



LUTHERAN
CHURCH
OF AUSTRALIA

book of reports

Addendum



Twentieth

Convention of General Synod

- » Online Sessions 1-2 October 2021
- » In-person Sessions 9-12 February 2023

2021-23



The Convention of General Synod theme is based on Isaiah 55:3

*... come to me, **listen**, that you may **live**.*

The Lutheran Church of Australia acknowledges that our loving Creator God first gave the land on which we are placed, to the peoples of the First Nations who have walked and cared for this land since before recorded time. We thank God for the land's Traditional Custodians and pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging as we travel this journey of reconciliation in Australia.



The Lutheran Church of Australia gratefully acknowledges the support of the LLL, the major sponsor of the 20th Regular Convention of General Synod.

20TH REGULAR CONVENTION OF GENERAL SYNOD

- ONLINE SESSIONS 1–2 OCTOBER 2021
- IN-PERSON SESSIONS 9-12 FEBRUARY 2023

This Addendum to the Book of Reports includes:

- (1) Proposals scheduled for the in-person sessions (February 2023)
- (2) Proposals scheduled for the online sessions (October 2021) but held over until the in-person sessions due to time constraints
- (3) Late proposals
- (4) Foreshadowed proposals for amendments to existing proposals.

It does not include the reports on the Constitution Review Phase 1 (Agenda 4.14) and Ecclesiastical Discipline Review (Agenda 4.15), which are found on pages 340 and 307 respectively of the Book of Reports. The Book of Reports was forwarded to all delegates prior to the online sessions of Convention in October 2021. It is available online at www.generalsynod.lca.org.au/agenda

Contents

| | AGENDA | PAGE |
|--|--------|------|
| Excerpts from Constitution and By-laws | | 3 |
| Rules for Transacting Business | | 10 |
| Draft Schedule of In-person Sessions | | 14 |
| Agenda | | 15 |

PROPOSALS

Late Proposals

| | | |
|---|----------|----|
| Pastor John Henderson to continue as a delegate <i>General Church Board</i> | 1.2.13.1 | 17 |
| LCA Constitution Review: GCB to consult and inform <i>General Church Board</i> | 1.2.13.2 | 17 |
| Authorise republication of Anglican–Lutheran <i>Common Ground</i> with addendum Perspectives on Mission <i>General Church Board</i> | 1.2.13.3 | 19 |
| Adopt Lutheran-Uniting <i>At the Table</i> statement <i>General Church Board</i> | 1.2.13.4 | 19 |

Proposals from LCA boards and councils

| | | |
|---|----------|----|
| Changes to Constitutions | 2.16 | 20 |
| Dissolution clause: Model Constitution of Districts <i>General Church Board</i> | 2.1.6.7 | 20 |
| Objects: Model Constitution of Districts <i>General Church Board</i> | 2.1.6.8 | 22 |
| Withdrawal from Membership clause: Lutheran Church of Australia Inc <i>General Church Board</i> | 2.1.6.9 | 23 |
| Withdrawal from Membership clause: Model Constitution of Districts <i>General Church Board</i> | 2.1.6.10 | 24 |
| Withdrawal and Dissolution clauses: Model Constitution of Congregations <i>General Church Board</i> | 2.1.6.11 | 25 |

| | | |
|--|------------|-----------|
| Withdrawal and Dissolution clauses: Model Constitution of Parishes <i>General Church Board</i> | 2.1.6.12 | 25 |
| Give thanks for new churches <i>Council of Local Mission</i> | 2.1.9 | 26 |
| Continue support for 'Hidden Hurts Healing Hearts' <i>General Church Board</i> | 2.1.10 | 28 |
| PROPOSALS from districts, parishes and congregations | 2.2 | 29 |
| Affirm the work of Local Mission <i>Glynde St Andrews Congregation</i> | 2.2.1 | 29 |
| Allow two practices of ministry <i>Adelaide St Stephens Congregation</i> | 2.2.2 | 30 |
| Remove Article 6.11 from Theses of Agreement <i>Duncraig Concordia Congregation</i> | 2.2.3 | 33 |
| Remove Article 6.11 from Theses of Agreement <i>Box Hill St Pauls Congregation</i> | 2.2.4 (V1) | 33 |
| Remove Article 6.11 from Theses of Agreement <i>Box Hill St Pauls Congregation</i> | 2.2.4 (V2) | 36 |
| Remove Article 6.11 from Theses of Agreement <i>South Australia – Northern Territory District</i> | 2.2.5 | 38 |
| LCANZ to seek full membership of LWF and ILC <i>Belconnen Holy Cross Congregation</i> | 2.2.6 | 40 |
| Offer congregations peaceful dismissal <i>Minyip/Warracknabeal Parish</i> | 2.2.7 | 42 |
| Amend Clause 3.2: Model Constitution for Congregations <i>South Australia – Northern Territory District</i> | 2.2.8 | 42 |
| Explore establishment of one church with two ordination practices <i>Queensland District</i> | 2.2.9 (V1) | 43 |
| Explore establishment of one church with two ordination practices <i>Queensland District</i> | 2.2.9 (V2) | 45 |
| Foreshadowed proposals for amendments to existing proposals | | 47 |
| Accept amended proposals from St Paul's Box Hill and Queensland District <i>General Church Board</i> | 2.2.10 | 47 |
| REPORTS | | |
| LCANZ Bishop | 3.4 | 48 |
| Ecclesiastical Discipline Review Team | 14.1 | [309] |
| Constitution Review | 14.2 | [340] |
| Constitution Review Working Group Report | 14.4 | 55 |
| General Pastors Conference Advice | 14.5 | 86 |
| Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue <i>Common Ground</i> | 14.6 | 87 |
| Lutheran-Uniting Dialogue <i>At the Table</i> | 14.7 | 94 |
| CLOSING FORMALITIES | | |
| Invitation to host 21 st Regular Convention of General Synod | 16.1 | |
| Vote of thanks | 16.2 | |
| Close of Convention | 16.3 | |
| Closing worship | 16.4 | |

EXCERPTS FROM THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

with reference to the church and the pastorate

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 3. OBJECTS

3.1 The Objects of the Church are to

- 3.1.1 fulfil the mission of the Christian Church in the world by proclaiming the Word of God and administering the Sacraments in accordance with the Confession of the Church laid down in the preceding Article 2;
- 3.1.2 unite in one body Evangelical Lutheran congregations in Australia and New Zealand for the more effective work of the Church;
- 3.1.3 promote and maintain true Christian unity in the bond of peace;
- 3.1.4 ensure that preaching, teaching and practice in the Church are in conformity with the Confession of the Church;
- 3.1.5 provide pastors and teachers and other church workers for service in the Church and its congregations, and for this purpose to establish and maintain institutions for their training;
- 3.1.6 encourage every congregation to carry out its mission to its local community;
- 3.1.7 establish, develop and support new congregations where it is not possible for individual congregations to do so;
- 3.1.8 support and cooperate with selected churches in other lands as they seek to carry out their mission;
- 3.1.9 dialogue with other Christian church bodies;
- 3.1.10 establish and maintain schools and other institutions and to foster all other means whereby the members of the congregations receive Christian education;
- 3.1.11 cultivate uniformity in worship, ecclesiastical practice and customs in accord with the principles laid down in Article X. of the Formula of Concord;
- 3.1.12 publish, procure, and distribute literature compatible with the Confession and principles of the Church;
- 3.1.13 minister to human need in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord in the spirit of Christian love and service, and to provide institutions and agencies for this purpose; and
- 3.1.14 maintain and promote a culture of care in all areas of the Church and its activities, so that all people, especially the vulnerable such as children and the aged, are protected against any form of spiritual, emotional, physical and sexual abuse by ensuring that
 - 3.1.14.1 appropriate governance and leadership structures are in place;
 - 3.1.14.2 policies and procedures are appropriately prescribed;
 - 3.1.14.3 a culture of safety and care for children and all people is actively encouraged and practised; and
 - 3.1.14.4 the wellbeing of congregations, pastors, teachers and other church workers in the performance of their duties and the maintenance of their rights is supported and promoted.

3.2 Not-for-Profit

- 3.2.1 The property and income of the Church shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects or purposes of the Church and no part of that property or income may be paid or otherwise distributed, directly or indirectly, to members of the Church, except in good faith in the promotion of those objects or purposes.

- 3.2.2 A payment may be made to a member out of the funds of the Church only if it is authorised under the following clause 3.2.3.
- 3.2.3 A payment to a member out of the funds of the Church is authorised if it is
 - 3.2.3.1 payment in good faith to the member as reasonable remuneration for any services provided to the Church, or for goods supplied to the Church, in the ordinary course of business; or
 - 3.2.3.2 payment of interest, on money borrowed by the Church from the member, at a rate not greater than the cash rate published from time to time by the Reserve Bank of Australia; or
 - 3.2.3.3 payment of reasonable rent to the member for premises leased by the member to the Church; or
 - 3.2.3.4 reimbursement of reasonable expenses properly incurred by the member on behalf of the Church; or
 - 3.2.3.5 making a payment or providing a benefit to a member in carrying out the objects of the Church for charitable purposes.

ARTICLE 9. DISTRICTS

- 9.1 For the promotion of its Objects by its members in prescribed geographical areas, the Church shall be divided into Districts. The number and the boundaries of the Districts shall be determined by the Church in consultation, and by agreement, with the Districts concerned and be defined in the By-laws.

BY-LAWS

SECTION 5.4. CALLS AND TRANSFERS

PREAMBLE (EXCERPT)

5.4.1 ... the New Testament ministry is the office instituted by Christ for the public administration of the means of grace, that is, the preaching of the Gospel and the administering of the Sacraments, through which as through instruments the Holy Spirit works saving faith in the hearts of people (Matthew 10; Matthew 28:18–20; Luke 9:1–2; 1 Corinthians 3:5–7; 2 Corinthians 3:5–8; Augsburg Confession V; Formula Concordiae, Solida Declaratio XI. 29) ...

... the office of the ministry is not a human institution but one instituted by God (2 Corinthians 5:18–20; Ephesians 4:11; Acts 20:28; Apology XIII. 11);

... the procedures connected with calls and transfers shall serve, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, towards the fulfilment of the divine promise: 'And I will give you shepherds after my own heart who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding' (Jeremiah 3:15);

... the calling of a pastor is not comparable with the purely secular procedures of employer and employee, but the acceptance of a call establishes a personal, spiritual, and sacred relationship between shepherd and flock in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ ...

SECTION 8. OFFICERS AND ADMINISTRATION

SECTION 8.1 ELIGIBILITY AND TERMS OF OFFICE

- 8.1.1 The Officials of the Church holding a full-time office shall not be eligible to hold any other administrative office of the Church or a District.
- 8.1.2 The Secretary shall be called by the General Church Board.
- 8.1.3 The members of the General Church Board shall not be eligible to be members of more than one other board or council of the Church.
- 8.1.4 A full-time executive officer serving under a board or council of the Church shall not be eligible to be a member of more than one board, council or commission of the Church or a District.
- 8.1.5 Any person who receives a salary from or is in the employ of a board shall not be a member of the board under which such person serves.
- 8.1.6 An executive officer of a committee of a District which is directly associated with the activities of a board of the Church shall not be eligible for membership on that board.
- 8.1.7 The spouse of an executive officer or salaried person serving the Church shall not be a member of a board under which such an executive officer or salaried person serves.
- 8.1.8 No person shall be eligible for appointment by the General Church Board to more than two [2] boards or councils of the Church unless otherwise determined by the General Church Board. This restriction shall not include membership on a board or council which according to the Terms of Reference is ex officio or representative of another board or council.
- 8.1.9 8.1.9.1 The term of office for the Bishop of the Church shall be
8.1.9.1.1 two [2] synodical terms for an incoming Bishop; and
8.1.9.1.2 one [1] synodical term for an incumbent Bishop seeking re-election.
- 8.1.9.2 The term of office for the Assistant Bishop and the Secretary shall be one [1] synodical term.
- 8.1.9.3 The term of office for all other Officials and officers of the Church shall be one [1] synodical term.
- 8.1.9.4 The term of office for members of boards, councils, commissions and committees shall be one [1] synodical term and they may be eligible for reappointment.
- 8.1.9.5 Any person retiring by effluxion of time under the provisions of the preceding sub-sections of 8.1.9 shall be eligible for re-election without limitation subject to the provisions of the preceding Section 8.1.6, or unless otherwise specifically determined.

SECTION 8.2 OFFICIALS

- 8.2.1 The Bishop
- 8.2.1.1 The Bishop by virtue of election shall
- 8.2.1.1.1 preach, teach and administer the Sacraments in accord with the Confession of the Church, exercising this ministry in congregations in consultation with the congregation and pastor concerned;

- 8.2.1.1.2 exercise oversight of the Church, promote its spiritual welfare and strive to preserve peace and order;
 - 8.2.1.1.3 exercise oversight over the doctrine and practice of all pastors and congregations of the Church, doing this in association with or through the respective Bishops of the Districts;
 - 8.2.1.1.4 exercise supervision over the doctrine, practice and official conduct of all officers of the Church, of all Bishops of the Districts and of all those who are elected or appointed by the Church;
 - 8.2.1.1.5 ensure the pastoral care of the pastors of the Church in association with or through the respective Bishops of the Districts;
 - 8.2.1.1.6 be the Official Visitor to Australian Lutheran College and as such, in fulfilment of this role, shall
 - 8.2.1.1.6.1 assure himself and thereby the Church that the teaching and practice of Australian Lutheran College is in accord with the public teaching and practice of the Church;
 - 8.2.1.1.6.2 be available to provide pastoral care to the Principal; and
 - 8.2.1.1.6.3 satisfy himself that the appropriate pastoral care is available for the staff of Australian Lutheran College;
 - 8.2.1.1.7 ordain approved candidates for the Ministry and install Bishops of the Districts and all those elected or called to spiritual offices of the Church, other than the pastoral ministry;
 - 8.2.1.1.8 arrange colloquies of persons seeking to enter the Ministry of the Church;
 - 8.2.1.1.9 officially represent the Church in relations with other church bodies and other agencies, unless these rights have been delegated by the Church to other persons;
 - 8.2.1.1.10 preside over all conventions of the General Synod, submit the Report of the Bishop and supervise the execution of all synodical resolutions;
 - 8.2.1.1.11 be present at the conventions of the Synods of the Districts, or appoint a deputy, and submit the Report of the Bishop;
 - 8.2.1.1.12 call and preside over meetings of the General Church Board and its Executive and the College of Bishops;
 - 8.2.1.1.13 provide for the calling of pastors or any other church workers needed for the institutions and/or departments of the Church, unless such powers have been delegated by the Church to Boards, Councils or Commissions or other persons; and
 - 8.2.1.1.14 be entitled to attend meetings of all the Boards, Councils, Departments, Standing Committees and Commissions of the Church and shall receive due notice of all meetings.
- 8.2.1.2 The Bishop may appoint the Assistant Bishop, the Secretary or another person to act as the Bishop's deputy.
- 8.2.1.3
- 8.2.1.3.1 A Bishop-elect shall normally assume office three [3] months after being elected.
 - 8.2.1.3.2 Before a Bishop-elect assumes office, the outgoing Bishop shall
 - 8.2.1.3.2.1 continue as Bishop;
 - 8.2.1.3.2.2 use the intervening period to settle the affairs of the administration; and
 - 8.2.1.3.2.3 assist the Bishop-elect to become acquainted with the duties and responsibilities of the office.

8.2.2 The Assistant Bishop

- 8.2.2.1 shall, in the event of the death or resignation of the Bishop, automatically assume the office of Bishop until the next convention of General Synod;
- 8.2.2.2 shall, by direction of the General Church Board, assume office as acting Bishop during the Bishop's sickness, absence or inability to carry out the duties of the Bishop;
- 8.2.2.3 may be requested by the Bishop to act as the Bishop's deputy whenever and wherever deemed necessary; and
- 8.2.2.4 shall exercise particular supervision over those areas of responsibility which have been especially assigned to the office of Assistant Bishop.

SECTION 8.3 THE SECRETARY

8.3.1 The duties of the Secretary shall be to

- 8.3.1.1 exercise a supportive role to the Bishop in the promotion of the general wellbeing of the church;
- 8.3.1.2 perform those duties generally incumbent upon such an office and as prescribed from time to time;
- 8.3.1.3 in reference to the regular general and special conventions of the General Synod
 - 8.3.1.3.1 publish the notice in the official publication of the church;
 - 8.3.1.3.2 publish the Agenda and the Book of Reports;
 - 8.3.1.3.3 keep an accurate recording of the proceedings and prepare and publish the Official Report;
 - 8.3.1.3.4 inform responsible bodies or individuals as soon as possible of the resolutions affecting them;
- 8.3.1.4 keep the Roll of Congregations, the Roll of Pastors and the Register of Lay Workers;
- 8.3.1.5 attend meetings of the General Church Board and College of Bishops in an advisory capacity;
- 8.3.1.6 attend any other meetings as required by the Bishop in an advisory capacity;
- 8.3.1.7 act as the Public Officer and be responsible for all legal matters;
- 8.3.1.8 ensure that all moneys collected by or payable to the church are passed to the Central Treasury Service promptly for banking; and
- 8.3.1.9 ensure that the Central Treasury Service is provided with adequate information to assist it in its day to day operations.

SECTION 8.4 THE GENERAL CHURCH BOARD

8.4.1 The duties of the General Church Board shall be to

- 8.4.1.1 implement the program of the Church in accordance with the policies established by the General Synod;
- 8.4.1.2 ensure that the mission of the Church, the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, remains central in the work of the Church;
- 8.4.1.3 ensure that all phases of the work of the Church are efficiently planned, coordinated, and controlled;
- 8.4.1.4 receive the reports submitted at least annually by the boards and councils of the Church, and pursuant to Article 8.3.2 of the Constitution to make any necessary decisions thereon subject to any policy or decisions laid down by the General Synod;
- 8.4.1.5 review the reports of the boards to the General Synod and submit recommendations for coordinated action to the General Synod;

- 8.4.1.6 initiate research into any sphere of activity with a view to achieving greater efficiency in the promotion of the Objects of the Church;
 - 8.4.1.7 appoint executive officers as required;
 - 8.4.1.8 submit the budget of the Church to the General Synod for consideration and adoption according to the policy laid down by the Church, and to adopt the budget of the Church in a year when the General Synod is not convened;
 - 8.4.1.9 appoint the Auditor of the Church;
 - 8.4.1.10 authorise proposals by a board regarding the number of office staff;
 - 8.4.1.11 appoint such sub-committees and delegate such powers as it sees fit;
 - 8.4.1.12 define from time to time the specific areas of responsibility of the Bishop and Assistant Bishop;
 - 8.4.1.13 fill any vacancy in any office or on any board, council, commission or committee in accordance with the delegated authority contained in the relevant Constitution or Terms of Reference, except when such vacancy occurs within three [3] months of the next regular convention of the General Synod;
 - 8.4.1.14 remove any Official, officer or member of a board, council, commission or committee from office during the term, subject to constitutional requirements, if, in its considered judgment, the said person becomes incapable or unworthy of holding office, and to fill the vacancy created until the next regular convention of the General Synod;
 - 8.4.1.15 determine any interim arrangements that may be necessary following the election of a full-time Official of the Church at a convention of the General Synod; and
 - 8.4.1.16 approve any alteration to the By-laws of the Church or the rules governing any board or fund of the Church made necessary by any resolution of the General Synod, as prepared by the Standing Committee on Constitutions.
- 8.4.2 8.4.2.1 In reference to finance its duties shall be to
- 8.4.2.1.1 ensure that all moneys collected by or payable to the Church are banked promptly into such banks or other institutions as are approved by the Church and that such moneys are properly accounted for and recorded in the accounting records of the Church. In this respect it shall have oversight of the work performed on behalf of the Church by any person or organisation to whom such work has been delegated by the Church, including a Central Treasury Service;
 - 8.4.2.1.2 ensure that recurring expenses and charges are paid in accordance with adopted budgets of the Church, and other moneys only withdrawn upon a specific resolution;
 - 8.4.2.1.3 receive reports on the state of the finances of the Church, including moneys received and payments made, on a regular basis, and present such reports to the Bishop when so required;
 - 8.4.2.1.4 prepare financial statements for publication or submission to the regular convention of the General Synod;
 - 8.4.2.1.5 submit financial records and statements to the Auditor for examination at least annually, or when it otherwise deems necessary;
 - 8.4.2.1.6 insure the insurable property of the Church as determined by resolution of the Council;
 - 8.4.2.1.7 have general oversight over all matters relating to the property of the Church; and
 - 8.4.2.1.8 have the right to appoint an advisory committee to give advice and professional guidance on financial issues.
- 8.4.2.2 In reference to the LCA Pensions Fund its duties shall be to
- 8.4.2.2.1 administer the funds entrusted to its control in accordance with the policy laid down by the General Synod;

- 8.4.2.2.2 keep itself informed on matters relating to pensions, benefit schemes and social services, and at its discretion submit to the General Synod any amendments to the policy of the Church;
- 8.4.2.2.3 recommend to the General Synod the scale of benefits and contributions applicable to any or all of the funds;
- 8.4.2.2.4 set up the procedures and provide any forms necessary for the payment of benefits from the funds;
- 8.4.2.2.5 investigate any applications for assistance not ordinarily covered by the regulations and make recommendations; and
- 8.4.2.2.6 regulate and arrange the rest and refreshment leave/long-service leave of church workers.

8.4.3 The General Church Board shall meet at least twice a year. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson, and shall be called by the Chairperson at the request of at least three [3] members of the General Church Board.

