and should be the case. However, we are not engaging anywhere near as much with a younger demographic within our own church. Our resources are centred on existing lay worship leaders who are in the older age bracket but do not seem to be used so much with younger lay leaders. To engage with a younger leadership would be a policy/strategy decision based on some research. This may be an issue COB and the Commission will need to take up into the future.

RISKS

Major risks

1. **New Terms of Reference:** The challenge is to identify and invite skilled people into the Commission's work with less ongoing connectivity now in play because of fewer people participating in CoW meetings.
2. **Funding via Subscription:** The LCA is currently providing quality Lutheran worship resources to churches overseas for no charge. While this is generous, it is also possibly misguided. It seems wise to 'monetise' our resources for those outside the LCA to be able to create an ongoing funding opportunity.
3. **Staffing:** We heavily rely on the paid Worship Planning Page Administrator role. All other COW members are working at the local level in paid roles or are volunteers. Should the paid Administration role come to an end for some reason, this would severely diminish the LCA's provision of quality worship resources, ability to respond to LCA worship needs, and offer sound and timely guidance in matters concerning worship.
4. **Younger Leadership Engagement:** The Commission engages with mainly an older demographic. This is needed and should continue. However, the Commission does not always engage with a young leadership when it comes to worship in schools, camping ministry and local church worship.

Likelihood of identified risks occurring and potential impact

1. **New Terms of Reference:** There are now generally fewer people involved in the Commission's work as a result of the new Terms of Reference. There is now a higher dependency on the paid Administrator.
2. **Funding via Subscription:** There are no mechanisms to gain funding through subscriptions. This could be a lost opportunity for some funding for the Commission.
3. **Staffing:** Post-COVID-19, we are uncertain as to the future of this role. Reduced staffing would significantly impact the resources provided.
4. **Younger Leadership Engagement:** The Commission currently does not always engage with a young leadership. This means that some parts of our church are not being supported/ are not engaging with LCA resources.

Action taken to mitigate risk

1. **New Terms of Reference:** Ensure the recruitment of a full membership for 2021-2024. Increase effort to engage people in the work of COW when and where possible. Keep the Administrator role clear, within Role Description.
2. **Funding via Subscription:** Seriously consider and research a mechanism to gain funding through subscriptions.
3. **Staffing:** Post-COVID-19, maintain the role at the current level.

4. Younger Leadership Engagement: Research this and develop policy and strategy to engage with younger local/District leaders more fully.

ALIGNMENT TO 'OUR DIRECTION 2018-2024'

The Commission on Worship upholds the Our Direction 2018-2024 values and particularly aims to meet the following priorities:

1. Grow as God's People

1.1 Support a passionate faith in individuals, families and communities shaped by a growing understanding of God's word, nurtured and sustained in prayer and worship

1.2 Encourage worship that recognises people receive and respond to God's grace in different ways

1.3 Equip people for mission and ministry in the church, local communities and the wider world

CoW supports and encourages worship, and enables people to participate in leading and participating in worship through the provision of weekly service resources, and a wide range of other resources and advice. During COVID-19, we initiated Church@Home resources including weekly home services, contemplative prayer sheets, listings of online services, prayer and faith development resources and practical advice for congregations. We worked with community TV stations and local congregations to deliver televised services in Melbourne and Adelaide.

3.2 Engagement and Communications

3.2.3 Encourage local communities so that they feel valued, united and hopeful within their wider church family

3.2.4 Deepen collaboration between the ministries of the church to achieve integrated and effective communications and engagement across the church

CoW continues to encourage and support congregations all around the church by assisting with queries and challenges faced, especially in lay-led congregations, and developing resources to support congregations struggling with new technologies, financial and administrative limitations.

CoW has significantly increased its collaboration with other ministries of the church, through regular communication and joint projects. We have particularly worked closely with ALC, GROW Ministries, Local Mission (Committees for the Ageing, Cross-Cultural Ministry), International Mission, the Reconciliation Action Plan officer, LCA Communications and Lutheran Media.

Our intention is that the guidance we offer, the ecumenical dialogue we undertake and the resources we provide encourage the church in its partnership in the Lord's mission, cultivate a gospel-centred, culturally-aware and sacramentally-shaped worship life in the LCA. Our main means of working at this is via the provision of Lutheran worship resources for use at the local level via digital means.

COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

1. **GROW Ministries** on publishing children/family worship resources on Worship Planning Page.
2. **Committee for Ministry with the Ageing** on provision of resources in the aged care context, including funeral planning resources.
3. **Cross-Cultural Ministry** on developing resources in other languages, and prayer resources reflecting more current concerns and traumas associated with war.
4. **International Mission** on prayer points and commissioning rites for mission activity teams.

5. **College of Bishops** on Synod worship, pastoral notes on the role of sponsors in baptism, general guidance and Ordination Service.
6. **Lutheran Media** on video sermon project and weekly live streaming of national worship services.
7. **Australian Church Resources (ACR)** on publication and storage of CoW resources
8. **LCA Communications** on copyright guidelines.
9. **Australian Lutheran College (ALC)** on construction of accredited unit on worship ongoing support for the worship unit, visual arts education for pre-vicarage students.
10. **Lutheran Education Australia (LEA)** on provision of worship resources for schools (conversation only).

FINANCE/BUDGET

COMMISSION ON WORSHIP

FINANCE REPORT	2020	2019	2018
Income	0	946	6,000
Expenditure	(3,981)	(5,932)	(12,561)
Non cash transfers	1,975	(18)	0
Net result for year	<u>(2,006)</u>	<u>(5,004)</u>	<u>(6,561)</u>
Amount allocated to LCA Accumulated Funds	<u>(2,006)</u>	<u>(5,004)</u>	<u>(6,561)</u>