SECTION 5.6 GENERAL PASTORS CONFERENCE

- 5.6.1 The duties of the General Pastors Conference shall be to
 - 5.6.1.1 give guidance in matters of doctrine and confession;
 - 5.6.1.2 foster theological studies by all members of the Ministry;
 - 5.6.1.3 stimulate and give guidance to the members of the Ministry in the work of their calling;
 - 5.6.1.4 foster fellowship between the members of the Ministry; and
 - 5.6.1.5 consider matters relating to the well-being of the Church.
- 5.6.2 The General Pastors Conference shall serve as a theological adviser to the General Synod and in fulfilment of such function
 - 5.6.2.1 shall consider those questions, issues and statements of a theological and confessional nature which appear on the agenda of the convention of the General Synod and are referred to it by the General Church Board;
 - 5.6.2.2 may voice its opinion with regard to the advisability or non-advisability of dealing with any such question or issue or of adopting a particular statement; and
 - 5.6.2.3 may recommend amendments, corrections, additions or explanations concerning proposed statements.
- 5.6.3 5.6.3.1 All pastors shall be entitled to attend all General Pastors Conferences, to take an active part in all deliberations and to vote on all matters before the Conference, except when nominations for the positions of Bishop and Assistant Bishop are being made according to the By-laws of the Church during a General Pastors Conference.
- 5.6.3.2 The General Pastors Conference shall elect a chairperson and a secretary at its conference prior to the regular convention of the General Synod. There shall be a Program Committee which shall consist of the chairperson and the secretary of the Conference, the Bishop and Assistant Bishop of the Church, and two other members elected by the Conference.
- 5.6.3.3 The basis for any reimbursement of the travelling expenses of
 - 5.6.3.3.1 pastors not being pastor delegates who attend the General Pastors Conference held in conjunction with the regular convention of the General Synod; and
 - 5.6.3.3.2 all pastors attending a General Pastors Conference held at any other time, shall be determined by the General Synod or the General Church Board.
- 5.6.4 An official copy of the minutes of the General Pastors Conference shall be filed with the Secretary of the Church.

RULES FOR TRANSACTING BUSINESS

The rules for transacting business at Convention of Synod are listed below. The rules are from the sections of the LCA Constitution and By-laws that deal with General Synod.

WHO ARE THE DELEGATES?

Elected lay representatives of the parishes, elected pastor delegates, the members of the General Church Board, bishops, chairpersons of LCA boards, representatives of Lutheran Education principals, teaching pastoral staff of Australian Lutheran College representatives, past bishops (presidents) and emeriti pastor representatives make up the voting members known as 'General Synod delegates'.

HOW IS THE QUORUM DETERMINED?

A majority of the maximum number of people entitled to vote forms a quorum.

WHO MAY SPEAK AT CONVENTION?

- All delegates
- Consultants
- Any other member of the church, at the discretion of the chairperson

WHO CAN SUBMIT MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION AT CONVENTION?

- Any congregation
- Any parish
- Any board of the church, provided the matter is within the terms of reference of the group
- The General Pastors Conference
- The General Church Board or its executive
- The Synod of any district of the church
- The Church Council/Board of any district
- The Pastors Conference of any district

LCA BY-LAWS

SECTION 7.3 PROCEDURE IN TRANSACTING BUSINESS

- 7.3.1 The business of a convention of the General Synod shall be chaired by the Bishop, or at the Bishop's request, the Assistant Bishop. If they are unable to act, the convention shall elect its own Chairperson.
- 7.3.2 The Chairperson shall ensure that a quorum is present at all times.
- 7.3.3 In addition to the voting members and the consultants, the right to speak may be exercised by recognised official visitors, by any additional members of the teaching staff of Australian Lutheran College present, and, when the reports of a board are before the convention, by any member of the respective board. Any other member of the Church present who desires to speak may do so at the discretion of the Chairperson.
- 7.3.4 Persons entitled to speak and desiring to exercise such right shall ask for the floor by raising their hand or otherwise indicating to the Chairperson their desire to speak, and when called upon to speak they shall stand and address themselves to the chair. No interruption to speech shall be permitted, except upon a question of order.
- 7.3.5 All proposals on the Agenda shall be placed before the convention for discussion and decision, unless withdrawn.

- 7.3.6 All reports published in the official book of reports or in supplements thereto shall be regarded as received by the convention by virtue of that fact.
- 7.3.7 A motion or amendment, including any proposal stemming from the reports of councils or boards or submitted by a Sessional Committee, may be discussed and voted on only after it has been moved and seconded by a delegate.
- 7.3.8 At the request of the mover and seconder, and with the consent of the convention, a motion or an amendment may be withdrawn.
- 7.3.9 A proposal which has not been moved may be withdrawn by the body from which it originated. A proposal which has been printed in the agenda of the convention, but which has not been moved, may be withdrawn by the body from which it originated, with the consent of the convention.
- 7.3.10 Only one amendment to a motion shall be before the chair at any time. After the same has been agreed to or rejected another amendment may be moved. Notice of further amendment may be given at any time.
- 7.3.11 Every amendment shall be relevant to the motion to which it refers.
- 7.3.12 Proposers of amendments and of any motions not previously printed shall submit them to the Chairperson in writing either in advance, whenever possible, or when requested to do so by the Chairperson.
- 7.3.13 Those taking part in a debate shall be limited to one [1] speech on a motion or amendment, except to clear up misunderstanding or in exercising the right of reply, or except the meeting grant permission.
- 7.3.14 A right of reply is only allowed to the mover of the original motion. It concludes the debate unless there are one or more amendments, in which case it may be exercised at the conclusion of the debate on the first amendment.
- 7.3.15 Seconded amendments are new questions and persons who have spoken to the motion shall be permitted to speak again.
- 7.3.16 The mover of any motion shall be permitted to speak for five [5] minutes, and three [3] minutes shall be the limit for all other speakers unless a resolution granting extension of time be granted by the convention.
- 7.3.17 The Chairperson shall give ample opportunity for speakers for and against a motion or an amendment to be heard. If there are no speakers against it shall be put without right of reply.
- 7.3.18 As a general rule motions and amendments shall be read before a vote is taken, and the Chairperson shall if necessary briefly explain their meaning.
- 7.3.19 No motion may be brought forward which is the same in substance as a matter which has already been resolved by the convention unless a motion calling for a reconsideration of the matter previously decided is moved and seconded by persons who voted with the majority when the matter was originally put. If the motion to reconsider is carried the previous vote is thereby cancelled, and the original motion is again before the convention in the form in which it was put to the vote. A matter may be reconsidered only once at the same convention.
- 7.3.20 A motion shall be decided by a show of hands unless a ballot is required by the Chairperson or demanded by a delegate and granted by resolution of the convention. In the event of a disagreement as to the result of the vote, a recount or second vote may be demanded.
- 7.3.21 If in the opinion of any delegate an irregularity of procedure occurs the delegate may immediately without asking permission from the chair rise to a 'point of order' and shall be heard forthwith. The delegate shall explain the point of order clearly and briefly without introducing new matter. The Chairperson shall decide either to uphold or disallow the point raised, and it shall not be debated unless an appeal be made against the ruling of the Chairperson.

- 7.3.22 Deference shall be paid to the Chairperson's authority. All present shall be seated whenever the Chairperson rises to speak, and the Chairperson shall be heard without interruption, except when a point of order is raised.
- 7.3.23 The Chairperson may call attention to continued irrelevance or tedious repetition on the part of a speaker, and may direct the speaker to cease speaking.
- 7.3.24 If disorder should arise the Chairperson may announce an adjournment of the convention and leave the chair, and by that action the convention is immediately adjourned for a period that shall not exceed one-half hour.
- 7.3.25 The Chairperson may speak briefly for the purpose of giving some desired or necessary information. If, however, the Chairperson wishes to take an active part in a debate, an Assistant Bishop or some other appointed person shall take the chair.
- 7.3.26 The Chairperson may determine when a vote is to be taken.
- 7.3.26.1 During a debate the Chairperson may seek an indication of readiness to vote. If there is an indication of a significant or high number of possible abstentions from voting by reason of indecision or by absence from the meeting, the Chairperson may decide to continue the discussion or defer the motion.
- 7.3.26.2 Unless otherwise stipulated a majority of those delegates voting shall decide the motion, and in the event of an equality of votes the Chairperson shall in addition to a deliberative vote have a casting vote, or refer the motion for further discussion.
- 7.3.27 No formal motion may be moved or seconded by anyone who has moved, seconded or spoken to the motion or any amendment. The following formal motions may be moved and seconded and are not debatable:
- 7.3.27.1 A motion may be superseded for that particular convention by the acceptance of either of the following motions:
 'That the debate be adjourned';
 'That Synod proceed to the next business'.
- 7.3.27.2 A motion may be superseded for the time being by the motion
 'That the question lie on the table'.
 There can be a subsequent motion either at the same or a later convention to take the motion from the table.
- 7.3.27.3 The convention may be adjourned by the motion 'That the convention adjourn'.
 Debate may take place if the motion or amendment states time, date and place of the adjourned convention.
- 7.3.27.4 Debate on a motion or an amendment may be closed by the motion 'That the motion be now put'. If in the opinion of the Chairperson the motion has not been sufficiently discussed, such motion may be refused.
- 7.3.28 7.3.28.1 Matters of conscience and of doctrine shall have precedence over other matters and any rules relating to time limits and number of times a person may speak may be suspended by the ruling of the Chairperson or by a majority of those delegates voting.
- 7.3.28.2 A matter deemed to be of a theological and confessional nature which has been referred to the General Pastors' Conference for consideration shall be considered by the convention only after a recommendation has been received from the General Pastors' Conference.
- 7.3.28.3 For a resolution on a matter of doctrine to be deemed to be the official position of the Church it shall require a two-thirds majority of all the registered delegates at the convention.
- 7.3.29 Any of the By-laws in Section 7.3 may, if the need arises, be suspended in respect to any business of the convention, by a two-thirds majority of those delegates present.

- 7.3.30 Any motions coming before the convention may be referred by the Executive of the General Church Board prior to the sessions, or by the convention during the sessions, for study and for report to the convention.
- 7.3.31 All proceedings shall be entered into a minute book, with the exception of unseconded motions or amendments.
- 7.3.32 The Church shall not be bound by any statements or plans contained in a report, but only by specific resolutions on matters arising from such report and carried by the General Synod.
- 7.3.33 In the event that a convention of the General Synod is held using electronic means in place of meeting in person, these procedures may be amended to suit that environment.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF CONVENTION 2021-23

IN-PERSON SESSIONS – 9-12 FEBRUARY 2023

Times are based on Australian Eastern Daylight Time

THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2023

- 4.00pm Registrations open
- 7.00pm Gathering worship service
- 9.00pm Supper

FRIDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2023

- 7.00am Registrations and helpdesk open
- 7.30am Optional worship service with holy communion (in prayer room)
- 9.00am Synod daily worship service
- 9.30am Morning tea
- 10.00am Convention session
- 12.00noon Lunch
- 1.30pm Convention session
- 3.00pm Afternoon tea
- 4.00pm Convention session
- 5.30pm Closing devotion (including In Memoriam)
- 6.00pm Close of session

SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2023

- 7.00am Helpdesk open
- 7.30am Optional worship service with holy communion (in prayer room)
- 9.00am Synod daily worship service
- 9.30am Morning tea
- 10.15am Convention session
- 12.30pm Lunch
- 1.30pm Convention session
- 3.00pm Afternoon tea
- 3.45pm Convention session
- 5.00pm Closing devotion
- 5.15pm Close of session
- 6.30pm General Synod dinner sponsored by the LLL

SUNDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2023

- 9.30am Closing worship service
- 12.00noon Lunch
- 12.30pm Depart

AGENDA

1 PRELIMINARIES

1.2. Endorsements

- 1.2.1. Reconvene Convention following adjournment of session in October 2021
- 1.2.2. Minute secretaries
- 1.2.3. Tellers
- 1.2.4. Communications officers
- 1.2.5. Committee for Verification of Minutes
- 1.2.6. Electoral Committee
- 1.2.7. Welcome to Convention
- 1.2.8. Civic welcome
- 1.2.9. Roll call
- 1.2.10. Apologies
- 1.2.11. Greetings
- 1.2.12. Receive reports
- 1.2.13. Late proposals

2 PROPOSALS

1.2.13 LATE PROPOSALS

- 1.2.13.1. **Pastor John Henderson to continue as a delegate**
General Church Board (p17)
- 1.2.13.2. **Constitution Review: GCB to consult and inform**
General Church Board (p17)
- 1.2.13.3. **Authorise republication of Anglican–Lutheran *Common Ground* with addendum *Perspectives on Mission***
General Church Board General Church Board (p19)
- 1.2.13.4. **Adopt Lutheran–Uniting *At the Table* statement**
General Church Board (p19)

2.1. PROPOSALS FROM LCA BOARDS AND COUNCILS

2.1.6. Changes to Constitution

- 2.1.6.7. Dissolution Clause: Model Constitution of Districts
General Church Board (p20)
- 2.1.6.8. Objects: Model Constitution of Districts
General Church Board (p22)
- 2.1.6.9. Withdrawal from Membership clauses: Lutheran Church of Australia Inc.
General Church Board (p23)
- 2.1.6.10. Withdrawal from Membership clauses: Model Constitution of Districts
General Church Board (p24)
- 2.1.6.11. Membership and Dissolution clauses: Model Constitution of Congregations
General Church Board (p25)
- 2.1.6.12. Membership and Dissolution clauses: Model Constitution of Parishes
General Church Board (p25)

2.1.9. Give thanks for new churches

Council for Local Mission (p26)

2.1.10. Continue support for 'Hidden Hurts Healing Hearts'

General Church Board (p28)

2.1 PROPOSALS FROM DISTRICTS, PARISHES AND CONGREGATIONS

- 2.2.1. **Affirm the work of Local Mission**
Glynde St Andrews Congregation (p29)
- 2.2.2. **Allow two practices of the ministry**
Adelaide St Stephens Congregation (p30)
- 2.2.3. **Remove Article 6.11 from Theses of Agreement**
Duncraig Concordia Congregation (p33)
- 2.2.4.(V1) **Remove Article 6.11 from Theses of Agreement**
Box Hill St Pauls Congregation (p33)
- 2.2.4.(V2) **Remove Article 6.11 from Theses of Agreement**
Box Hill St Pauls Congregation (p36)
- 2.2.5 **Remove Article 6.11 from Theses of Agreement**
South Australia – Northern Territory District (p38)
- 2.2.6. **LCANZ to seek full membership of LWC and ILC**
Belconnen Holy Cross Congregation (p40)
- 2.2.7 **Offer congregations peaceful dismissal**
Minyip/Warracknabeal Parish (p42)
- 2.2.8 **Amend clause 3.2 in Model Constitution for Congregations**
South Australia – Northern Territory District (p42)
- 2.2.9.(V1) **Explore establishment of one church with two ordination practices**
Queensland District (p43)
- 2.2.9.(V2) **Explore establishment of one church with two ordination practices**
Queensland District (p45)

FORESHADOWED PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENTS

- 2.2.10 Accept amended proposals from St Paul’s Box Hill and Queensland District (p47)

3 - 14 REPORTS

- 3.4. **LCANZ Bishop** (p48)
- 14.1. **Ecclesiastical Discipline Review Team** (p307 Book of Reports)
- 14.2. **Constitution Review** (p340 Book of Reports)
- 14.4. **Constitution Review Working Group** (p55)
- 14.5 **General Pastors Conference Advice** (p86)
- 14.6 **Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations, Anglican–Lutheran Dialogue – *Common Ground*** with addendum *Perspectives on Mission* (p87)
- 14.7 **Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations, Lutheran–Uniting Dialogue – *At the Table*** Statement (p94)

16 CLOSING FORMALITIES

- 16.1. Invitation to host 21st Regular Convention of General Synod
- 16.2. Vote of thanks
- 16.3. Close of Convention
- 16.4. Closing Services

AGENDA 1.2.13

LATE PROPOSALS

AGENDA 1.2.13.1

Pastor John Henderson to continue as a delegate

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT General Synod acknowledge Pastor John Henderson as a continuing delegate under Article 7.2.7 of the Constitution.

REASONS FOR MOTION

Under normal circumstance, Pastor John Henderson would have continued as delegate by virtue of his position as Bishop of the Church until the conclusion of the convention. In addition, the bishop-elect only assumes office three months after being elected. As the 20th regular convention was adjourned, due to the holding of convention in two parts because of the impact of COVID, it is the same meeting that was convened in October 2021. Due to the unusual circumstances and for good order the General Church Board is asking the General Synod to acknowledge Pastor Henderson as a continuing delegate.

AGENDA 2.1.11

LCA Constitution Review: GCB to consult and inform

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT General Synod:

1. Receives the Constitution Review Working Group's paper
2. Requests the General Church Board to initiate opportunity for further consultation with congregations on the Constitution Review process, and
3. Requests the General Church Board to initiate a period of education/information leading up to Convention of General Synod in 2024 with the dual objectives of keeping the constitution review before the LCANZ and ensuring delegates are well informed before any proposal to move to Phase 2 is considered.

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

The LCA Constitution Review Final Report of Phase 1 was presented to the 20th Convention of Synod online sessions (Agenda 14.2, Book of Reports p340). The General Church Board (GCB) proposed motion (Agenda 2.1.8) was resolved in the affirmative by the General Synod:

2021:0214 RESOLVED that General Synod:

1. *Affirms the work of the Phase 1 of the Constitution Review and acknowledges the contributions made by church members to it;*
2. *Authorises the General Church Board to establish a Working Group that considers the issues raised in the review, in particular the questions, 'who we are now as LCA NZ' and 'why do we gather as LCA NZ', noting that these are fundamental questions for the LCA's constitutional arrangements, and ask the Working Group to:*
 - a. *prepare a position paper that responds to these issues and questions*
 - b. *have due regard to the principles and findings contained in the final report of the Phase 1 of the Constitution Review report; and*
 - c. *engage with key groups within the LCA NZ, including the CTICR and*
 - d. *for the General Church Board to submit the Working Group's paper to the in-person sessions of the 2022 Convention to enable discussion by Synod delegates on the issues raised in it;*
3. *Requests the General Church Board to submit any necessary proposals authorising the move into Phase 2 of the review of the LCA Constitution and By-laws to continue the journey of ensuring the LCA NZ has quality constitutional documents appropriate for the future and that reflects the LCA NZ's understanding of who it is for the future, based on the Phase 1 final report and the Working Group's position paper, for the General Synod's consideration at the 2022 sessions of the 20th Regular Convention of General Synod; and*
4. *the Working Group consists of LCA NZ members with a mix of backgrounds and perspectives which, together with relevant qualifications and experience, will enable the working group to fulfil its role.*

After the 2021 online sessions of General Synod the GCB enacted paragraph 2 of the resolution on the Constitution Review. This saw the formation of a Working Group tasked to consider the final report of the Phase 1 of the Constitution Review report with a specific focus of consulting on and considering the two particular questions: 'Who we are now as LCA NZ?' and 'Why do we gather as LCA NZ?'

The report titled 'One in Christ: The faith and purpose of those who are gathered as the LCA NZ' is available in this Addendum to the Book of Reports (Agenda 14.4, p55)

The 2021 resolution also requested GCB 'to submit any necessary proposals' to move into Phase 2 'to continue the journey of ensuring the LCA NZ has quality constitutional documents for the future and that reflects the LCA NZ's understanding of who it is for the future, based on the Phase 1 final report and the Working Group's position paper'.

It is envisaged that a Phase 2 would include the development of a new draft LCA NZ constitution for consideration by the church.

GCB is recommending that before moving to a Phase 2 of the constitution review, the church would be best served by providing opportunity for further consultation within the church, especially at a congregational level, identified by the Working Group as being advantageous.

The GCB recommendation acknowledges that paragraph 3 of the resolution adopted by General Synod in 2021 is deferred to a future convention.

Together with congregational engagement, the GCB will initiate an informative/educational phase to keep the constitution review process before the church.

This is 'a half-century review' of our church's constitution (Bishop John Henderson, quoted in the Phase 1 Report in the paragraph 'Context of this Report', p2). It is a large task. It can be expected to take time. To achieve a constitutional framework with durability to serve the LCA NZ over the next half-century, the process needs to be done properly and collaboratively.

AGENDA 2.1.12

Authorise republication of Anglican–Lutheran *Common Ground* with addendum *Perspectives on Mission*

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT General Synod authorise the republication of the revised booklet *Common Ground* including the addendum *Perspectives on Mission*.

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

1. As the Christian churches of Australia and New Zealand find it increasingly difficult to continue serving their cities, towns and rural areas, working together is increasing in importance. Indeed, unless we do, some communities will have no organised Christian presence at all.
2. Anglicans and Lutherans have engaged in fruitful formal dialogue in Australia for 50 years. In 2001 our two churches entered a process for covenanting for mutual recognition and reconciliation and issues a document called *Common Ground*.

The dialogue has now added to *Common Ground* a section titled ‘Perspectives in Mission’ (as Appendix 3), which it is hoped will assist bishops, mission departments, congregations and other ministries in collaborating with the Anglicans and other traditions in joining God’s mission to his world in their contexts.

3. The September 2022 General Pastors Conference considered the document and resolved the following: ‘The GPC recommends that the 20th Convention of General Synod authorise the republication of the revised booklet *Common Ground* including the addendum *Perspectives on Mission*’.
4. The Anglican General Synod adopted *Perspectives on Mission* as a third appendix to *Common Ground* and it encouraged members of the Anglican Church of Australia to study *Common Ground* and *Perspectives on Mission* and to foster closer cooperation and relations with the Lutheran Church of Australia.

AGENDA 2.1.13

Adopt Lutheran–Uniting *At the Table* statement

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT General Synod receive and adopt *At the Table: The Eucharist* as an agreed statement between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia.

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

The document *At the Table: The Eucharist*, produced by the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) – Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) official Dialogue, is presented to General Synod for adoption as an agreed statement between the LCA and UCA.

The September 2022 General Pastors Conference considered the document and resolved the following:

The GPC recommends that the 20th Convention of General Synod receive and adopt *At the Table: The Eucharist* as an agreed statement between the LCA and the UCA.

This document is the culmination of over a decade of study and consultation in the service of our two churches' Declaration of Mutual Recognition, adopted by our 2009 General Synod, which commits us to work towards a Concordat for 'intentional sharing in pastoral ministry and in mission' and 'full communion, so that members from either denomination may share in Holy Communion in each other's churches'.

In 2018 an earlier version was shared with the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations and LCA District pastors conferences (with a corresponding process in the UCA), with comments and questions returned to the Dialogue for further study and reflection in *At the Table* where appropriate.

Delegates are directed to the document's Preface and Introduction for background and context, noting that it builds on earlier, briefer statements of agreement about the Lord's Supper.

The Dialogue is now studying other topics under the mandate to work toward a possible Concordat.

Dialogues work in obedience to our Lord's prayer for the unity of the church in John 17, and in the hope that the Holy Spirit will impart some gift from each other to each other. Adopting this document will provide a richer foundation for our journey as God's people together, and for local congregational cooperation under the oversight of District bishops where this occurs.

AGENDA 2.1

PROPOSALS FROM LCA BOARDS AND COUNCILS

AGENDA 2.1.6

CHANGES TO CONSTITUTIONS

AGENDA 2.1.6.7

Dissolution clause: Model Constitution of Districts

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT

ARTICLE 11. DISSOLUTION of the By-laws of the Church, Constitution of the Districts, be amended to add the following words (words to be deleted - ~~strike through~~; words to be added - **bold**):

Article 11. DISSOLUTION

- 11.1 Changes to the prescribed geographical area of the District, dissolution of the District, or an amalgamation of the District with one or more other Districts or with the Church or changes

to the legislative or governance structure of the Church affecting the District shall be determined according to the procedure set out in this article.

11.2 Action initiated by the Church

11.2.1 For any action referred to in the preceding clause 11.1 initiated by the Church, the General Church Board, in consultation with the District Church Council and its Synod, shall outline the reasons, purposes and procedure for such a proposal and make a recommendation to the District Synod. Upon an in principle agreement, the matter shall proceed to a General Synod for approval.

11.2.2 Any decision for any action referred to in the preceding clause 11.1 shall be made by the Church according to the following procedure:

11.2.2.1 ~~Written~~ Notice of a motion specifying such action shall be given to the delegates of the General Synod.

11.2.2.2 At least thirty [30] days written notice of a General Synod, specifying such action as a special motion, shall be given to the delegates of the General Synod.

11.2.2.3 The motion must be presented at a duly constituted General Synod and shall require a majority of **not less than** three-quarters **[3/4]** of all the registered delegates of the General Synod.

11.2.3 Once a decision has been determined by the Church according to the preceding clause 11.2.2 it shall be communicated to the District which shall then take the following action:

11.2.3.1 ~~Written~~ Notice of a motion specifying the action shall be given to the delegates of the District Synod.

11.2.3.2 At least thirty [30] days written notice of a District Synod, specifying the action to be taken as a special motion, shall be given to the delegates of the District Synod.

11.2.3.3 The motion must be presented at a duly constituted District Synod and shall require a majority of **not less than** three-quarters **[3/4]** of all the registered delegates of the District Synod.

11.2.3.4 The special resolution shall be submitted to the General Church Board.

11.3 Action initiated by the District

11.3.1 For any action referred to in the preceding clause 11.1 initiated by the District, the District shall outline the reasons, purposes and procedure for such a proposal to the General Church Board for consultation prior to presentation to the District Synod.

11.3.2 Following such consultation as described in the preceding clause 11.3.1, any outline of the reasons and purposes for dissolution shall be made by the District according to the following procedure:

11.3.2.1 ~~Written~~ Notice of a motion specifying the action shall be given to the delegates of the District Synod.

11.3.2.2 At least thirty [30] days written notice of a District Synod, specifying such action as a special motion, shall be given to the delegates of the District Synod.

11.3.2.3 The motion must be presented at a duly constituted District Synod and shall require a majority of **not less than** three-quarters **[3/4]** of all the registered delegates of the District Synod.

11.3.2.4 The special resolution shall be submitted to the General Church Board.

11.3.3 Upon agreement, the General Church Board, subject to the provisions in the Constitution of the Church, Article 9.2, shall submit the proposal to a General Synod for approval according to the procedure in the preceding clause 11.2.2.

- 11.4 Any recommendation or motion for dissolution of the District must address the transferring of the surplus assets of the District to either the Church or another district of the Church.
- 11.5 The District Synod shall take all steps required to implement the special resolution for action under this clause, including the making of changes required in respect of incorporation under the Act and/or other relevant legislation.

REASON FOR PROPOSAL

The changes here presented bring this section into line with legal requirements under the Incorporations Act 1985 (SA) and for better clarity. Specifically, in clauses 11.2.2.1 and 11.3.2.1 the emphasis is on the requirement for a special resolution in writing on this matter. The inclusion of the words “not less than” ensures that any margin of three-quarters or more is sufficient majority.

AGENDA 2.1.6.8

Objects: Model Constitution of Districts

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT

Article 3. OBJECTS of the Model Constitution for a District in the By-laws of the Church, be amended to revise clause 3.1.14: (words to be deleted - ~~strike through~~; words to be added - **bold**):

~~3.1.14 — take such action as is necessary for the protection of the congregations, pastors, teachers and other church workers in the performance of their duties and the maintenance of their rights.~~

- 3.1.14 maintain and promote a culture of care in all areas of the Church and its activities, so that all people, especially the vulnerable such as children and the aged, are protected against any form of spiritual, emotional, physical and sexual abuse by ensuring that**
- 3.1.14.1 appropriate governance and leadership structures are in place;**
 - 3.1.14.2 policies and procedures are appropriately prescribed;**
 - 3.1.14.3 a culture of safety and care for children and all people is actively encouraged and practised; and**
 - 3.1.14.4 the well-being of congregations, pastors, teachers and other church workers in the performance of their duties and the maintenance of their rights is supported and promoted.**

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

Due to an oversight, at the 2018 General Convention of Synod when changes were made to the Constitution of the Church, the Model Constitution of the Districts was not updated. It is the same clause as was inserted into the Constitution of the Church and brings the Model constitution of the Districts into alignment with the remaining constitutions. The resolution number is 2018.0235 (see pages 66-67 of the Minutes of the 2018 Convention of General Synod). The reasons for that proposal were the need for due concern for the wellbeing of children, the aged and vulnerable people, which has been well accepted and expected in society, and this amendment gives witness to the intent of the church to demonstrate its support for this goal.

AGENDA 2.1.6.9

Withdrawal from Membership clauses: Lutheran Church of Australia Inc

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT in the Constitution and By-laws of the Church, the following changes be made (words to be deleted - ~~strike through~~; words to be added - **bold**):

Article 13.2

13.2 Notice of any such motion to amend, alter, add to or repeal any of the rules shall be given on the agenda of the convention, and any motion to amend, alter, add or repeal shall require a ~~two-thirds~~ majority **of not less than two-thirds [2/3]** of all the delegates registered at the convention.

Section 4.3

Withdrawal From Membership

- 4.3 A congregation may withdraw from membership in the Church by adopting the following procedure:
- 4.3.1 The resolution of a congregation indicating the desire to withdraw must be adopted at a legally constituted meeting of the congregation and shall require a majority of **not less than two-thirds [2/3]** of all the voting members of the congregation, and shall be submitted to the Bishop of the District within fourteen [14] days of adoption.
 - 4.3.2 The Bishop of the District or the Bishop's appointed representative shall negotiate with the congregation for at least ninety [90] days after receipt of the resolution.
 - 4.3.3 After such negotiation, the formal and final vote shall be taken at a legally constituted meeting of the congregation, the purpose of which has been published and at which the Bishop of the District or the Bishop's representative shall be present.
 - 4.3.4 The final motion to withdraw shall require a majority of **not less than two-thirds [2/3]** of all the voting members of the congregation. A copy of the resolution shall be forwarded to the Bishop of the District, and upon its receipt the membership of the congregation in the Church shall terminate. The Bishop shall forward notice of withdrawal to the Secretary of the Church, who shall publish it in the official publication of the Church.

Section 7.3.28.3

7.3.28.3 For a resolution on a matter of doctrine to be deemed to be the official position of the Church it shall require a ~~two-thirds~~ majority **of not less than two-thirds [2/3]** of all the registered delegates at the convention.

Section 7.3.29

7.3.29 Any of the By-laws in Section 7.3 may, if the need arises, be suspended in respect to any business of the convention, by a ~~two-thirds~~ majority **of not less than two-thirds [2/3]** of those delegates present.

REASON FOR PROPOSAL

These changes are to ensure the correct interpretation of, and consistency in, the wording for the specified required majority. The inclusion of the words 'not less than' ensures that any margin of two thirds of the required amount, or more, is sufficient majority.

AGENDA 2.1.6.10

Withdrawal from Membership clauses: Model Constitution of Districts

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT in the Constitution and By-laws of the Church, Constitutions of the Districts, the following changes be made (words to be deleted - ~~strike through~~; words to be added - **bold**):

Article 13.2

13.2 Notice of any motion to amend, alter, add to or repeal any of the rules shall be given on the agenda of the convention, and any such motion shall require a ~~two-thirds~~ majority **of not less than two-thirds [2/3]** of all the registered delegates at the convention, unless the motion relates to an amendment, alteration, addition or repeal already approved or recommended by General Synod or General Church Board of the Church, in which case the motion shall require a majority of those voting.

Section 4.3

Withdrawal from Membership

- 4.3 A congregation may withdraw from membership in the Church by adopting the following procedure:
- 4.3.1 The resolution of a congregation indicating the desire to withdraw must be adopted at a legally constituted meeting of the congregation by a ~~two-thirds~~ majority **of not less than two-thirds [2/3]** of all the voting members of the Congregation, and shall be submitted to the Bishop of the District within fourteen [14] days of adoption.
 - 4.3.2 The Bishop of the District or the Bishop's appointed representative shall negotiate with the congregation for at least ninety [90] days after receipt of the resolution.
 - 4.3.3 After such negotiation the formal and final vote shall be taken at a legally constituted meeting of the congregation, the purpose of which has been published and at which the Bishop of the District or the Bishop's representative shall be present.
 - 4.3.4 The final motion to withdraw shall require a majority of **not less than two-thirds [2/3]** of all the voting members of the Congregation. If it is resolved in the affirmative, a copy of the resolution shall be forwarded to the Bishop of the District, and upon its receipt the membership of the congregation in the Church shall terminate. The Bishop shall forward notice of withdrawal to the Secretary of the Church, who shall publish it in the official publication of the Church.

Section 7.3.29

- 7.3.29 Any of the By-laws in Section 7.3 may, if the need arises, be suspended in respect to any business of the convention by a ~~two-thirds~~ majority **of not less than two-thirds [2/3]** of those delegates present.

REASON FOR PROPOSAL

These changes are to ensure the correct interpretation of, and consistency in, the wording for the specified required majority. The inclusion of the words 'not less than' ensures that any margin of two thirds of the required amount, or more, is sufficient majority.

AGENDA 2.1.6.11

Membership and Dissolution clauses: Model Constitution of Congregations

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT in the Model Constitution for a Congregation the following changes be made (words to be deleted - ~~strike through~~; words to be added - **bold**):

ARTICLE 11. DISSOLUTION

- 11.1 A special resolution is required if it is proposed that the Congregation dissolve and any such resolution for dissolution shall be made according to the following procedure:
- 11.1.1 Written notice of a motion to dissolve the Congregation shall be given to the members of the Congregation.
 - 11.1.2 The motion shall be presented to the Congregation only after the Bishop of the District has been consulted.
 - 11.1.3 At least thirty [30] days written notice of a meeting, specifying the intention to dissolve as a special motion, shall be given to all the voting members of the Congregation.
 - 11.1.4 The motion shall require a majority of **not less than** three-quarters [3/4] of all the voting members of the Congregation for determination at a general meeting.

ARTICLE 13. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 13.1 The Congregation may resolve, by a resolution requiring at least a ~~two-thirds~~ majority **of not less than two-thirds [2/3] of the members present**, to amend, alter, add to or repeal its Constitution, including changing the name of the Congregation, except as hereinafter provided in the following clause 13.4 and subject to the preceding clause 3.1.4.

REASON FOR PROPOSAL

These changes are to ensure the correct interpretation of, and consistency in, the wording for the specified required majority. The inclusion of the words “not less than” ensures that any margin of two thirds (2/3) OR three quarters (3/4) of the required amount, or more, is sufficient majority. This amendment brings the Model Constitutions for a congregation into line with the LCA, District and parish constitutions.

AGENDA 2.1.6.12

Amend Membership and Dissolution clauses: Model Constitution of Parishes

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT in the Model Constitution for a Parish the following changes be made (words to be deleted - ~~strike through~~; words to be added - **bold**):

ARTICLE 5. MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1 The Parish shall consist of the following congregations and others admitted according to the procedure in the following clause 5.2 and the voting members of member-congregations shall be the voting members of the Parish:
- 5.1.1 *(Names of congregations inserted here)*
- 5.2 Any other congregation which is a member of both the Church and the District may apply for membership in the Parish and shall require a ~~two-thirds [2/3]~~ majority **of not less than two-thirds [2/3]** of those voting members present at a duly constituted meeting of the Parish provided that at least one [1] calendar month's notice of application for such membership shall have been given to all member-congregations of the Parish.

ARTICLE 11. DISSOLUTION

- 11.1 A special resolution is required if it is proposed that the Parish dissolve and any such resolution for dissolution shall be made according to the following procedure:
- 11.1.1 Written notice of a motion to dissolve the Parish shall be given to the member-congregations of the Parish.
- 11.1.2 The motion shall be presented to the member-congregations only after the Bishop of the District has been consulted.
- 11.1.3 At least thirty [30] days written notice of a meeting, specifying the intention to dissolve as a special motion, shall be given to all the voting members of the Parish.
- 11.1.4 The motion shall require a majority of **not less than** three-quarters [3/4] of all the voting members of the Parish for determination at a general meeting.

ARTICLE 13. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 13.1 The Parish may resolve, by a resolution requiring at least a ~~two-thirds~~ majority **of not less than two-thirds [2/3] of the members present**, amend, alter, add to or repeal its Constitution, including changing the name of the Parish, except as hereinafter provided in the following clause 13.4 and subject to the preceding clause 3.1.4.

REASON FOR PROPOSAL

These changes are to ensure the correct interpretation of, and consistency in, the wording for the specified required majority. The inclusion of the words "not less than" ensures that any margin of two-thirds (2/3) OR three-quarters (3/4) of the required amount, or more, is sufficient majority. This amendment brings the Model Constitutions for a parish into line with the LCA, District and Congregation constitutions.

AGENDA 2.1.9

Give thanks for new churches

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by Council for Local Mission

PROPOSED THAT

1. Synod give thanks for the new life of Christ found in newly established Lutheran churches, and welcome these new churches with joy and thanksgiving; and
2. Congregations be encouraged and actively supported to:

- a. Pray diligently and regularly that God would raise up and send out evangelists, missional communities, church planting teams, and church planters in the harvest fields of Australia and New Zealand;
- b. Identify and act on their mission strengths, and identify themselves as a Sending or Partner Church; and
- c. Invest and promote investment of funds and resources in new church plants, including intentional investment in church planting and local mission following the dissolution of a Congregation.

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ instructed us to ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you’ (Matthew 28 18-20). Thus, being sent in mission to share the gospel is part of the LCA’s identity and not just one of its many activities. In following the command of Jesus to make disciples, a priority of the LCA is to ‘equip people for mission and ministry in the church, local communities and the wider world’ (priority 1.3, Our Direction 2018-2024, LCA).
2. The Objects of the Church in the LCA’s Constitution include church planting, that is establishing new churches: to ‘encourage every congregation to carry out its mission to its local community’ (Article 3, Objects of the Church, 3.1.6) and ‘establish, develop and support new congregations where it is not possible for individual congregations to do so’ (Article 3, Objects of the Church, 3.1.7).
3. The LCA is beginning to see the fruit of new believers in Christ and new churches planted through the grassroots church planting movement and the work of the New and Renewing Churches department and the Council for Local Mission. We praise God for this life-giving fruitfulness.
4. While newly constituted congregations of the LCA are formally welcomed into membership at District Conventions of Synod, we believe it is important to recognise and rejoice in this new life also at church-wide level, so that delegates are able to take back these good news stories to their congregations and share the joy with the wider church.
5. Jesus also instructed his disciples to pray for labourers. “The Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest”” Luke 10: 1-2 (NRSV).
6. One of the important factors in church planting and mission work is the ‘harvest workers’ – the evangelists, church planters, and church planting teams who partner with the Holy Spirit to see new people to faith in Christ and which bring new churches into existence in local areas. The Bishop of the Church encouraged the Church in a six-week season of prayer for this very purpose in 2019. Regular, diligent, church-wide prayer for harvest workers is thus essential to see new people come to faith in Christ and new churches planted.
7. Each individual and congregation is called to join with God in His mission. God has given us many different gifts, and so mission can take many forms, including where God has placed us in our vocations to serve our family, colleagues, community and congregations. One of the best ways for congregations to experience renewal in their own life and mission is to be involved with church planting. As congregations get involved with church planting and experience the joy of the Heavenly Father and of the angels as they see new people coming to faith in Christ and new churches planted (Luke 15:7,10), they are reinvigorated and renewed.

8. The New and Renewing Churches department has a bold vision to plant over 200 new Lutheran churches by 2030 across Australia and New Zealand. In order to realise this vision, the LCA NZ needs a large pool of Sending Churches, which are congregations being trained in health, mission, and multiplication of leaders in order to begin a new church plant. Not every congregation has the capacity to become a Sending Church, but every congregation in the LCA NZ can benefit in its mission and its own congregational renewal by being a Partner Church, engaged in mutual learning and growth, prayer, and practical partnership with a Sending Church or a Church Plant.
9. Thus, all congregations are encouraged to identify as a Sending or Partner Church and undertake the New and Renewing Churches department's Renew Mission Life training, which has been shown to be effective in increasing church health, renewal, mission and multiplication.
10. Practical support for mission work is also vital, whether it be through funds, gifts of resources such as houses or land, or human resources. For this to occur congregations need to undertake a prayerful and intentional process of investing in the ongoing mission work of the LCA NZ.
11. Planting new churches is costly, and the bold vision of planting many new congregations of the LCA NZ will require significant investment by the wider church. One situation where such investment can occur is where congregations have completed the work God has given them to do in their location and amongst their generation, known constitutionally as 'dissolution' of a congregation. The Dissolution clause in the model constitution for congregations of the LCA NZ allows for the congregation to 'give indication regarding the use of its assets by the District and/or the Church. Any surplus assets which remain after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be transferred to one or more Lutheran organisations with similar purposes.' Supporting church planting, either through a Sending Church or Churches, or through the LCA's New and Renewing Churches department, allows for the passing on of a missional legacy. Such an investment, joyfully and prayerfully given by congregations entering a stage of completion, and joyfully and prayerfully received by new congregations at the beginning of their lifecycle, will reap great benefits for the LCA NZ into the future.

AGENDA 2.1.10

Continue to support 'Hidden Hurts Healing Hearts'

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT General Synod notes the work carried out by the "Hidden Hurts Healing Hearts" campaign and requests that the GCB oversees and continues to provide adequate resources to support its continuation in the next synodical term with a focus on the following areas:

- Review, update continue to develop resources
- Awareness training and on-going professional education, including LCA NZ community engagement and greater understanding of the impact of family and domestic violence
- Evaluation of the impact of the awareness training
- Ongoing research in related fields

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

1. The Hidden Hurts Healing Hearts Campaign needs to be ongoing to continue to curb family violence on partners, children and church communities.
2. Family violence has continued to be a significant issue, with a rising incidence of family violence reported across Australia in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic (Australian Institute of Criminology, Survey July 2020). It is a leading cause of homelessness for women with children. In 2016–17, 115,000 people (72,000 women, 34,000 children and 9000 men) reported that family and domestic violence caused or contributed to their homelessness (AIHW 2017d). It is the greatest health risk factor for women aged 25-44, particularly in relation to mental health. The estimated cost of family violence in Australia in 2015-16 was \$22 billion (AIHW, 2018).
3. Previous Conventions of General Synod have reaffirmed the condemnation of all forms of violence in the family and authorised GCB to commit resources for a church-wide campaign to address the prevalence of family and domestic violence amongst us, which may include sharing of resources, education initiatives and the provision of pastoral care to the survivors of violence. Refer to Resolutions passed at previous Synods in 1993, 2003, 2015. In 2018, Synod referred the proposal to continue this work to GCB - see Minutes 2.2.14. In passing these resolutions, General Synod has shared the wider community's deep concern about the impact of family violence, especially the effect on women and children.
4. The 2018 "Reason for Proposal" outlined the start of the "Hidden Hurts Healing Hearts" campaign which commenced in the previous synodical term with the development of training materials and resources which were then rolled out in 2018 and planned for 2019.
5. The "Hidden Hurts Healing Hearts" campaign has been active in providing professional education to pastors and church workers and also in developing resources that are web-based or suitable for distance education. It has also been actively involved with Flinders University and ALC in a research project to increase the church's understanding of the extent and impact of family violence within its midst. This research will extend into the next synodical term. Once completed, the results of this research will be broadly disseminated. Research will also seek to analyse the extent and effectiveness of the LCA in raising awareness of this issue.

AGENDA 2.2

PROPOSALS FROM DISTRICTS, PARISHES AND CONGREGATIONS

AGENDA 2.2.1

Affirm the work of Local Mission

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by Glynde St Andrews Congregation

PROPOSED THAT General Synod:

1. affirm the work done by the Council for Local Mission (CLM), leading the way in many aspects of local mission outreach, and

2. ask the Council for Local Mission (in cooperation with District mission directors and committees) to intensify efforts to provide support and ongoing encouragement to local congregations, specifically,
 - (a) to help pastors and congregational leaders to better equip their members for the work of outreach ministry, including biblically based resources, to review their context and local mission; and
 - (b) to give local congregations and congregational leaders specific practical and proven ideas, resources and suggestions for consideration in their efforts to reach out more earnestly and faithfully, both as individual witnesses and as participants in congregational mission projects.

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

1. The spreading of the Gospel is one of the chief purposes of the Church, with every congregation to be a mission congregation and every member to be an active missionary.
2. Every person in the Church is a witness for Christ in their life, and all members, individually and collectively in congregations and other church structures, are to be “Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through them (us)” (2 Cor 5:20).
3. A sense of urgency pervades the Church in all that it is called to do, remembering also the constant and enabling presence of Christ and the Spirit, particularly in bringing the Gospel to those who have not heard it or have not yet accepted it.
4. Increased encouragement and support, directly to congregations for their outreach ministries, will help to increase congregations’ concern for the lost, becoming more outward-looking, and stimulate a passion to reach out locally, in response to Christ’s command to ‘make disciples of all nations’ (Matt 28:19).

AGENDA 2.2.2

Allow two practices of the ministry

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by Adelaide St Stephens Congregation

PROPOSED THAT for the peace and unity of the LCANZ, both male only ordination and the ordination of men and women be endorsed as acceptable non-Church divisive theological opinions, allowing for two practices of the ministry in the Church.

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

1. In the first document of the Church’s *Theses of Agreement*, called ‘Principles Governing Church Fellowship’,¹ our forebears agreed in advance how to deal with doctrinal differences that might emerge in the new Church. They stipulated that if the Church fails to reach ‘agreement on the basis of God’s Word’ on a doctrinal matter after ‘combined, prayerful examination of the passage or passages in question’, ‘divergent views arising from such differences of interpretation are not divisive of church fellowship, providing there be the readiness in principle to submit to the authority of the Word of God’ (*Theses of Agreement 1.4.e*).

¹ ‘Principles governing Church Fellowship’, *Theses of Agreement 1*, DSTO, pages A2-A3. The relevant section of this document is paragraph 4, quoted in full in the Appendix (below).

Because

- i. Neither those who support the ordination of both women and men nor those who support the ordination of only men have been able to persuade *the whole Church* that their position alone has clear scriptural support;
- ii. The gender of a minister cannot violate or infringe upon the central doctrine of Holy Scripture, as there is nothing we can do or be that adds to justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ;
- iii. The Lutheran Confessions are silent regarding the ordination of women; moreover, Article VII of the *Augsburg Confession* states, “For this is enough for the true unity of the Christian church that there the Gospel is preached harmoniously according to a pure understanding and the Sacraments are administered in conformity with the divine Word” and Article XV “people are ... instructed not to burden consciences with [church regulations made by human beings] as if such things were necessary for salvation”

therefore Point (iv) of the *Theses of Agreement 1.4.e* becomes a direction to the church for the sake of unity, that “such divergent views are not propagated as the *publica doctrina* of the Church”.

2. The period of scripturally based theological reflection regarding ordination, now lasting more than 30 years, has failed to resolve the differences in interpretation that are all too evident in the Church. In ‘Principles governing Church Fellowship’ the Church clearly states that ‘there are some things hard to understand in Holy Writ (2 Peter 3:16); and no doctrine can be based on Scripture passages that are not clear, especially if no light is thrown on them by clear passages’ (*DSTO A2*; 4.c).

The Church’s ‘combined, prayerful examination’ of the relevant passages has not led to ‘agreement on the basis of God’s Word’ on the ordination issue. And it seems unlikely that further discussion and debate will lead to a breakthrough, given the firmly entrenched positions that have emerged. Therefore, strictly speaking, neither of the divergent exegetical conclusions that have been in evidence since the start of the prolonged debate—male-only ordination and the ordination of both men and women—meets the criteria for being promulgated as an essential part of the whole Church’s teaching on the ministry. According to the principles of *TA 1* (see Appendix) both positions can now be regarded as acceptable theological opinions that can be held without dividing the Church.

3. The LCANZ already has a teaching on the office of the ministry that avoids the divergent conclusions that have surfaced in the debate in our circles. It is articulated in Articles 5 and 14 of the *Augsburg Confession* and reflected in the *Theses of Agreement 6.1-10*. This teaching states that God has instituted the ministry so that people can be brought to saving faith and nurtured in the faith through the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments (*AC 5*). And the ministry requires an orderly process of call and ordination (*AC 14*).

To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel. And the Gospel teaches that we have a gracious God, not by our own merits but by the merit of Christ, when we believe this (*Augsburg Confession 5*); and,

It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call (*AC 14*).

The emphasis of these statements on the ministry from the Confessions is rightly placed on the office, not on the gender, of those who fill the office. The proposal does not require a new Lutheran teaching on the ministry, different from the one that is articulated in the Confessions (above).

4. With both groups united in their commitment to the Confessions’ teaching on the ministry, it would be a wise course of action for the Church to affirm this one unchanging teaching that

Lutherans have inherited from the time of the Reformation, and leave congregations² free to call as their pastor the one they believe will best serve with them in their mission, from those who are qualified for the office, ordained and endorsed by the Church.

The proposal allows those who are conscience bound to support the ordination of both women and men, and also those who are conscience bound to reject the ordination of both men and women, to share common ground on the Lutheran doctrine of the ministry, and it frees the LCA to adopt a middle way that respects and honours the consciences of those who take either position.

5. The LCA teaches that 'the Theses of Agreement are always under the authority of the Word of God, and therefore there must always be a readiness to submit them to the critical scrutiny of God's Word and accordingly confirm them, or amend or repudiate them when further study of God's Word shows them to be inadequate or in error'.³ This statement has given the Church both the freedom to study closely the teaching that only men may be ordained as per *Theses of Agreement* 6.11 and the freedom to remove this paragraph in the *Theses of Agreement*.

Reaffirming *Augsburg Confession* 5 and 14 and *Theses of Agreement* 6.1-10 as the documents that give the LCA's teaching on the ministry gives the freedom and flexibility that befits a gospel-centred teaching and a gospel-centred Church. And it would restore the Church to peace and unity.

APPENDIX

THESES OF AGREEMENT 1, 'PRINCIPLES GOVERNING CHURCH FELLOWSHIP', PARAGRAPH 4; DSTO A2-A3

4. (a) We believe that where differences in teaching and practice exist or arise between Churches uniting, these differences are to be removed by willingly submitting to the authority of the Word of God. Where a difference in teaching or practice is a departure from the doctrine of the Bible, such difference cannot be tolerated, but must be pointed out as an error, on the basis of clear passages of Holy Writ; and if the error is persisted in, in spite of instruction, warning, and earnest witness, it must at last lead to a separation.

(b) We believe that all doctrines of Holy Writ are equally binding; nevertheless, not all things in Scripture are of the same importance, when viewed from the centre and core of the Scriptures, Christ and justification by Him through faith.

(c) We admit that there are some things hard to understand in Holy Writ, 2 Peter 3:16; but no doctrine can be based on Scripture passages that are not clear, especially if no light is thrown upon them by clear passages

(d) Differences in exegesis that do not affect doctrine are not church divisive.

(e) In case of differences in exegesis that affect doctrine, agreement on the basis of God's word must be sought by combined, prayerful examination of the passage or passages in question.

If this does not lead to agreement, because no unanimity has been reached on the clarity of the passage or passages in question and hence on the stringency and adequacy of the Scriptural proof, divergent views arising from such differences of interpretation are not divisive of church fellowship, providing that there be the readiness in principle to submit to the authority of the Word of God, and providing that

- (i) Thereby no clear Word of Scripture is denied, contradicted or ignored;
- (ii) Such divergent views in no wise impair, infringe upon, or violate the central doctrine of Holy Scripture, justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ;

² Including other calling bodies such as aged care services and schools.

³ 'The Permanent Status of the Theses of Agreement', *Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions, LCA NZ (DSTO)*, page A31.

- (iii) Nothing is taught contrary to the *publica doctrina* of the Lutheran Church as laid out in its Confessions;
- (iv) Such divergent views are not propagated as the *publica doctrina* of the Church and in no wise impair the doctrine of Holy Writ.

AGENDA 2.2.3

Remove Article 6.11 from Theses of Agreement

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by Duncraig Concordia Congregation

PROPOSED THAT, given that there is not a clear agreement in the Church, Article 6.11 be removed from the Theses of Agreement.

REASON FOR PROPOSAL

1. The Theses of Agreement should reflect the agreement of the Body of the church on the Church's teaching.
2. The Church, in this Synod, has voted repeatedly in simple majority to change the teaching of the Church in respect to Article 6.11, however without the number sufficient to enact such change.
3. The ongoing contention shows that there is not a clear agreement on the teaching of the church one way or the other.
4. Given that there is no evident agreement of the body of the Church on the teaching of Article 6.11, it should be removed from the Theses of Agreement of the Church.

AGENDA 2.2.4(V1)

Remove Article 6.11 from Theses of Agreement

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by Box Hill St Pauls Congregation

PROPOSED THAT, given that the report of the General Church Board (GCB) and the College of Bishops (CoB) stated;

“After many years of research, study of God's word, respectful engagement, dialogue and debate with each other in healthy, scriptural, Christ-centred ways and after several synods have debated and voted on the subject, we have not reached consensus”³;

1. Synod accepts there is ongoing division and no consensus in the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ) on the matter of whether both men and women can be ordained according to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and
2. For the sake of the gospel and the mission of God that we share in the LCANZ, that Theses of Agreement (T.A.) 6.11 be removed from the Theses of Agreement. ⁴

⁴ Theses of Agreement 6.11 reads: Though women prophets were used by the Spirit of God in the Old as well as in the New Testament, 1 Cor. 14:34,35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-14 prohibit a woman from being called into the office of the public ministry for the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. This apostolic rule is binding on all Christendom; hereby her rights as a member of the spiritual priesthood are in no wise impaired. 'Theses on the Office of the Ministry', paragraph 6.11; Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions, LCANZ, page A17 and see <https://www.lca.org.au/departments/commissions/cticr/>

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

1. The Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) came together as one Church in 1966. When it came together it brought two church bodies together as one for the sake of the gospel and the mission of God through the witness of God's people to the world.
2. At that time, the LCA (now LCANZ) held a consensus view that Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions allowed for a male only ordained pastorate. The teaching of the LCA on the office of the public ministry was outlined in Thesis 6 of the Theses of Agreement. T.A. 6.11 outlines the specific teaching that men only may be called as pastors⁵
3. This specific teaching in T.A. 6.11 has since been placed under the scrutiny of Holy Scripture and the Confessions over many years now.⁶
4. Some hold to this teaching and others contend that Scripture provides for both women and men to be ordained as pastors.
5. Both views are earnestly and prayerfully held as being the witness of Scripture.
6. Neither those who support the ordination of both women and men and those who support the Church's teaching have been able to persuade the whole Church that their position alone has clear scriptural support, even though both make such a claim.
7. Neither group has persuaded the whole Church that their position alone upholds the central Lutheran teaching of justification by God's grace through faith in Christ, even though both make the claim.
8. Neither position has persuaded the whole Church that their stance alone is faithful to the Lutheran Confessions' teaching on the public ministry, even though both make the claim. The LCANZ no longer has a consensus view of this matter.
9. We have consensus that the office of the public ministry is instituted by Christ for the public administration of the means of grace; and we have consensus that Thesis of Agreement 6.1-10 articulates clearly the witness of Scripture concerning this public office.
10. There is no consensus concerning Thesis of Agreement 6.11 and this has been debated over many years now. Conventions of Synod have voted on the question of whether Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions allow that both women and men can be ordained⁷ with no consensus able to be achieved.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ The document: The permanent status of Theses of Agreement adopted by the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations, May 1976 and which is a document in the LCANZ's Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions (<https://www.lca.org.au/departments/commissions/cticr/>) states that

"Like all confessional statements, the Theses of Agreement are always under the authority of the Word of God, and therefore there must always be a readiness to submit them to the critical scrutiny of God's Word and accordingly confirm them, or amend or repudiate them when further study of God's Word shows them to be inadequate or in error.

In that sense their permanent status and authority are entirely determined by the faithfulness and accuracy with which they reflect the teaching of God's Word, in particular the doctrine of the Gospel."

⁷ Synod has voted on this question in 2003, 2006, 2015 and 2018. In each case, more than 50 pc of delegates have voted in favour of the proposal that both women and men may be ordained. The most recent Synods of 2015 and 2018 revealed approximately 60 pc of delegates were in favour of the proposal that both women and men may be ordained according to God's Word. However, the two-thirds required to change the official teaching of the LCANZ was not reached. The LCANZ now faces the lack of consensus as our reality in approaching the 2021 Convention of Synod.

11. The joint report of the CoB and GCB of its February 2020 meeting included the words of Bishop John Henderson: "Repeating the practices of past Conventions of Synod will not solve this matter. So, what new approaches do we need?"⁸ The removal of T.A. 6.11 provides a new way forward.
12. Thesis 1 of Theses of Agreement, "Principles governing church fellowship" speaks to us today concerning differences of exegesis which are not necessarily church divisive. For example, differences in exegesis are cited as not being church divisive if they do not affect church doctrine (see TA 1.4. b, c., d., and e. in the appendix to this proposal). The longstanding lack of consensus on TA 6.11 in the LCA begs the question as to whether it is the understanding and teaching of the LCA any longer.
13. Thesis 1 clearly points the Church to the centre and core of Scripture (TA 1.4. b. and TA 1.4.e.ii) which is the article of justification by grace through faith in Christ.

*"1.4.b. We believe that all doctrines of Holy Writ are equally binding; nevertheless, not all things in Scripture are of the same importance, when viewed from **the centre and core of the Scriptures, Christ and justification by Him through faith.**"*

"1.4.e. In case of differences in exegesis that affect doctrine, agreement on the basis of God's Word must be sought by combined, prayerful examination of the passage or passages in question.

If this does not lead to agreement, because no unanimity has been reached on the clarity of the passage or passages in question and hence on the stringency and adequacy of the Scriptural proof, divergent views arising from such differences of interpretation are not divisive of church fellowship, providing that there be the readiness in principle to submit to the authority of the Word of God;

*ii. Such divergent views in no wise the central doctrine of Holy Scripture, justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ or our proclamation of it. However, the resolution to remove T.A. 6.11 can provide the LCA with fresh impetus to focus to proclaim this central doctrine in the call to God's mission which we all share as members of the LCA. **impair, infringe upon, or violate the central doctrine of Holy Scripture, justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ;**"*
14. The removal of T.A. 6.11 does not negatively impact in any way,

APPENDIX

'PRINCIPLES GOVERNING CHURCH FELLOWSHIP', DSTO, VOL 1A. TA 1.4

4. (a) We believe that where differences in teaching and practice exist or arise between Churches uniting, these differences are to be removed by willingly submitting to the authority of the Word of God. Where a difference in teaching or practice is a departure from the doctrine of the Bible, such difference cannot be tolerated, but must be pointed out as an error, on the basis of clear passages of Holy Writ; and if the error is persisted in, in spite of instruction, warning, and earnest witness, it must at last lead to a separation.
- (b) We believe that all doctrines of Holy Writ are equally binding; nevertheless, not all things in Scripture are of the same importance, when viewed from the centre and core of the Scriptures, Christ and justification by Him through faith.
- (c) We admit that there are some things hard to understand in Holy Writ, 2 Peter 3:16; but no doctrine can be based on Scripture passages that are not clear, especially if no light is thrown upon them by clear passages

⁸ Joint Report of the College of Bishops and General Church Council February 2020 meeting distributed to the LCA August 2020.

(d) Differences in exegesis that do not affect doctrine are not church divisive.

(e) In case of differences in exegesis that affect doctrine, agreement on the basis of God's word must be sought by combined, prayerful examination of the passage or passages in question.

If this does not lead to agreement, because no unanimity has been reached on the clarity of the passage or passages in question and hence on the stringency and adequacy of the Scriptural proof, divergent views arising from such differences of interpretation are not divisive of church fellowship, providing that there be the readiness in principle to submit to the authority of the Word of God, and providing that

- i Thereby no clear Word of Scripture is denied, contradicted or ignored;
- ii Such divergent views in no wise impair, infringe upon, or violate the central doctrine of Holy Scripture, justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ;
- iii Nothing is taught contrary to the *publica doctrina* of the Lutheran Church as laid out in its Confessions;
- iv Such divergent views are not propagated as the *publica doctrina* of the Church and in no wise impair the doctrine of Holy Writ.

AGENDA 2.2.4(V2)

Remove Article 6.11 from Theses of Agreement

PROPOSED AMENDED MOTION

Submitted by Box Hill St Pauls Congregation

PROPOSED THAT

1. Synod accepts there is ongoing division and no consensus in the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCA) on the matter of whether both men and women can be ordained according to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and
2. For the sake of the gospel and the mission of God that we share in the LCA, that Theses of Agreement (T.A.) 6.11 be removed from the Theses of Agreement⁹, and
3. For peace and unity, the LCA allows for two practices in the office of the ministry, being male only ordination and the ordination of both men and women effective from 4 February 2024, and
4. The Constitution of the LCA be amended as set out below (words to be deleted – ~~striketrough~~; words to be added – **bold**) and General Church Board be authorised to make any necessary changes to the By-laws to enact points 2 and 3.

Article 5. THE MINISTRY

- 5.1 The Church recognises and upholds the Office of the Ministry as the office divinely instituted for the public administration of the Means of Grace. For this purpose it shall receive into its Ministry, by ordination or by colloquy of ministers ordained elsewhere, ~~men~~ **persons** whose qualifications for the office have been established and who
 - 5.1.1 accept and hold the Confession of the Church;
 - 5.1.2 accept the Constitution and By-laws of the Church; and
 - 5.1.3 undertake to participate in the work of the Church and to promote its Objects. Such members of the Ministry shall be recorded in the official Roll of Pastors.

⁹ Theses of Agreement 6.11 reads: Though women prophets were used by the Spirit of God in the Old as well as in the New Testament, 1 Cor. 14:34,35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-14 prohibit a woman from being called into the office of the public ministry for the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. This apostolic rule is binding on all Christendom; hereby her rights as a member of the spiritual priesthood are in no wise impaired. 'Theses on the Office of the Ministry', paragraph 6.11; Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions, LCA, page A17 and see <https://www.lca.org.au/departments/commissions/ctcr/>

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

1. The report of the February 2020 joint meeting of the General Church Board (GCB) and the College of Bishops (CoB) stated:
'After many years of research, study of God's word, respectful engagement, dialogue and debate with each other in healthy, scriptural, Christ-centred ways and after several synods have debated and voted on the subject, we have not reached consensus'¹⁰;
2. This proposal acknowledges the LCA's long and prayerful study of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions leading to many years of discussion, dialogue and debate on the matter of whether Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions provide for the ordination of both women and men. The LCA has strived together to faithfully submit to Scripture as the sole source and norm of doctrine and practice. Yet, we have not reached consensus understanding. The LCA is stronger when we are together in our witness in following Christ in his mission to the world. Like those who went before us to help us become one in 1966, this proposal seeks to provide the way forward for the us to remain one church with a shared mission to proclaim Christ to the world.
3. The Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) came together as one church in 1966 for the sake of the gospel and the mission of God through the witness of God's people to the world. This proposal seeks to maintain this unity.
4. At the constituting Synod of the LCA at Tanunda in 1966, Dr S Hebart preached at one of the worship services on Colossians 3:13-15:
'Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.'
Our sincere hope and prayer is for God's peace amongst us and that our witness to the world is of the gospel, as we put on God's love which binds us together.
5. In relation to ordination, some hold to the view that Scripture teaches that only men may be ordained to the office of the public ministry. At the same time others hold the view that Scripture teaches that both men and women may be ordained to the office of the public ministry.
6. Both views are earnestly and prayerfully held as being the witness of Scripture.
7. Neither those who support the ordination of both women and men and those who support the church's current teaching have been able to persuade the whole church that their position alone has clear scriptural support, even though both make such a claim. There is ongoing agreement on the Confessional Lutheran teaching on the Office of the Public Ministry in Augsburg Confession Articles 5 and 14 and as evidenced in TA 6:1-10.
8. The Theses of Agreement (TA) Article 1 outlines the LCA's agreed basis for church fellowship. Paragraph TA 1.4 is particularly pertinent.
9. The addition of point 3 to this proposal makes explicit our understanding that TA 1.4.e. speaks to the very situation of the LCA today. For the sake of our continued shared gospel witness as Lutherans in Australia and New Zealand, TA 1.4.e. provides for us to be a church with one teaching on the Office of the Public Ministry and to have two practices of ordination. This provides for congregations to call either men only; or both women or men as pastors. This therefore allows

¹⁰ Report to the LCA on a special meeting of the and the College of Bishops on the division within the LCA over the ordination of women and men, published August 2020

those who are conscience bound to either position to continue together in common Lutheran fellowship.

10. The proposal acknowledges that a transition time is desired by some in the LCA, including to allow the General Church Board and College of Bishops to work through the associated matters required to operate as one church with two different practices of ordination. In the interests of supporting unity of the church, an approximate one-year period prior to implementation of the change has been incorporated. 4 February 2024 has been selected as an appropriate Sunday, being Epiphany 5.
12. We are stronger for the mission work God calls to and for our common witness to the world when we are together as one Lutheran Church in Australia and New Zealand. Our proposal strongly advocates and provides for us to remain one.

AGENDA 2.2.5

Remove Article 6.11 from Theses of Agreement

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by South Australia – Northern Territory District

PROPOSED THAT in the interests of good order and the unity and wellbeing of the Church, the SA-NT District recommend to the 2021 LCA NZ General Convention that Theses of Agreement 6.11,¹¹ be removed from the Theses of Agreement.

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

The SA-NT District Convention of Synod 2021 received this proposal from St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Adelaide:

The LCA NZ teaches that 'the Theses of Agreement are always under the authority of the Word of God, and therefore there must always be a readiness to submit them to the critical scrutiny of God's Word and accordingly confirm them, or amend or repudiate them when further study of God's Word shows them to be inadequate or in error'.¹² This statement has given the Church the freedom to study closely the teaching that only men may be ordained during the past three decades.

However, the protracted period of theological reflection regarding ordination, on the basis of the Scriptures, has failed to resolve the differences in teaching that are all too evident in the Church. In the Theses of Agreement (Theses of Agreement 1, 'Principles governing Church Fellowship' (DSTO, page A2, 4.c), the Church clearly states that 'there are some things hard to be understood in Holy Writ (2 Peter 3:16); and no doctrine can be based on Scripture passages that are not clear, especially if no light is thrown on them by clear passages'.

Those who formulated the Church's foundational documents agreed in advance how to deal with doctrinal differences that might emerge in the new Church. They stipulated that if the Church fails to reach 'agreement on the basis of God's Word' on a doctrinal matter after 'combined, prayerful examination of the passage or passages in question', neither of the 'divergent views' may be

¹¹ Theses of Agreement 6.11 reads: Though women prophets were used by the Spirit of God in the Old as well as in the New Testament, 1 Cor. 14:34,35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-14 prohibit a woman from being called into the office of the public ministry for the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. This apostolic rule is binding on all Christendom; hereby her rights as a member of the spiritual priesthood are in no wise impaired. 'Theses on the Office of the Ministry', paragraph 6.11; *Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions*, LCA NZ, page A17.

¹² 'The Permanent Status of the Theses of Agreement', *Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions*, LCA NZ (DSTO), page A31

'promulgated as the *publica doctrina* (public teaching) of the Lutheran Church, as laid down in the Confessions', if it lacks clear scriptural support, if it violates the central Lutheran teaching of justification by God's grace through faith in Christ, or if it runs counter to the Church's public teaching on the doctrine in question, in this case the ministry.¹³

- Neither those who support the ordination of both women and men and those who support the Church's teaching have been able to persuade *the whole Church* that their position alone has clear scriptural support, even though both make such a claim.
- Neither group has persuaded *the whole Church* that their position alone upholds the central Lutheran teaching of justification by God's grace through faith in Christ, even though both make the claim.
- Neither position has persuaded *the whole Church* that their stance alone is faithful to the Lutheran Confessions' teaching on the public ministry, even though both make the claim.

The Church's 'combined, prayerful examination' of the relevant passages has not led to 'agreement on the basis of God's Word' on the ordination issue. And it seems unlikely that further discussion and debate will lead to a breakthrough, given the firmly entrenched positions that have emerged. Therefore, strictly speaking, neither of the divergent exegetical conclusions that have been in evidence since the start of the prolonged debate—male-only ordination and the ordination of both men and women—meets the criteria for being promulgated as an essential part of the whole Church's teaching on the ministry. According to the principles of TA 1.4 (see Appendix), both positions should be regarded as acceptable theological opinions that can be held without dividing the Church.

The LCANZ already has a teaching on the office of the ministry that avoids the divergent conclusions that have surfaced in the debate in our circles. It is articulated in Articles 5 and 14 of the Augsburg Confession and Theses of Agreement 6.1-10. This teaching states that God has instituted the ministry so that people can be brought to saving faith and nurtured in the faith through the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments (AC 5). And the ministry requires an orderly process of call and ordination (AC 14).

To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel. And the Gospel teaches that we have a gracious God, not by our own merits but by the merit of Christ, when we believe this (Augsburg Confession 5); and,

It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call (AC 14).

The emphasis of these statements on the ministry from the Confessions is rightly placed on the office, not on the gender, of those who fill the office. Removing the paragraph in the Theses of Agreement that prohibits women's ordination does not require a new Lutheran teaching on the ministry, different from the one that is articulated in the Confessions (above).

With both groups united in their commitment to the Confessions' teaching on the ministry, it would be a wise course of action for the Church to affirm this one unchanging teaching that Lutherans have inherited from the time of the Reformation, and leave congregations¹⁴ free to call as their pastor the one they believe will best serve with them in their mission, from those who are qualified for the office, ordained and endorsed by the Church.

Removal of Theses of Agreement 6.11, which is sanctioned by the Church's foundational documents, allows both those who are conscience bound to support the ordination of both women and men, and

¹³ 'Principles governing Church Fellowship', DSTO, pages A2-A3. The relevant section of this document is paragraph 4, quoted in full in the Appendix (below).

¹⁴ Including other calling bodies such as aged care services and schools

also those who are conscience bound to reject the ordination of both men and women to share common ground on the Lutheran doctrine of the ministry, and it frees the LCA to adopt a middle way that respects and honours the consciences of those who take either position.

The removal of Theses of Agreement 6.11 would in no way impinge on the right of congregations to call the pastor of their choosing, whether they be male or female. Reaffirming Augsburg Confession 5 and 14 and Theses of Agreement 6.1-10 as the documents that give the LCA's teaching on the ministry gives the freedom and flexibility that befits a gospel-centred teaching and a gospel-centred Church. And it would contribute to the peace and unity of the Church.

APPENDIX

'PRINCIPLES GOVERNING CHURCH FELLOWSHIP', DSTO, VOL 1A. TA 1.4

4. (a) We believe that where differences in teaching and practice exist or arise between Churches uniting, these differences are to be removed by willingly submitting to the authority of the Word of God. Where a difference in teaching or practice is a departure from the doctrine of the Bible, such difference cannot be tolerated, but must be pointed out as an error, on the basis of clear passages of Holy Writ; and if the error is persisted in, in spite of instruction, warning, and earnest witness, it must at last lead to a separation.

(b) We believe that all doctrines of Holy Writ are equally binding; nevertheless, not all things in Scripture are of the same importance, when viewed from the centre and core of the Scriptures, Christ and justification by Him through faith.

(c) We admit that there are some things hard to understand in Holy Writ, 2 Peter 3:16; but no doctrine can be based on Scripture passages that are not clear, especially if no light is thrown upon them by clear passages

(d) Differences in exegesis that do not affect doctrine are not church divisive.

(e) In case of differences in exegesis that affect doctrine, agreement on the basis of God's word must be sought by combined, prayerful examination of the passage or passages in question.

If this does not lead to agreement, because no unanimity has been reached on the clarity of the passage or passages in question and hence on the stringency and adequacy of the Scriptural proof, divergent views arising from such differences of interpretation are not divisive of church fellowship, providing that there be the readiness in principle to submit to the authority of the Word of God, and providing that

- i Thereby no clear Word of Scripture is denied, contradicted or ignored;
- ii Such divergent views in no wise impair, infringe upon, or violate the central doctrine of Holy Scripture, justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ;
- iii Nothing is taught contrary to the *publica doctrina* of the Lutheran Church as laid out in its Confessions;
- iv Such divergent views are not propagated as the *publica doctrina* of the Church and in no wise impair the doctrine of Holy Writ.

AGENDA 2.2.6

LCANZ to seek full membership of LWF and ILC

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by Belconnen Holy Cross Congregation

PROPOSED THAT the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand becomes a full member of both the Lutheran World Federation and of the International Lutheran Council.

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

1. The Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ) is at present an associate member of both the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and of the International Lutheran Council (ILC). As an associate member, the LCANZ participates in assemblies of the LWF and the ILC at which it can speak, but cannot influence decision-making as it is excluded from voting or holding elected office.
2. The LWF is a global communion of 145 churches in the Lutheran tradition, representing over 77 million Christians in 98 countries. The LWF confesses the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only source and norm of its doctrine, life and service. It sees in the three Ecumenical Creeds and in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, especially in the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism of Martin Luther, a pure exposition of the Word of God. The LWF was established in 1947 as a Federation of Lutheran churches. Lutherans worldwide wanted to confess, reflect, reconcile and respond together to human suffering in the aftermath of the Second World War. The LWF strives to put Lutheran faith into action within and beyond the communion, and seeks God's Word and Spirit to guide it. This action takes a variety of forms from theological reflection and dialogue with other churches and faiths, to deepening relationships, sharing about our faith, serving those in need and advocating for a more just, peaceful and reconciled world. The LWF shares a vision, purpose and values. It works to strengthen Lutheran relationships and build an inclusive, respectful communion. It is on a common journey of renewal shaped and enriched by the different contexts within which we live.
3. The ILC is a worldwide association of 37 established confessional Lutheran church bodies comprising some 7.15 million members which proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God and to the Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord as the true and faithful exposition of the Word of God. The ILC, which can be traced to a meeting of leaders of confessional Lutheran churches in 1952, exists for the purpose of encouraging, strengthening and promoting confessional Lutheran theology and practice focussing on Jesus Christ, both among member churches and throughout the world:
 - by providing opportunities for the joint study of contemporary theological issues;
 - by giving mutual support and encouragement to the heads of member church bodies;
 - by encouraging and assisting member churches in planning for mission outreach;
 - by strengthening theological education through conferences of theologians and seminary teachers, mission staff and those involved with human care;
 - by facilitating communication between confessional Lutheran churches of the world through the publication of ILC News;
 - by stimulating and facilitating the preparation and publication of confessional Lutheran literature.
4. Similar proposals were made at the 2018 Convention of Synod. It was resolved at that Synod to refer full membership of both the LWF and of the ILC for review. Almost three years have passed without any outcome of the review having been publicised. The proposal is therefore presented again.
5. Full membership of the LWF and the ILC would enable the LCANZ to participate fully, including in decision-making, voting and by being able to hold elected office.

AGENDA 2.2.7

Offer congregations peaceful dismissal

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by Minyip/Warracknabeal Parish

PROPOSED THAT by the closing date of delegate appointments for Synod 2024, all Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ) congregations unable to live under the current teaching of a male-only pastorate, and who exercise their right to withdraw membership from the LCANZ, be offered the opportunity for a formal recognition of their peaceful dismissal at the Convention of Synod 2024. Such a ceremony would celebrate both their specific involvement in the LCANZ over the years as well as their synodical support for the LCANZ in areas such as the Australian Lutheran College (seminary), mission partnerships throughout Southeast Asia, Papua New Guinea, among indigenous Australians and other aid/educational agencies.

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

1. A joint meeting of the General Church Board (GCB) and the College of Bishops (CoB) on the 20th of February 2020 resulted in a report on the division within the LCANZ over the ordination of women and men, which was circulated within the Church. The GCB and the CoB confined the task to considering three potential scenarios, while acknowledging that there may also be others:
 - Scenario 1: A single LCANZ synod - one teaching, two practices
 - Scenario 2: A single LCANZ synod – status quo (current teaching upheld)
 - Scenario 3: Multiple LCANZ synods – we can no longer stay together.
2. The report notes that:
 - a. This is “a dispute that has been with us for many years.”
 - b. “We have not reached consensus” through dialogue.
 - c. “...our differences on female pastors appear irreconcilable. Even more, they threaten to spill over into other areas of our faith and confession.” (teaching)
 - d. None of the options above offer unity in practice.
3. Formal peaceful dismissals, with appropriate celebrations at Synod 2024, will provide a means of removing this dilemma.

AGENDA 2.2.8

Amend clause 3.2 in Model Constitution for Congregations

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by South Australia – Northern Territory District

PROPOSED THAT General Synod replace Clause 3.2 in the model constitution for a congregation with the following:

The congregation accepts the pastoral guidelines for responsible communion practice in the LCA. The pastor and congregation agree to seek the district bishop’s approval for any proposal for the public proclamation of the Word in the divine service by others than those normally authorised to do so in the LCA.

(The current Clause 3.2 is:

Article 3 "Relationship to the Church", Clause 3.2 of the LCA Model Constitution for Congregations:

3.2 In common with the Church, the Congregation regards unity in and the application in practice of doctrine as the necessary prerequisite for church fellowship, and rejects all forms of religious syncretism or unionism which are not in accord with the confessional position of the Church. The Congregation therefore adheres to the following principles:

3.2.1 Lutheran pulpits are for Lutheran pastors only and in determining any exception the consent of the Bishop of the Church must be obtained; and

3.2.2 Lutheran altars are for Lutheran communicants only and in determining any exceptions the Pastor shall exercise conscientious judgment consistent with the confession of the Church and its pastoral guidelines.)

REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

1. It better reflects the current policy of the LCA on Responsible Communion Practice.

The policy of the LCA on communion participation is now defined in the policy on *Responsible Communion Practice* (adopted by General Pastors Conference in 1990). This takes a more nuanced approach than the clause in the model constitution.

2. It states the current process for authorising other preachers in LCA worship services.

The current clause suggests that any Lutheran pastor is welcome to preach at our services. This is not the case. Our current policy requires approval from the district bishop.

3. We are ecumenical but not syncretistic.

We are not abandoning our confession in favour of another but engaging with other Christians as Lutherans whose confession is clearly defined, also in our constitutions. The current clause muddies these waters by its narrow focus and dated language.

4. What the clause communicates is not what we want to say.

The wording in the model constitution needs to be clear so that what a detached reader understands is what we actually want to say. That is not the case with the present wording.

5. It is therefore a hindrance to the mission of the Church in our context.

The impact of this clause on the mission of the Church makes it an urgent issue. The current wording sends the wrong message that our main focus is on being exclusive rather than welcoming others. While it is no doubt true that few members read their constitution, when a new one is adopted or alterations are made it becomes an issue.

6. The SA-NT District pastors proposed this same change to General Synod in June 2012.

After discussing this over three conferences our District Pastors resolved to propose this amended wording to the LCA General Synod. It was on the agenda for the 2013 Synod, but was never discussed because of a shortage of time. Synod therefore referred it as 'unfinished business' to General Church Board, and nothing more was done about it.

Note: General Pastors Conference 2022 accepted this proposal unamended.

AGENDA 2.2.9(V1)

Explore establishment of one church with two ordination practices

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by Queensland District

PROPOSED THAT General Synod direct the LCA NZ General Church Board to:

- a) Work through the theological, constitutional, and governance issues that would be involved in establishing one church with two different practices of ordination, and establish a detailed framework through which this could be accomplished, such as by establishing a geographical or non-geographical LCA NZ 'District' that teaches and practices the ordination of both women and men to the office of the public ministry.
- b) Submit the fruit of this work in the form of a proposal that can be discussed and potentially endorsed by the LCA NZ General Pastors Conference and Convention of General Synod 2024.

REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

A proposal from the Lutheran Church of St Andrew the Apostle, Brisbane City, was brought to the floor of Synod and accepted as a late proposal to the LCA QD 2021 Synod. An amendment to the St Andrew's proposal was put forward by Rev Dr Michael Lockwood and this amended proposal (above) was passed with a strong majority.

In presenting the proposal, St Andrew's Congregation delegates to the LCA QD Synod made the following comments as background information to the proposal:

The issue of ordination for both men and women has come before multiple LCA/LCA NZ synods. Votes conducted regarding this issue have indicated that a majority of delegates are in support of the ordination of both men and women, yet the required two-thirds majority for change to be accepted has not been met. Indications appear to be that there is a majority of those casting votes at Synod who have been led to and accept the understanding that ordaining both men and women is biblically and theologically acceptable.

A growing number of members and congregations of LCA NZ are expressing support for the view that treating genders differently with regard to this issue, goes against the heart of the gospel. For this reason, many are finding themselves in the position where they believe that they cannot continue to uphold current teaching and practice of the LCA NZ regarding ordination, with a clear conscience.

It has become evident that further theological study, which has identified two contrasting theologically sound positions, has not assisted in alleviating the convergence of opinions within the LCA NZ. As such, the matter continues to have the potential to become divisive, regardless of the possible future outcomes of votes with regard to changing the practice of the LCA NZ concerning ordination.

There appears to be a minority within the LCA NZ who feel strongly that ordination should be restricted to men only. Members and congregations that do not support male-only ordination are becoming increasingly restless as they yearn for leadership of an ordained pastor that is not based on gender. Some congregations are openly seeking women to preach, and as such, are in breach of the current teaching and practice of the LCA NZ.

The question of ordaining both women and men appears to have reached a theological impasse, which now threatens to divide the LCA NZ. Hence, there is an urgent need to find a respectful way to move on from this impasse.

In August 2020, the LCA released the report to the LCA NZ on a special meeting of the General Church Board and the College of Bishops on the division within the LCA NZ over the ordination of women and men. The report offers three scenarios:

1. A single LCA NZ synod – one teaching, two practices
 - a. Current structure, with one teaching of the ministry and two practices
 - b. One overarching governance framework containing two or more synods
2. A single LCA NZ synod – status quo (current teaching upheld)
3. Multiple Lutheran synods – we can no longer remain together (we separate).

The proposal (above) appears to best align with Scenario 1b and is not entirely without precedent. The LCA already has a formal agreement with a Church that ordains women as well as men – the Church of Finland – and this agreement was signed after the Church of Finland began ordaining women.

We note that current Districts are not exclusively geographical – for example, Moree in NSW is part of the LCA QD. We anticipate that congregations, parishes and existing Districts across the LCA NZ would be able to join or align with this ‘District’.

We recognise that relationships between Districts, and between Districts and the LCA NZ would need clarification, and that the LCA NZ Constitution, currently under review, would need to be able to cater for this additional ‘District’.

AGENDA 2.2.9(V2)

Explore establishment of one church with two ordination practices

PROPOSED AMENDED MOTION

Submitted by Queensland District

PROPOSED THAT General Synod direct the LCA NZ General Church Board and the College of Bishops to:

- a) Work through the theological, constitutional, and governance requirements to operate as one church with two different practices of ordination and establish a detailed framework through which this could be accomplished, such as by establishing a geographical or non-geographical LCA NZ ‘District’ that teaches and practices the ordination of both women and men to the office of the public ministry, and
- b) Submit the fruit of this work in the form of a proposal that can be discussed and potentially endorsed by the LCA NZ General Pastors Conference and Convention of General Synod 2024.

REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

A proposal from the Lutheran Church of St Andrew the Apostle, Brisbane City, was brought to the floor of Synod and accepted as a late proposal to the LCA QD 2021 Synod. An amendment to the St Andrew’s proposal was put forward by Rev Dr Michael Lockwood, and this amended proposal (above) was passed with a strong majority.

In presenting the proposal, St Andrew’s Congregation delegates to the LCA QD Synod made the following comments as background information to the proposal:

The issue of ordination for both men and women has come before multiple LCA/LCANZ synods. Votes conducted regarding this issue have indicated that a majority of delegates are in support of the ordination of both men and women, yet the required two-thirds majority for change to be accepted has not been met. Indications appear to be that there is a majority of those casting votes at Synod who have been led to and accept the understanding that ordaining both men and women is biblically and theologically acceptable.

A growing number of members and congregations of LCANZ are expressing support for the view that treating genders differently with regard to this issue, goes against the heart of the gospel. For this reason, many are finding themselves in the position where they believe that they cannot continue to uphold current teaching and practice of the LCANZ regarding ordination, with a clear conscience.

It has become evident that further theological study, which has identified two contrasting theologically sound positions, has not assisted in alleviating the convergence of opinions within the LCANZ. As such, the matter continues to have the potential to become divisive, regardless of the possible future outcomes of votes with regard to changing the practice of the LCANZ concerning ordination.

There appears to be a minority within the LCANZ who feel strongly that ordination should be restricted to men only. Members and congregations that do not support male-only ordination are becoming increasingly restless as they yearn for leadership of an ordained pastor that is not based on gender. Some congregations are openly seeking women to preach, and as such, are in breach of the current teaching and practice of the LCANZ.

The question of ordaining both women and men appears to have reached a theological impasse, which now threatens to divide the LCANZ. Hence, there is an urgent need to find a respectful way to move on from this impasse.

In August 2020, the LCA released the report to the LCANZ on a special meeting of the General Church Board and the College of Bishops on the division within the LCANZ over the ordination of women and men. The report offers three scenarios:

1. A single LCANZ synod – one teaching, two practices
 - a. Current structure, with one teaching of the ministry and two practices
 - b. One overarching governance framework containing two or more synods
2. A single LCANZ synod – status quo (current teaching upheld)
3. Multiple Lutheran synods – we can no longer remain together (we separate).

The proposal (above) appears to best align with Scenario 1b and is not entirely without precedent. The LCA already has a formal agreement with a Church that ordains women as well as men – the Church of Finland – and this agreement was signed after the Church of Finland began ordaining women.

We note that current Districts are not exclusively geographical – for example, Moree in NSW is part of the LCAQD. We anticipate that congregations, parishes and existing Districts across the LCANZ would be able to join or align with this ‘District’.

We recognise that relationships between Districts, and between Districts and the LCANZ would need clarification, and that the LCANZ Constitution, currently under review, would need to be able to cater for this additional ‘District’.

AGENDA 2.2.10

Accept amended proposals from St Paul's Box Hill and Queensland District

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT General Synod accept amended proposals submitted by St Paul's Box Hill and the Queensland District under 7.3.12 of the LCA By-laws as the proposals for items 2.2.4 and 2.2.9 respectively on ordination for debate before the 20th Regular Convention.

REASONS FOR MOTION

Section 7.3.12 of the LCA By-laws states, 'Proposers of amendments and of any motions not previously printed shall submit them to the Chairperson in writing either in advance, whenever possible, or when requested to do so by the Chairperson'.

This By-law allows the proposers of amendments to submit them in advance and be provided to delegates prior to debate on the proposed motion. Under this section the GCB has printed the amended St Paul's Box Hill and Queensland District proposals in the addendum to the Book of Reports for inclusion on the agenda.

Article 7.12 of the LCA Constitution states, 'Subject to this Constitution and its By-laws, the General Synod may determine its own procedure'.

Under this provision, the General Synod is able to determine how it manages the transaction of business in convention. The amended proposals submitted by St Paul's Box Hill and the Queensland District printed in the addendum to the Book of Reports are the intended form for debate. This proposal, under the stated provisions in the LCA Constitution and By-laws, is that the amended proposals be put to the convention 'afresh' in their amended form.

The amendments therefore become the proposals 2.2.4 and 2.2.9 for consideration by the convention.

REPORTS TO GENERAL SYNOD OR GENERAL CHURCH BOARD

AGENDA 3.4

LCA Bishop

1. INTRODUCTION

May our gracious God continue to flourish in you, the joy of salvation, as you share in the work of the gospel in your respective places of our church in New Zealand and Australia. The apostle Paul reminds us, 'But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us' (2 Corinthians 4).

As this is my first report for you as Bishop for our church in New Zealand and Australia, I want to express to you the immense privilege I feel, that I have been given the opportunity to oversee the hand of God at work in and through seemingly ordinary folk in everyday places across the communities of our Lutheran Church, caught up together in the mighty acts of God who called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

This report is a brief supplement to the comprehensive report which Bishop John tabled in the Book of Reports for Convention of Synod published in 2021. I will not repeat material but will follow John's layout. I will also include some material that I have presented in reports to some District Conventions, as I highlight those things that we share together in various 'Churchwide' activities in the mission of God that is the LCA NZ.

2. THE CHURCH

2.1 THE LCA TODAY: DEMOGRAPHY

We are declining in the number of New Zealanders and Australians who identify themselves as people of the Lutheran Church. In the Australian Census, for example, we were listed at 1.2% of the population in 2011, then 0.7% in 2016 (approximately 174,000). We are also seeing an increase in the median age of the people of our church.

In the recent Australian National Church life Survey (NCLS) for the Lutheran Church, of the 7500 Lutherans who took part, 48% were over 70 years of age. Presentations from the NCLS this year have reported that on any regular Sunday, there is likely to be approximately 26,000 people attending Lutheran Church services in Australia and New Zealand.

These statistics invite us to ask, 'What is the Lord saying to his church?'

Executive Officer – Local Mission, Dr Tania Nelson, in collaboration with the bishops and mission directors of the church are providing strategies for the people in the communities of our church to study and apply the data from the NCLS and Census results. Two-thirds of our congregations are communities of under 100 people. If we do 'small church' well as Lutherans, then how can we help each other to do this better, with purposefulness? How do we properly collaborate in the mission of God with other Christian denominations on both sides of the Tasman?

2.2 WITH YOUTH IN MINISTRY

I enjoy pointing out to people that missionary George ‘Muni’ Schwarz was only 19 years old when he arrived to serve as pastor to the people of Cape Bedford, now Hopevale. He remained there for 55 years, with a lasting impact on the Christian witness and service of the Indigenous First Nations peoples around Cooktown in Far North Queensland.

We have many passionate young women and men in our contemporary Lutheran communities, and we are faced with the challenge not simply to minister to them, to guide their walk in the grace of their baptism, but also how to minister with them, so that they might actively participate, like Muni, in the wider mission of God.

Please pray for our young people and as you have opportunity encourage them in their witness and service. You might also ask young people what they think about the church and what they see the church of the future looking like.

2.3 THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN AND MEN

Throughout 2022, the GCB has been working with the College of Bishops to ensure that the church is prepared to consider the six proposals before the in-person sessions of the Convention of General Synod in 2023, addressing the question of whether men or women or only men are to be ordained to the Office of the Public Ministry. This work has included the convening of ‘town hall’ sessions to consider the proposals and how they are addressed by delegates at Convention.

In May, the College of Bishops placed the following consideration before a joint meeting of CoB and GCB:

‘The bishops lament the ongoing division in our church exhibited by the Synod debates throughout the 21st century on the question regarding who can be ordained to the office of the public ministry. As bishops, we are called to oversight in the church. We have prayerfully sought the Lord’s guidance and have discerned how we must express our leadership. We urge that the agenda of Synod 2023 must include proposals on the matter of ordination which do not continue debate which leaves us divided. Rather, we need to consider a godly way to collegially participate in the mission God has given us.’

May the Lord guide his people as we seek his good and gracious will for his church. In concluding remarks in the church’s 1992 booklet on ‘Women and the ministry’, Drs Weiss and Leske gave us encouragement for our 2023 convention, when they wrote, ‘We pray that God’s Spirit will bless our discussions, preserve us in unity and harmony as we engage in debate, and guide us into a clear consensus on this challenging issue’.

2.4 SUPPLY OF CHURCH WORKERS

Together let us ask the Lord to raise up workers for the harvest.

By 2030 we expect that half of our active pastors will have retired. Currently the LCA NZ has 239 pastors in active ministry. Seventeen are serving as Specific Ministry Pastors, and there are 15 Aboriginal pastors. Across the church there are 65 Lutheran communities seeking a pastor to serve among them. In addition, parishes, schools and church agencies are also facing a critical situation regarding trained church workers being available to serve for the ministries of the church.

The May 2022 meeting of the College of Bishops, our District bishops included a full-day meeting with District mission directors, Pastor James Winderlich (Principal of Australian Lutheran College),

Dr Tania Nelson (Executive Office for Local Mission), Pastor Neville Otto (LCANZ Assistant Bishop) and me.

The focus of the meeting was the issue of the supply of church workers for this mission and ministry of the LCANZ, and the outcomes have been reported elsewhere. The GCB has appointed Bishop Emeritus Greg Pietsch to oversee the outcomes of the May workshop, with a view to any relevant proposals brought to the church in synod in 2024.

The three key priorities which emerged from the conversations are:

1. Pathways: developing pathways for specific ministries, such as pastor or chaplain, including specific pathways for ministries in schools and aged care, and church planting.
2. Regionalising: developing regional collaboration to determine how local areas work together for the provision of word and sacrament ministry in the mission God gives us.
3. Ordering Ministry: establishing clear language for how we understand the ordering of ministry among us, including what we understand to be flexible. This includes engaging with the CTICR.

The priority for Greg is consultation with people and the communities of the Church here and in New Zealand, with a view to bringing recommendations to the 2024 General Convention of Synod.

2.5 LUTHERAN SCHOOLS IN THE MISSION OF GOD

In the six months prior to relocating to Adelaide to begin as the bishop of our church, I served in an interim role as the senior college pastor at St Peters Lutheran College in Indooroopilly, Queensland. I thank God for the opportunity to serve in the church in this wonderful Lutheran school community, which has been such blessing to my own life. It was a joy to serve with the college's faithful Christian principal, Tim Kotzur.

In November that year, I sat with a member of the college's Parents and Friends group, reflecting on his voluntary work at the college. Not a Lutheran himself, this college parent reflected on his choice of St Peters Lutheran College for his child's education. He welcomed the college's witness to Christian faith and highlighted the pastoral community amid educational disciplines based on carefully articulated principles. He cherished a Lutheran school as something good for his family and he gives hours and hours to the community life of the college, eager to promote St Peters as a school of the Lutheran Church.

Our Lutheran Church impacts on the lives of thousands of Australian families through our Lutheran schools and early childhood services. We are blessed with faithful principals and school leaders, who are passionate educators influencing teaching and learning both at home and abroad. We have a challenge before us, to continually ask what the Lord is doing in and through our Lutheran schools and early childhood services. Please pray for these communities of our church as they serve young people and their families.

3. INDIGENOUS LUTHERANS IN THE CENTRE

I was privileged to have Pastors Simon Dixon and Roderick Kantamara, from the Finke River Lutheran communities in Central Australia, formally participating in my installation as the bishop of our church. Women of the Ntaria choir of Hermannsburg were unable to be present on account of COVID restrictions but were able to provide video recording of their songs. Rosalind Coleman, local South Australian Christian woman of the Kurna Peoples, also attended to present the Welcome to Country.

The Lutheran Church in Australia and New Zealand includes significant populations of members from our Indigenous First Nations peoples, particularly in South Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland. In his report to Convention, Bishop John highlighted the church's Reconciliation Action Plan. I commend this ongoing work to each of the parish communities and the agencies of our

Lutheran Church, so that we would promote respectful and supportive relationships between our Indigenous First Nations people and those who have arrived on these shores since 1788.

A highlight in 2023 will be the 50th Anniversary of Yirara College in Alice Springs, planned for the end of July.

In 2022, the Finke River Mission Board farewelled its long-serving chairperson, Tim Stollznow, who has stepped down due to business obligations. Current board member, Chris Guntner, has been appointed to serve as the acting chair for the board.

Our Lutheran Church has been blessed with the participation of so many diverse Aboriginal Lutheran communities who have much to teach the rest of our nation in the matters of reconciliation and cooperation. I cherish the image given to us by Pastor George Rosendale of Hopevale in Far North Queensland. A Christian sees with the eyes of God. Those eyes are 'colour blind' when it comes to skin colour. Please pray that our Lutheran witness with and for Indigenous First Nations peoples would continue to flourish.

4. AUSTRALIAN LUTHERAN COLLEGE

The Board of Australian Lutheran College developed its strategic plan, and this work summarised in the document 'Towards 2028: Our Strategic Direction' has been published, upon being endorsed by our General Church Board in February this year. It is available online.

When I entered the seminary in 1980, the theological program of our church included Lutheran Teachers College/Lay Training Centre on Ward Street and Luther Seminary on Jeffcott Street in North Adelaide. Any visitor to the seminary at dinner time during the academic term would encounter almost 200 young women and men training for ministries in the church. The campus also included some students undertaking other tertiary studies, many of whom are active in church leadership today.

In 2022 there is only a fraction of that community remaining with fewer than a dozen full-time students on campus. The refectory and boarding house are closed. Only three young men have been approved for ordination, with only two in the cohort for 2023.

This requires the ALC Board to determine how best to serve the church. This has included changing its staffing levels for both ordained and lay staff members. This also impacts on our church's capacity to provide support for our international mission partnerships.

ALC is the tertiary education institution of our church, committed to its charter to train pastors, teachers and other church workers for the LCA. Please pray for Principal James Winderlich and ALC staff members, our leaders in the theological education programs of our church.

5. INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS

In August 2022 I travelled with Pastor Matt Anker, Assistant to the Bishop – International Mission, to visit with the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP). We were warmly welcomed and Pastor Matt has brought back to the Committee for International Mission matters for potential mission collaboration with our sisters and brothers in the LCP.

In September, Pastor Matt and I travelled to Kisumu in Kenya to join with over 50 church leaders attending the 27th Annual Conference of the International Lutheran Council (ILC). The conference's theme was 'Liturgy and Culture: how worship shapes our life together and why we do what we do'. A key matter at this conference was a joint paper between the ILC and the Roman Catholic Pontifical

Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU). The conference will recommend that further theological work be done.

In October 2023, representatives of our church will be attending the Lutheran World Federation's (LWF) Thirteenth General Assembly in Poland, under the theme 'One Body, One Spirit, One Hope'.

5.1 THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN CONFERENCE MOTION REGARDING FULL MEMBERSHIP

In the 2018 General Synod, the Holy Cross Belconnen Congregation in Belconnen in the NSW and ACT District brought two proposals which have been combined and have now been placed before the 2023 General Convention as Proposal 2.2.6:

LCANZ to seek full membership of LWF and ILC

PROPOSED MOTION Submitted by Belconnen Holy Cross Congregation

PROPOSED THAT the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand becomes a full member of both the Lutheran World Federation and of the International Lutheran Council.

A significant number of Lutheran churches are full members of both international Lutheran organisations (ILC and LWF). These include the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, the Malagasy Lutheran Church (Madagascar), the India Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Japan Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in Korea, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia and the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church.

GCB asked CTICR to investigate the theology of this proposal and the CTICR has now closed its investigation with no advice, opinion or recommendation.

1. The example of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP)

In my August 2022 visit to the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, I was able to learn more of the way it operates with full membership in both the International Lutheran Council and the Lutheran World Federation.

The LCP was founded as a mission of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in 1946 and has grown to be a Church of approximately 35 000 members across 4 Districts. In 1973, the LCP resolved to join the LWF as a full member. The LCP was also admitted to full membership of the ILC at the foundation of the ILC in 1993. Currently, the President of the LCP, Revd Antonio del Rio Reyes serves as the Asia Region Leader for the ILC and he attends the ILC World Conferences and other ILC gatherings. The LCP is active in regional LWF work, including mission partnerships with neighbouring LWF community Churches such as the ELCPNG and the Singapore Lutheran Church. Neither the LWF nor the ILC has formally recommended to the LCP that membership in one is not compatible with membership in the other. Currently, there is no church-wide movement in the LCP to take any particular action regarding leaving the LWF or leaving the ILC.

2. Commonalities and divergences between the LCP and the LCANZ

- 2.1 The LCP and LCANZ share a common overall population of active members – approximately 35,000.
- 2.2 The LCP and LCANZ both keep the 'Galesburg Rule' central to the practice of church fellowships. From our LCANZ Model Constitution we state: 'Lutheran pulpits are for Lutheran pastors only; Lutheran altars are for Lutheran communicants only. Any exception to the application of this principle belongs to the sphere of privilege, not of right'.
- 2.3 The LCP has very few institutions and receives no government funding for its ministries. The LCP has a much lower median age of members (and pastors) than the LCANZ has.
- 2.4 The LCP is divided into four Districts each with a District president much like the LCANZ.

- 2.5 The LCP does not currently ordain women to the office of the public ministry and is not currently discussing any proposals in this regard.
- 2.6 The LCP welcomes the exploration of a closer altar and pulpit relationship with the LCANZ.

3. Some key issues from the example of the LCP for the LCANZ consideration of full membership in the LWF and the ILC

- 3.1 The LCP is evidence of a Lutheran church in our region which retains full membership in both the ILC and LWF thereby showing that the LCP is able to participate in both Lutheran organisations in the way described in the Holy Cross Belconnen proposal to General Synod.
- 3.2 The LWF can be approached to ask if the LCANZ could be welcomed into full membership in the form of 'emerging communion' practised by the LCP. This means that there is not a 'full communion' of altar and pulpit fellowship, but a full participation in the collaborative activities of the LWF while maintaining the LCANZ's local theological and historical culture of the Galesburg Rule.
- 3.3 LWF Current Strategy 6.1 declares that the LWF is committed to: 'Jointly develop theological reflection that articulates our understanding of being Lutheran churches in communion: We will further develop a shared understanding of the theological identity of LWF member churches through which they will continue recognising each other, belonging to the communion, while witnessing in their diverse contexts'. And to "Live out the communion relationships among member churches: We will further clarify and define our common understanding, structures, and the praxis supporting churches as they express their call to live in communion; We will provide accompaniment and support encounter and theological discernment to understand and address differences and conflict in the communion.'
- 3.4 How would the ILC respond if the LCANZ introduced the practice of ordaining women to the office of the public ministry?
- 3.5 How would the ILC respond if the LCANZ were to become a full member of the LWF?
- 3.6 The LWF Constitution speaks of 'Full Communion': Constitution Section III: NATURE AND FUNCTIONS: 'The Lutheran World Federation is a communion of churches which confess the triune God, agree in the proclamation of the Word of God and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship.'
- 3.7 How would the LWF respond if the LCANZ were to become a full member of the ILC?
- 3.8 The LWF does not confess with the LCANZ, all the writings of the Book of Concord of 1580: 'The Lutheran World Federation confesses the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only source and norm of its doctrine, life and service. It sees in the three Ecumenical Creeds and in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, especially in the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism of Martin Luther, a pure exposition of the Word of God.'
- 3.9 How do the principles of Thesis I and Thesis II of the Theses of Agreement apply to full membership in the LWF?
- 3.10 How will the LWF respond to the concern that full member churches are pressured into ordaining women?
- 3.11 Would the LWF accept the LCANZ's practice of colloquising visiting pastors and theologians?

Finally, the 2022 General Pastors Conference in Tanunda welcomed the reconvening of a gathering of representatives of the ILC and the LWF with LCANZ representatives to address the issues of full membership. A meeting had been planned in 2021 but was not held due to COVID restrictions.

3. LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION

3.1 CHURCHWIDE OFFICE

We welcome Brett Hausler to his role as Executive Officer of the Church. Brett and I both began our service in the Churchwide Office in January 2022. Brett has relocated to Adelaide from his hometown of Melbourne in Victoria where he was well-known to the people of the St Paul's Lutheran Church, Box Hill community. His experience of Church and of the corporate world has enabled Brett to give robust guidance for our Churchwide Office and the General Church Board in the operations of being Church. He has worked hard to be present in the field, attending as many District Conventions as he has been able to. Please pray for Brett in this new role. It is certain that he understands his work as EoC to be his vocation as a Christian servant.

3.2 THE COLLEGE OF BISHOPS (COB)

The Lord has blessed our church with faithful witnesses in the Office of Bishop: Mark serving in New Zealand; Mike serving in Western Australia; David serving in South Australia and the Northern Territory; Lester serving in Victoria Tasmania; Robert serving in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory; Mark serving in Queensland; and Neville serving as Assistant Bishop of the LCA NZ. These men are passionately committed to the mission of God in which we all serve.

Each is deeply aware of his own frailties and 'thorns in the flesh'. Each is eager to collaborate with sisters and brothers around them. Please pray for each of them with their office of oversight in their respective places. In your praying, please include particular prayers for our bishops who are concluding their work in 2023: Bishop Mark in the LCA NZ, Bishop Mike in LCA WA and Bishop David in LCA SNT.

I also wish to especially acknowledge the legacy of leadership given to me by our remaining past Churchwide leaders: President Emeritus Mike Semmler and Bishop Emeritus John Henderson. These two men have faithfully followed where the Lord has been leading as they continue to offer their gifts in the cause of the gospel. God bless Mike and John in these well-earned years of retirement.

4. IN MISSION

Let me conclude with a word of encouragement from Dr Lance Steicke, past president of the LCA NZ who was called home to his Saviour's side during this synodical term. Just prior to the 1997 Convention of General Synod, Dr Steicke was recorded for a video, which was distributed to the church to prepare people for the coming Convention.

In that recording, he said:

'If the first 30 years have been exciting, and there have been some challenges, I believe the years immediately ahead of us will be more exciting and present even greater challenges. I envisage the church will be one that emphasises mission all the more, that emphasises the need to reach out to people with the great good news of Jesus Christ – sharing what it means to be a Christian, and what it means to be a Lutheran Christian in this country ... The challenge for our church is an exciting one and a demanding one, but one which is placed into our lap by the Lord himself. He has called us to be his people – people who he has placed us as his people in this our church and he wants us to be his people by sharing his good news of who he is and what he has done for us in Jesus Christ – for the people of our church, of our country, of our world.'

To the glory of God

Pastor Paul Smith

Bishop, Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand

AGENDA 14.4

Report: Constitution Review Working Group

ONE IN CHRIST

THE FAITH AND PURPOSE OF THOSE WHO ARE GATHERED AS THE LCA NZ

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Where are we now?

Before asking the purposeful questions of who, why, and then what and how on the pathway to constitutional renewal we need to also ask where are we now? The psalmist ponders "How then do we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" (Ps 137:4).

The church is now in a foreign land. This unfamiliar environment is seen in the unstoppable changes we are confronting. Membership, pastoral supply and finances are declining at an alarming rate. We are getting older and more tired, while struggling with the burden of governing a multiplicity of entities with fewer volunteer resources while compliance demands steadily increase. The ordination debate is dividing us. Congregations are steadily closing, and members are becoming increasingly isolated from each other.

To worship and to receive the means of grace, isolated members need to join other Christian churches. They grieve the loss of the church they once knew. Younger generations do not hold to Lutheran identity, nor worship exclusively in Lutheran congregations like their forebears. Respect for traditions and authority is waning. We cannot assume that all Lutherans will in the future so obligingly accept rigid church structures and procedures or even theological pronouncements as their forebears. The avalanche of emotions of grief, anxiety, fear, depression and anger associated with great loss felt by many Lutherans are a new reality.

To Christians in this foreign land, this new and challenging reality of discord, grief and decline, God declares his fulfilled promise "See I am making all things new... it is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega." (Rev 21:5,6).

The brief

The General Church Board (GCB) acting on the resolution of General Synod 2021 commissioned a Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) to prepare a paper seeking to answer two questions:

1. Who are we now as LCA NZ?
2. Why do we gather as LCA NZ?

Subsequently, CRWG was given further guidance to pay particular attention to who we are from an ecclesial perspective, a small and large district perspective and a global perspective

Who we are now as LCA NZ

Our acronym

Through recent usage and broad acceptance LCA NZ has since 2018 used this inclusive acronym for the churchwide ecclesial community of faith across two countries. The acronym LCA NZ is now nearly

always used whenever we are not referring specifically to the constituted and incorporated entities formed by the church. This acronym is used as an umbrella reference to the whole church fellowship and does not affect country or district specific entities or logos. Simply, LCANZ = LCA + LCNZ.

Our ecclesial perspective

Ecclesiology is the study of the church: its character (what it is), its make-up (who we are), and what it does (why we gather). This means that our Lutheran ecclesiology is fundamental to this report.

On the basis of Scripture, the Ecumenical Creeds, and Lutheran Confessions, with all Christians, we believe that we are called together by the Holy Spirit into the one holy catholic and apostolic church. United as the body of Christ, with all believers of every time and every place we enter into the spiritual fellowship of the “communion of saints”. Christ is head of the church, and in him all the rich variety of human life, experience and culture is drawn together into the blessed inclusivity of the people of God.

As God’s people, we rejoice in all the blessings of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Jesus brought salvation, peace, forgiveness and new life into this world; in Jesus’ name the Spirit sends us out to share God’s love in word and deed, working for peace and justice in God’s world until it reaches its ultimate fulfilment in Christ’s eternal kingdom.

It is through an ecclesial perspective that we are able to fully know and understand the LCANZ as our church. This church – formed from its gathered congregations – is both synodical and episcopal, and it is from this understanding that we seek to organise and govern ourselves.

- **Our congregations and parishes**

The church suffers from the tyranny of distance. Thinly spread over some 5346 km east to west and 3735 km north to south, remote and rural congregations, and widespread parishes are rapidly declining in number as families move to regional centres and capital cities. And then contrastingly in some regional areas such as the Barossa and Toowoomba there are too many congregations in very close proximity. More than half all LCANZ congregations have fewer than 50 attending an average weekly service, which is normally unsustainable for the support of a pastor unless part of a wider parish. The CRWG did not have the time, resources nor specific TOR to explore in depth the headwinds of change facing congregations and parishes. How are the members of a congregation coping as the congregation becomes unviable and closes? How are they continuing in worship and accessing the means of grace? What are we doing for them? More work needs to be undertaken to fully understand the plight of these small and diminishing congregations and how we can better support our people.

- **Our pastoral supply crisis.**

There are 70 more parishes than there are general ministry pastors (GMPs). Some parishes have two GMPs which means that more than 70 parishes are without a pastor. Currently 32 parishes are actively calling. But even filling a call just moves the vacancy from one parish to another. Why are the other parishes not calling a pastor? About 30% of all parishes are currently without a pastor.

This year eight pastors have served at ALC, but only supplied three graduate pastors. Why are the men of the church not hearing a call to study for pastoral ministry? Half of all general ministry pastors will retire in the next 10 years. At the current rate of new ordinations and retirements, by 2032 the percentage of all parishes without a pastor could double to an alarming 60%. As the church is recognised through the congregations gathered around the means of grace, how do we understand the church so dramatically and increasingly deprived of pastors?

- **Our capacity to govern**

We rely heavily on an ever-diminishing pool of volunteers to govern, administer and manage our congregations, parishes, districts, councils, committees, auxiliaries, and boards.

Churchwide there are 31 legal entities; across the districts another 86; our places of worship have another 505; and our agencies 258; a total of 880 entities. And that does not include the 266 parishes and six aboriginal communities. This large number of entities and diverse spread of their purposes, in many different contexts and in an increasingly complex legislative and compliance environment places a heavy burden on those volunteering for these governing responsibilities, especially as they age and in turn become dependent on care services.

WHY DO WE GATHER AS LCA NZ?

As Lutherans within this diverse family of God, we believe that the Spirit unites us by God's word of promise proclaimed in the gospel and revealed in the Scriptures and celebrated in the sacraments of God's grace. As our spiritual mother, the church gives us birth through our baptism and nurtures us through God's word of forgiveness and peace, feeding us with the holy supper of Christ's saving body and blood. This is the church's ministry, by which we are served through God's word, and in which we all participate according to the Spirit's gifts of faith and love. It is always this understanding of the church and its spiritual purposes that drives and determines the structures that we adopt for the work of the church in the world.

Together, we gather as communities of faith in our local congregations and parishes. As the LCA NZ, we also walk and serve together through the structures of our district and general synods. In keeping with local, national and churchwide needs, we choose and appoint pastors, leaders and other gifted persons to ensure that Christ's ministry continues among us. United as Christ's people we rejoice in God's word: worshipping, serving, and witnessing to God's love in our local communities, throughout Australia and New Zealand, and out into all the world.

Our large and small District perspectives

The LCA NZ has two large, two medium and two small sized districts. The Vic/Tas district stated that they are ***"A district of the LCA NZ (the churchwide ecclesial community of faith). This is a faith partnership, not a legal/ownership relationship. We are synodical"***. Other districts gave different answers, highlighting a significant lack of clarity over the constitutional division of the LCA Inc (the Church) into districts. This lack of clarity is apparent in some strategic and governance duplications, misunderstandings, tensions and discord.

The good news is that the districts and the church are finding new collaborative and synodical pathways which are church based and unconstrained by our legal structure. Communication, collaboration, good will, the *Missio Dei*, do not need any constitution.

Key issues for the districts include:

- pastoral supply and distribution
- synodality
- governance of their own entities without duplication and overlaps with churchwide entities
- avoidance of hierarchy
- meaningful participation and productive deliberation.
- sustainability
- creating the maximum of possibilities for congregations (Hermann Sasse).

Our global perspective

- **Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and International Lutheran Council (ILC)**
The LCANZ has maintained an associate membership of both the LWF and ILC for a long time preferring to remain a bridge between the two major Lutheran world church groupings.
- **LCA International Mission (LCA-IM) and Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS)**
LCA International Mission (LCA-IM) serves the LCANZ in overseas mission and evangelism. The Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS) is a humanitarian aid agency which works closely with AusAid. Generally, LCA-IM and ALWS serve in different countries, with LCA-IM having an Asian focus and ALWS a wider aid focus. Sometimes mission and evangelism opportunities arise through the humanitarian aid services, and these are clearly separated via good informal relationships between the two agencies.

Our commissions

The LCANZ has three commissions, CTICR, CSBQ and CoW which provide theological, inter-church relations, social, bio-ethical and worship guidance to the church. The CTICR answers the two questions before us by reinforcing that “Who we are” is a confessional church, and “Why we gather” is to undertake "the church's instrumental purposes and functions; contemporary actions" - shaped, clarified, and applied in faithfulness to the Scriptures.

Our agencies

The main agencies of the church are ALC; Local Mission and Aboriginal Mission; Education; Youth/Young adult ministries; and Care Services. While in congregations and parishes we find the church in ministry, bringing the means of grace to the worshipping communities, in these agencies we find these worshipping communities coming together to do what they cannot do alone to enable and fulfil our chosen purposes of witness and service.

- **Theological education**
Pastoral education and formation and equipping the church and other agencies in theology
- **Local Mission**
Equipping and guiding the districts and congregations in missional endeavors.
- **Aboriginal Mission**
FRM in Central Australia is a separate entity. Other First Nations communities are found in Queensland and South Australia. The LCANZ has not yet addressed when or how to transition from treating our First Nations people as mission subjects to accepting them as members of the church.
- **Education - Formative years**
As a church we have excelled in providing quality Christian education for our children during their formative years. However with increasing fees many Lutheran families can no longer afford this private schooling which is becoming more elite and less Lutheran.
 - **Youth and Young Adults**
Mainly camping ministry in some districts.
Youth groups and tertiary fellowships do not have the connection with youth they once did. These are challenging areas for relevance of the church to youth and young adults.
 - **Productive years**
Lutherans have not been so good at caring for families during the mid-years of life. We struggle to connect and relate to families while they juggle work/life balance.

- **Dependent years**

As we age, Lutherans excel again. We have provided accommodation and services for the elderly. We have also provided some care services for those in need, but this is not widespread and is becoming a joint service with other care providers.

Wrestling with these two questions the CRWG finds the LCA NZ struggling to “sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land” and to trust in God’s fulfilled promise “see I am making all things new.... It is done”.

AUTHORISATION OF THE CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP

General Synod in 2021 authorised the General Church Board to form this Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) by the following resolution:

The General Synod:

1. *affirms the work of the Phase 1 of the Constitution Review and acknowledges the contributions made by church members to it;*
2. *authorises the General Church Board to establish a Working Group that considers the issues raised in the review, in particular the questions, ‘who we are now as a LCA NZ’ and ‘why do we gather as LCA NZ’, noting that these are fundamental questions for the LCA’s constitutional arrangements, and ask the Working Group to:*
 - a. *prepare a position paper that responds to these issues and questions*
 - b. *have due regard to the principles and findings contained in the final report of the Phase 1 of the Constitution Review report; and*
 - c. *engage with key groups within the LCA NZ, including the CTICR**and*
for the General Church Board to submit the Working Group’s paper to the in-person sessions of the 2022 Convention to enable discussion by Synod delegates on the issues raised in it;

The Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) was commissioned by the General Church Board in accordance with this resolution to prepare a paper seeking to answer two questions:

1. Who are we now as LCA NZ?
2. Why do we gather as LCA NZ?

Why are these questions being asked?

Prior to the engagements with key groups the Chair of CRWG discussed with Les Stahl, facilitator of the Phase 1 Review, why these two questions were not explored to his satisfaction. Why was more discernment required on these questions before GCB could frame any proposal regarding a possible Phase 2 Constitution Review.

*Les Stahl advised that these two questions are the first two of four questions which the LCA NZ needs to answer on its constitutional journey. The LCA NZ needs to agree **who** we are and **why** we gather before discerning **what** is LCA NZ’s purpose, now and into the future. The purpose then informs LCA NZ’s Objects. Only when the LCA NZ has agreement on these three questions can it consider **how** to organize itself to fulfil its purpose. Finally, when all four questions are answered and agreed synodically will the LCA NZ have a firm basis on which to decide whether to amend or rewrite its constitution.*

Les Stahl said that the constitution is the highest governance document of the church. He said the LCANZ has to decide whether it governs the church from an ecclesial or a legal perspective? Or as at present, attempt to do both?

Finally, Les Stahl recommended identifying all the areas of tension or disagreement in the church which are reported in the Phase 1 Final Report. (see PART 2 B. Appendices - The Principles and Findings of the Phase 1 Review). He advised that a revised constitution should be written so that any tensions or disagreements which arise have a constitutional pathway to agreement and resolution.

WHO ARE WE NOW AS LCANZ?

The Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) was formed by the union of two churches in 1966. The church was constituted as the Lutheran Church of Australia – an Association incorporated in South Australia and in the constitution this entity was named “the Church”. The headquarters were known as the “National Office”. Recently the term, “churchwide” was introduced by the church’s previous Bishop John Henderson to acknowledge the Lutheran Church of New Zealand as a district of the LCA.

Our acronym

The acronym LCANZ came into existence after the 2018 General Synod replacing LCA as the acronym for the church. For example, in 2018 the bishop reported as ‘LCA Bishop’ and in 2021 as ‘LCANZ Bishop’. The acronym LCANZ is yet to be defined in the constitution. For this paper the CRWG assumes that the inclusive LCANZ has, through common usage, become the umbrella reference to both the LCA and the LCNZ as the churchwide acronym. i.e. LCANZ = LCA + LCNZ. Who we are now as LCANZ refers to ‘we’ the people of the church, the ecclesial community of faith.

Our ecclesial perspective

Ecclesiology is the study of the church: its character (what it is), its make-up (who we are), and what it does (why we gather). This means that our Lutheran ecclesiology is fundamental to this report.

On the basis of Scripture, the Ecumenical Creeds, and Lutheran Confessions, with all Christians, we believe that we are called together by the Holy Spirit into the one holy catholic and apostolic church. United as the body of Christ, with all believers of every time and every place we enter into the spiritual fellowship of the “communion of saints”. Christ is head of the church, and in him all the rich variety of human life, experience and culture is drawn together into the blessed inclusivity of the people of God.

Members of the LCANZ acknowledge that the one holy catholic and apostolic church, with Christ as its head, is the hidden reality of the church, living and active through the many different Christian denominations spread across the earth. Each denomination has its own unique way of understanding and expressing their faith in Christ but are joined as one as they confess “one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:5-6).

Members of the LCANZ proclaim the good news of God’s saving love for all people, teaching that we are saved only by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This, we believe, is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Holy Scriptures, who has called and gathered us as God’s holy people in Christ’s body, the church. Together, these teachings - as understood and confessed in the Book of Concord of 1580 - inform our unique Lutheran expression of the faith - our teaching and our confession.

Engagements with key groups in the LCANZ

According to the Terms of Reference, the CRWG has engaged with key persons and groups within the LCANZ. These engagements have been carried out through conversations, correspondence, on-line and face to face meetings. Most meetings and dialogues have been conducted with a questionnaire forming

the discussion agenda. Notes from these meetings and formal responses where received, reports to General Synod, web-site information and other materials have all been collated to supplement the findings of the Phase 1 Report.

The CRWG had two engagements with CTICR, who had provided CRWG with two prior written submissions to the Phase 1 facilitator. These are found in the Appendices 'Key Group' submissions. Other arms of the LCAQD we engaged with included LLL, ALC, LEA, Local Mission, International Mission, LCA executives and GCB. Districts have engaged with us through zoom meetings and/or answered questionnaires.

Other engagements have been held with Dr Vic Pfitzner, emeritus President Queensland District Reinhardt Mayer, Assistant Bishop Mission SA Pr Stephen Schultz, Dr Chris Materne, Bishop Dr Mark Vainikka, Bishop Paul Smith, EOC Brett Hausler, SOC Nigel Long, Lutheran Archivist Angela Schilling, Historian Dr Dean Zweck, Executive Director Lutheran Services Qld Nick Ryan, Executive Director of LEQ Tanya Crooks, Marilyn Wall of Reconciliation Action Plan, Malcolm Willcocks of FRM, Assistant to the Bishop International Mission pr Matt Anker, and Pr Nathan Hedt of Cross-cultural Ministry. Debbie Venz has assisted with LAMP records.

What are we hearing?

Much can be found on the LCA website and the District websites about the work of the various commissions, committees and departments. There are also comprehensive reports within the Book of Reports. The following are common threads from engagements with these entities, persons and other sources, either face-to-face, on-line, via questionnaire responses or other papers from which we highlight key themes.

The breadth, depth and diversity of the LCA NZ

The acronym 'LCA NZ' refers to the ecclesial community of faith, the 'one' Lutheran church of Australia and New Zealand, rich in its diversity. The LCA NZ is a spiritual fellowship, God's people gathered by the Spirit through the gospel and the means of grace; as such, it is not a legal entity. However, the members of this spiritual fellowship have formed a multiplicity of temporal entities, (one body of many parts) to organise the church and fulfil its chosen purposes. These entities are separate legal bodies recognised through their incorporation and legal name. The LCA Governance Framework 2020 lists 31 church-wide entities and 86 district-wide entities. This does not include the far greater number of congregations, parishes, agencies, and other entities within the districts such as boards, commissions, councils, committees, conferences, assemblies, auxiliaries, guilds, clubs, groups, educational and care services, first nations communities, cross-cultural communities, church plants, camping ministries. All these entities operate variously as either legally incorporated companies or associations, or as unincorporated associations, standing or ad-hoc committees, working groups, communities, informal networks, and collaborations.

A summary spreadsheet sourced from the 2022 Yearbook shows 505 congregations and other places of worship, and 258 agency entities within the districts of the church. Adding to this the 31 churchwide overarching governing entities and the 86 districtwide governing entities there are 880 entities to weave together, to resource, to delegate to and require accountability from. This is a very challenging task. These 880 entities do not include 266 parishes which also have a parish council to manage parish work, nor does it include 6 listed aboriginal and language communities.

The LCA NZ includes all the people who belong together in the spiritual fellowship and for the temporal purposes of the Lutheran church in Australia and New Zealand, and who share one faith and one purpose. The LCA NZ includes both an ecclesial fellowship and the organised structures and synods, and all the entities, establishments, networks, gatherings, ministries, and missions.

We are a culturally diverse church and serve in many different contexts, broadly spread across two countries. While our roots are traditional and European, we include first nations people and many ethnic cultures, including Chinese, Finnish, African, Tamil, Indonesian, Latvian, Hungarian, Slovak, and German. We have many multi-ethnic congregations.

The external environment – now

Much has changed in society during the 56 years since union. These changes have been technological, social, cultural, legal and moral. In 1966, the telegram was faster than a letter and televisions were still black and white. Society was also in the throes of the sexual revolution, and the church was trying to come to terms with what this meant for its own moral teaching. For the most part, community life in the church was rich. Congregations met in large numbers with booming youth and other social groups. Marriage and children were the norm of society, and divorce was rare. Christianity was still deemed relevant to society and continued to shape cultural expectations as well as the laws made by our parliaments and courts.

We now find ourselves in a digital age of instant global communications via clouds of satellites, telescopes and cameras which penetrate space, skies, seas and landscape. New technologies and communication webs bring many blessings but also carry risks and threats. We are able to attend meetings and communicate with our loved ones from a distance, but many of us have an unhealthy dependence on screens which affects our health and ability to cope with real-life situations. The knowledge of much of what we do online is also now commercialized - a valuable targeted marketing commodity. Even our identities can be stolen. Social norms and laws regarding gender, sex, marriage, family and attitudes towards children have changed drastically. Our laws and culture enable us to achieve inner psychological happiness through virtually any means, yet we are more anxious and depressed than ever.

In addition to this, the landscape with respect to Christian belief is changing. The latest census data reveals that the percentage of Australians that identify as Christians has fallen below 50%, and now stands at just below 44%, a drop of over 8% in 5 years. This is a sobering statistic, but not surprising. It confirms what many of us see in our workplaces, in community attitudes about the institution of the church and the place of religion in our secular culture. We must ask ourselves: *How then do we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? Ps 137:4.*

Despite this challenging context, the faithful continue to gather to hear God's word proclaimed, to receive Jesus in bread and wine, and to be sent with his blessing – and with the encouragement of the Christian community – back into the world to love and serve those around them.

However, 'more than half of Australians (55%) say they believe in God, six in ten pray or meditate, and two in ten (21%) attend religious services at least monthly'.

And Dr Ruth Powell, Director of NCLS Research, observed: 'Many young Australians do not claim to affiliate with a particular religion as it is not part of their social or cultural identity....But it does not mean that they are hostile or closed to spiritual life. The evidence from our detailed research shows an openness to spirituality, including the Christian faith - perhaps more than people would expect.'

Today's environment is indeed a contested one in which to be a Christian. On the upside, the mission fields are enormous!

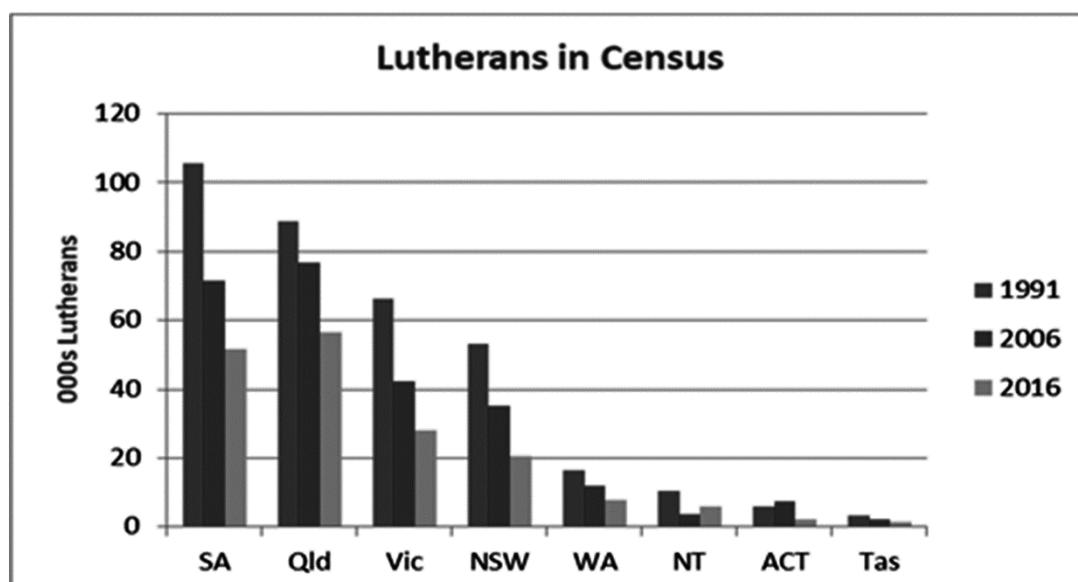
LCANZ District Entities (data sourced from the 2022 LCA Yearbook)

| Entity | SA/NT | QLD | VIC/TAS | NSW/ACT | WA | NZ | TOTAL |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Congregations | 168 | 109 | 70 | 45 | 13 | 13 | 418 |
| Worship Centres | 23 | 26 | 16 | 13 | 3 | 1 | 82 |
| Preaching Places | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Fellowships | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Places of Worship | 193 | 136 | 86 | 58 | 18 | 14 | 505 |
| Schools/Colleges | 33 | 26 | 16 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 80 |
| Early Childhood | 19 | 32 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 58 |
| Community/Service | 24 | 14 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 39 |
| Res. Aged Care | 6 | 12 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 26 |
| Ret. Living | 13 | 13 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 33 |
| Camps | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Book Stores | 5 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Agencies | 103 | 103 | 31 | 18 | 2 | 1 | 258 |
| Total entities | 296 | 239 | 117 | 76 | 20 | 15 | 763 |
| Other | | | | | | | |
| Parishes | 94 | 72 | 43 | 33 | 12 | 12 | 266 |
| Aboriginal Comm's | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |

these entities do not include the churchwide (31) or district (86) governance entities (*Governance Framework pp 28 – 31*) adding 31 churchwide entities and 86 districtwide entities there are 880 entities. (On average there are 46 baptised members (based on an assumed 41,000 baptised members) to support each entity.

Congregations

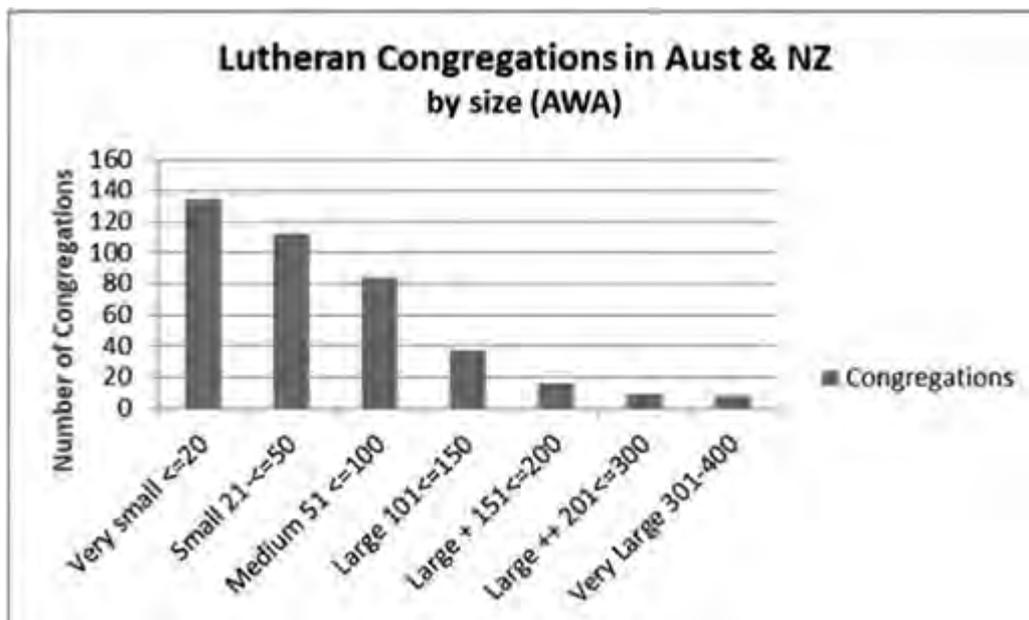
The Census figures show a constant decline in the number of persons identifying as Lutheran. In 1991, 346,000 people identified as Lutheran in the Census; in 2016, 174,000 identified as Lutheran in the Census.



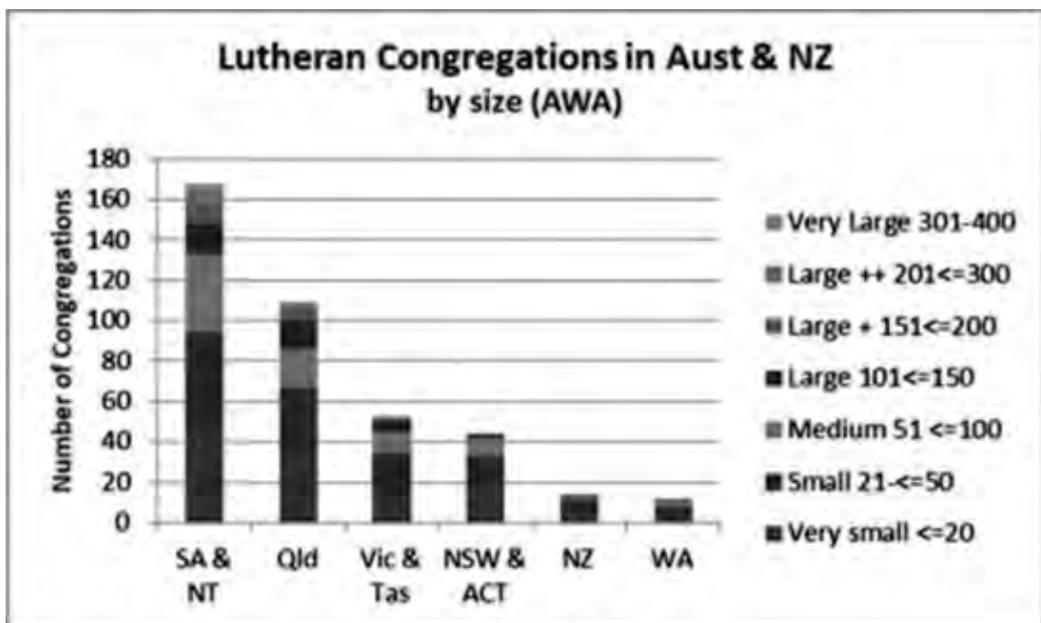
The following data concerning church attendances in LCA NZ and commentary is extracted from a NSW District report from 2018.

The LCA NZ is a small, aging and numerically declining church, with a majority of small congregations with a proportionally large number of agencies providing services to its community.

The data in this section is based on the most recent statistical returns in LAMP at **December 2017**. The congregations vary enormously in size based on average weekly attendance (AWA). 134 of the 400 congregations (34%) have an AWA of 20 or less. 8 of the 400 congregations (2%) have an AWA of 300 or more. While over half the congregations have average weekly attendances of 50 or less, most Lutherans attend Congregations with an AWA of 100 or more.



The mix of congregation sizes varies greatly by District. For example, SA & NT have 20 Congregations with an AWA of 150 or more. NSW & ACT have no Congregations with an AWA of 150 or more.



While over half the congregations in Australian and NZ have average weekly attendances of 50 or less, most Lutherans attend Congregations with AWA of 100 or more. This table shows the AWA for Australia and NZ by congregation size.

Pastors (sourced from the 2022 LCA Yearbook and Dr Chris Materne – latest update 27.09.2022)

| | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Pastors in General Ministry | | Bishops, Assistants, ALC | |
| Congregation/Parish | <u>196</u> | ALC | 8 |
| | | Churchwide Office | 4 |
| Pastors in other Active ministry | | District Offices | 13 |
| Schools | 13 | Total | <u>25</u> |
| Aged/Community | 8 | Pastors not in active ministry | |
| Defence chaplains | 4 | Leave of absence | 15 |
| PNG | 2 | Without a call | 4 |
| ALWS | 1 | Total | <u>19</u> |
| SMPs | 15 | Total other pastors | <u>87</u> |
| Total - other active ministry | <u>43</u> | Total pastors | <u>283</u> |
| Total (general + active) | <u>239</u> | (not incl. 17 aboriginal SMP's) | |
| | | Pastors emeriti | 226 |

Parishes without a pastor **80**

**some parishes have 2 pastors*

“However, if the number of active pastors are compared to the number of baptised members in the LCA the question can be raised about whether there is a shortage at all. There were 363 baptised members for every active LCA pastor in 1966. In 2017 there were only 136 baptised members for every active LCA pastor”. (Stephen Schultz – Ministry Structure in the LCA 2019).

Based on the 239 pastors in general/active ministry, and 41,000 baptised members, this ratio would now be 171 baptised members for every “general/active” LCA pastor. For pastors serving in general congregational ministry the ratio is 1:209. This means that on average each general ministry pastor is serving 60% fewer baptised members than at the time of union. What does this mean? There are many emeriti pastors providing locum services to help congregations with vacancies. During the recent financial year 75 (31%) emeriti pastors have provided locum services at least one time.

Local Mission – changes in LCA NZ in the 21st century and expected changes in the next decade:
(an opinion piece by Dr Tania Nelson for the recent and initial meeting of the College of Bishops on the issue of **pastoral supply and the ordering of ministry**).

*“Generally, in traditional Christian denominations, regular **worship attendance is on a marked decline**, which is expected to continue, due in part to our ageing demographic. We are becoming less of a rural church and our larger congregations are predominantly in urban or in larger regional areas. There is a growing movement towards **church planting** in the LCA NZ but there are more churches and schools keen to plant churches than suitable personnel. The harvest is still plentiful, and the labourers still are few. If we fail to adequately resource this potential growth area it may not take root and flourish.*

*We are still predominantly an **Anglo church** but with a few notable exceptions such as Alice Springs and surrounds, the Hope Vale communities, and congregations like Glynde, Queensland Asian Lutheran, Sydney Indonesian, Mountainside Auckland and the Chinese Lutheran Church of Vic. Some congregations want to become more **multiethnic** to match their local demographic. Demographic trends indicate that nearly half the general population will be of non-European background by the end of the century. Light house type congregations could demonstrate the changes required in this mission endeavour. More of these multiethnic congregations will have leaders with English as a second language.*

*Covid has enabled a powerful pivot toward the world of **digital worship**. Some congregations are exploring **digital mission and ministry** which is here to stay, complementing and enhancing face-to-face relationships. The digital space is a gift of the Spirit that the LCA NZ can utilise. The LCA NZ needs to grow and develop its capability in this space. Some have experienced worship at home and have not found their way back to face-to-face church worship. Other priorities compete with the Sunday morning timeslot. How do we connect with a wired world?*

*The **old model of Sunday school and youth ministry no longer works** for many families and young people. Congregational life has changed dramatically over time and especially in the past two years. Perhaps the most noticeable shift has been with the families and young people that once were a part of the community are who are now much less regular in their attendance, if present at all. Many congregations have difficulty thinking differently about how they can support children, youth, and families. For example, confirmation used to be offered to young people who were regular worship attenders and now it is a missional opportunity. We are beginning to realise that life-long discipleship is both a priority and is a way that we join in with God's mission. **Relationships** are always the key and lead to deeper connection. We need to continue to build the bridge to be with our families and our communities.*

*Putting most of our eggs in the Sunday **morning 'event'** basket has contributed to the continuation of a pastor-centric model of ministry to the detriment of mission and discipleship. We must shift our focus outwards. For many this shift is seismic in proportion. To what extent is the LCA NZ ready to embrace the new reality that Christians are no longer in the majority (as evidenced by the fact that we are often portrayed negatively in the media)? Are we prepared to **become 'a bold minority'**?*

*The LCA NZ is in **a liminal space** which has come about through a number of converging factors – such as declining membership, diminishing finances, being over-governed for our size, the debate over women's ordination, a pandemic and its uncertainties, a constitutional review and an ecclesiastical discipline review - creating anxiety in some sectors and some people. Let's **refocus on the primary task of proclaiming the good news of Christ in our neighbourhoods**".*

Governance capacity

The summary spreadsheet sourced from the 2022 LCA Yearbook shows 763 church and agency entities within the districts of the church (see table above). Adding to this the 31 churchwide overarching governing entities and the 86 districtwide governing entities there are 880 entities to weave together, to resource, to delegate to and require accountability from (not including the 266 parish entities and 6 listed aboriginal communities). This spreadsheet reveals that there are actually two large, two medium and two small districts. The two largest districts together have 70% of district entities, the two middle sized districts have 25% and the two smallest districts have 5%.

The congregations/worship centres; parishes; and other worshipping communities, totals 505 entities which is 57% of all entities, overarching governing entities comprise 13%, and the remaining 30% of entities are agencies.

This means that on average there are only 46 baptised members to resource and support each entity. Recognising that probably less than half the baptised members are regular church attenders who participate in and support the work of the church this would mean that the church has on average less than 23 regular contributors to support the governance work of the church. Not all church members have the gifts for, nor interest in, church governance. This is clearly unsustainable.

While our formal church governance systems struggle to adapt and benefit from these changes, we already see the green shoots of adaption through partnerships, collaborations, and networks of mutual support. Silos are being emptied and fences are breaking down as we support each other. This is most evident in the work of Local Mission. Originally five distinct departments requiring 60 members in their governing councils, they are now five purposeful ministries working together as teams, collaborating, sharing, and supporting each other under one over-arching governing council. Even better, Local Mission initially had the mission directors of the two largest districts and the congregational supporter for one medium sized district 'at the table' and is now also including the other three districts. This is distinctly synodical, providing a direct link and understanding of the needs of congregations, supporting their incarnational mission in time and place. Local mission is doing for congregations what congregations cannot do alone.

We are a diverse church. While our roots are traditional and European, we as a church in Australia and New Zealand now welcome first nations people and cultures, African, Asian, and American. We have changed from predominantly rural presence to a more urban and large regional presence. We are also a church which has grown with the post-war generation of baby boomers, the builders, who are now retired or retiring, greying, dying and are now passing on their inheritance to the 'inheritance generation'.

The LCANZ is diverse

- **Culturally:** While its roots are traditional and European, in Australia and New Zealand the church includes first nations people, African, Asian and American and their cultures.
- **Generationally:** families, young adults, school students, baby boomers, the elderly (2021 LAMP shows 5 specialist aged care facility congregations)
- **Attitudinally:** social values, socio-economic circumstances, upbringing, sexual orientation, gender, age, education, urban/rural location

This diversity is both healthy and challenging for 'one' church. There are differences in worship formats, expressions of faith, approaches to mission, priorities, opinions and strategies for a sustainable church in today's environment.

These differences surface in the LCANZ as we search for answers to questions such as: a shortage of pastors and other resources, women's ordination, loss of youth membership, debate about the role of pastors, and more broadly in addressing social issues being explored by the Commission for Social and Biological Questions.

The perspective of large, medium and small districts

The CRWG was asked to specifically examine the large and small districts of the LCANZ.

The summary spreadsheet reveals that there are actually two large, two medium and two small districts. The two largest districts together have 70% of district entities, the two middle sized districts have 25% and the two smallest districts have 5%.

The LCA Inc constitution states in Article 9.1 that “For the promotion of its Objects by its members in prescribed geographical areas, the Church shall be **divided** into Districts”. This means that the church recognises that the promotion of the ministry and missional purpose of the church (Objects) by its members is fulfilled in geographical areas called ‘districts’. This is incarnational theology – ‘where’ the church is at work.

Each of the uniting churches, the ELCA and UELCA had formed a district synod in SA; VIC; NSW and QLD prior to union. Western Australia was not recognised as a separate district but was loosely associated with SA. NZ was a separately constituted, ELCA church named the Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Zealand. New Zealand was welcomed into the fold as a district while remaining a church in New Zealand.

Following ‘union’ to form the LCA in 1966, the LCA Inc constitution states it ‘divided’ the LCA into districts. The pre-existing districts concluded/closed, united and re-constituted following the LCA union. The districts followed the same pathway as the churchwide synods with closing conventions followed immediately afterwards with uniting constituting conventions. For more details refer to the Part 2 Appendices.

The church is now changing the language used to describe itself. The LCA has become known as the inclusive LCA NZ. The division of the church into districts is now described as having been **separately established** to carry out specific functions and tasks.” And then “The church has **organized** itself into: Districts”. Archive records talk of congregations ‘**amalgamating**’ (The Lutheran April 2016).

A reflection on the district responses to the engagement questionnaire

Comprehensive responses have been received to the CRWG’s questionnaire and face-to-face engagements (where possible) with district representatives. Although the challenges facing each district vary considerably there are some common themes which have emerged. One presenting issue is the question whether the church, the ecclesial community of faith, the LCA NZ, should be oriented ecclesially or constitutionally? Bishop Mark Vainikka contends that the constitution is inconsistent with our ecclesiology.

Are we: ‘The Church’ LCA Inc., an incorporated, State-based, legal entity within which ‘the church’ exists or are we: ‘the church’ the LCA NZ, the ecclesial community of faith which, when required by governments and legislation, incorporate entities for the legal and compliance aspects of our purposes?

Do we as a church of faith, really need to be bound and ‘mysteriously hidden’ in the law? What purpose does that fulfil? Or do we treat the law as a gift of God which is limited to only those matters, and within those legislatures, which are applicable and necessary to undertake our ministry, mission and service in the world?

Did our forebears “divide’ the church into districts in 1966 simply because ‘The Church’ as an Association Incorporated in South Australia, was not legally permitted to operate in any district other than South Australia? This would have been quite valid at that time when our legal frameworks were far less complex than now.

Now, in a time of ever-increasing state, federal and international legislative changes, legal constraints, and compliance obligations, the CRWG engagements with the districts of the church has highlighted to us that the single state-based incorporation of an association for the LCA is proving unsuitable for our broadly dispersed churchwide church. Different understandings and interpretations of cross border legal rights and obligations, particularly since the year 2000 when the LCA Inc. registered in each State

creating duplicate incorporations, with the good intention of fixing a perceived problem, has only exacerbated confusion about our corporate structures.

The districts report significant areas of division, disharmony, discord, disunity, and other tensions in the church. Ecclesially the districts understand that we are 'one' church. But they also experience breakdowns in fellowship, collaboration, and mutual support, particularly at the district – churchwide interface.

The reasons present as being twofold:

1. Centralized solutions to complex churchwide issues.
2. Churchwide entities trying to govern some aspects of district entities (especially where they are currently duplicated) where the district entities have reporting and compliance obligations.

Districts and congregations and church agencies have local legislation and compliance obligations. There are many commonalities, but a single one-size fits-all approach is not a good fit-for-purpose. Churchwide agencies are best placed to provide churchwide strategic, governance and even policy advice to district agencies but should refrain from actual district level strategy, governance and policy for which the churchwide agencies are not accountable.

The good news is that the districts and the church are finding new collaborative and synodical pathways which are church based and unconstrained by our legislative structure. Good communication, collaboration, good will, and the *missio Dei*, do not need any constitution.

In answer to the question “Does your District consider itself to be a district of the LCA Inc (“constitutionally the Church”); a district of the LCANZ (the churchwide community of faith); or a combination of both? the Vic/Tas district replied ***“A district of the LCANZ (the churchwide ecclesial community of faith). This is a faith partnership, not a legal/ownership relationship. We are synodical”*** Other districts gave different answers, highlighting a significant lack of clarity over the constitutional division of the LCA Inc (the Church) into districts. This lack of clarity has led to strategic and governance duplications and misunderstandings, tensions and discord.

What are the main issues for the districts:

- pastoral supply and distribution
- synodality
- governance of their own entities without duplication and overlaps with churchwide entities
- avoidance of hierarchy
- meaningful participation and productive deliberation.
- viability, Sustainability
- creating the maximum of possibilities for congregations .

The perspective of our global networks?

The Constitution Article 1.2.3 defines the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

‘Evangelical Lutheran Church’ is a generic reference to churches throughout the world which proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ as understood and confessed in the Book of Concord of 1580;’

International Lutheran organisations

The LCANZ is an associate member of both LWF and ILC.

The LCANZ also has two distinct areas of service: LCAIM and ALWS.

Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and International Lutheran Council (ILC)

The LCA NZ has maintained an associate membership of both the LWF and ILC for a long time preferring to remain a bridge between the two major Lutheran world church groupings. As associate members of both LWF and ILC the LCA NZ participates in assemblies at which they can speak but cannot influence decision making as it is excluded from voting or holding elected office. There is a proposal before the General Synod to apply for full membership of both LWF and ILC. The different emphases of LWF and ILC member churches can be seen within the LCA NZ. The Book of Reports Agenda item 2.2.6 on pages 48, 49 provides background briefing on the Federation and the Council.

LCA International Mission (LCAIM) and Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS)

LCA International Mission (LCAIM) serves the LCA NZ in overseas mission and evangelism and is led by the Assistant to the Bishop Pr Matt Anker. LCAIM has only three staff. Its focus on overseas mission means that LCA-IM does not receive any government funding and is fully dependent on church budgetary allocations and funding priorities. LCAIM is accountable to the church.

The Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS) on the other hand is a humanitarian aid agency which works closely with AusAid. ALWS raises funds through churchwide appeals and also receives AusAid funding as a trusted agent for the efficient delivery of humanitarian aid. Because ALWS receives funding from its own fundraising, and the government, it is accountable to both.

Generally, LCA-IM and ALWS serve in different countries, with LCAIM having an Asian focus and ALWS a wider aid focus. Sometimes mission and evangelism opportunities arise through the humanitarian aid services, and these are clearly separated via good informal relationships between the two agencies. The government does not fund any LCAIM missional work.

LCA International Mission

A comprehensive report from LCAIM is found as Agenda item 3.2 pgs. 69-79 of the Book of Reports. LCAIM has built on the missionary work of Australian Lutherans beyond our borders since 1886. As we work together with churches in Papua New Guinea and South-east Asia, sharing the gifts the Lord has granted to our church for the sake of his mission, we seek to promote an awareness of this work among our local congregations that they may be encouraged, inspired, and engaged in God's mission. LCAIM is currently serving in Burundi (African and very small); Myanmar (4 churches working together as a Federation; Cambodia; Thailand; Malaysia (4 churches working together as a Federation); Singapore (great mission focus although small); Indonesia (13 churches working together as a Federation; 6 million people); and Papua New Guinea. LCA-IM is currently exploring the possibility of a partnership with the Lutheran Church in the Philippines; and Dr Michael Lockwood has been called to serve on the faculty of a seminary in Taiwan.

LCAIM is part of the Office of the Bishop and reports to GCB both via the Bishop and at times, via the AB-IM's attendance at GCB meetings.

LCAIM seeks to have strong and informal relationships with Ministry and Mission Directors of the districts. Pr. Anker advised that these relationships potentially provide opportunities to help connect overseas pastors and members with pastors and congregations within districts. There are also some early developments of collaborative sharing between Local Mission's Cross-Cultural Ministry, which has a domestic focus, and International Mission which has an international focus. There are opportunities here for better cultural understandings and networking to develop.

Pr. Anker further advises that:

- when he is not overseas, he is invited to preach to congregations almost every Sunday; some congregations have an advocate who help with information sharing, and prayer support. In addition, other LCAIM staff members take up invitations to share with congregations wherever possible.
- the work of LCAIM is published on the LCA website, a monthly eNewsletter, and Border Crossings (in *The Lutheran*). LCAIM also provides a monthly prayer calendar.
- now fewer and fewer people relate to what the church is doing overseas

Australian Lutheran World Service

A comprehensive report from ALWS is found as Agenda item 6.1 pgs. 186 - 210 of the Book of Reports. ALWS is the overseas aid & development agency of the LCA which has commissioned ALWS to “translate the spirit of Christian love and faith of the Church into effective services with and for those most in need.” (ALWS Constitution). For 70 years now, ALWS has reached out to bring love to life for people struggling to recover from humanitarian disasters, threatened by displacement, marginalized by poverty and injustice.

ALWS, through community development programs has empowered people in 10 countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific and proclaimed their preciousness in God’s eyes.

Nine (9) LCA schools have partnerships with schools in Indonesia via LCAIM and a number of congregations have partnerships which are also supported by the LCAIM team also. In addition, some congregations sponsor scholarship holders to ALC and develop close personal relationships with these pastors which extend beyond their time of study. LCA-IM also facilitates the Volunteers in Mission program which assists LCA members to volunteer according to their gifts throughout our mission partners.

Other groups doing the same work out of Australian Lutherans

Informal relationships with groups and congregations such as these

- Asia Focus – Queensland group which is supported by individuals and some congregations started by a retired pastor who travelled in Asia and made connections – in Vietnam, Indonesia, Mongolia, Kenya, Myanmar, and Philippines
- Lutheran congregations – it is not known how many congregations have established informal relations with churches overseas. Often these are based on personal relationships, and even sometimes in competition with LCA-IM which can take time to work through.

Theology

The biggest challenge among partner churches is developing and sustaining a distinctly Lutheran theology due to limited training opportunities and the recruitment of pastors from other theological traditions. For this reason, a key focus of LCA-IM is on theological training. This provides an increasing opportunity for ALC to play a key role in the Asia-Pacific however funding challenges have hampered this opportunity in recent years.

Commissions

Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations. (CTICR)

On its website, the LCA NZ describes the role and responsibility of CTICR in these words. *The Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations (CTICR) advises the Church on matters of theology and doctrine, and studies the theological implications of the LCA NZ’s relationships with other churches, at home and overseas; as such, the Commission participates in the ministry of oversight exercised by the College of Bishops in the LCA NZ. CTICR also sponsors our formal bilateral dialogues, currently with the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Uniting churches in Australia. At the request of the Church, the CTICR also studies current theological issues and trends, and provides advice to the Church in the form of papers and statements.*

Through its ecumenical dialogues, it has an ongoing program of theological discussion with the major church bodies in Australia. It hears reports from the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) and the NCCA’s theological body, the Faith and Unity Commission, and it monitors developments within Lutheran World Federation and the International Lutheran Council.

In its submission to the CRWG, members of the Commission provide the following comments about how CTICR plays a vital part in the formation of the LCANZ's identity and self-understanding ("Who we are") and in shaping the church's instrumental purposes and functions ("Why we are gathered"):

- The LCANZ entrusts the Commission with the task of connecting the church's confessional heritage ("Who we are") and its faithfulness to the Scriptures, by clarifying them, and applying them, in ways that are appropriate to the contemporary actions of the church ("Why we are gathered).
- The LCANZ defines the purpose of the Commission in its 'Terms of Reference (3.1)'; namely, (a) to engage in the study of theological matters and inter-church relations; (b) to provide the Church with an informed position on issues and developments on theological matters and inter-church relations; and (c) to give guidance to members of the Church on current theological and inter-church questions.
- The Commission provides such theological and doctrinal advice by (a) reporting its findings to the General Church Board through the College of Bishops; (b) providing a triennium report to General Convention of Synod; (c) giving advice, on request, on theological matters in the Church according to its public teaching; and (d) by engaging in consultations and dialogue with other Lutheran bodies and organisations within the Christian church.

A comprehensive report from CTICR is found as Agenda item 4.2.1 pgs. 107-110 of the Book of Reports.

Commission on Social and Bioethical Questions (CSBQ)

CSBQ is commissioned to:

- study and evaluate current social and bioethical questions in the light of the Scriptures and Confessions;
- obtain reports of any social and bioethical questions, from boards, councils, commissions and committees of the Church directly involved in such questions, and to liaise with such bodies; and
- develop statements, opinions and other resources for the Church with the approval of the College of Bishops and, as necessary, to forward submissions to appropriate secular bodies.

The CSBQ undertakes much of its work through working groups, each having its own Terms of Reference approved by the Commission and/or GCB.

- Lutherans for Life;
- Working Group for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence; and
- Lutheran Earth Care Australia and New Zealand (LECANZ).

A comprehensive report from CSBQ is found as Agenda item 4.2.2 pgs. 111-117 of the Book of Reports.

Commission on Worship (CoW)

The Commission's purpose is to prepare materials for worship and give guidance in the theology and practice of Lutheran worship. A comprehensive report from CoW is found as Agenda item 4.2.1 pgs. 118-123 of the Book of Reports.

Australian Lutheran College (ALC)

On its website, ALC describes itself as *a diverse and welcoming learning community, committed to delivering quality theological education and training that prepares tomorrow's leaders - pastors, teachers, church workers and volunteers of all kinds - to serve and lead with confident Christian faith, integrity, competence and compassion in a changing world.*

In his submission to the CRWG, Principal James Winderlich makes the following points about how ALC plays a vital part in the formation of the LCA's identity and self-understanding ("Who we are") and also in shaping the church's instrumental purposes and functions ("Why we are gathered"):

1. As a teaching, learning and research institution, ALC is aligned confessionally with the LCA.
2. Thus the college has a critical role as "culture-carrier, communicator, and co-creator" in relation to the church's confession and identity.
3. As people are equipped for their diverse service in a diverse church, ALC acts as "a point of confessional and cultural convergence" even as the church negotiates the "lively tensions" that such diversity brings.
4. The LCA trusts ALC to act faithfully, as ALC connects the church's confessional heritage ("Who we are") to its contemporary actions ("Why we are gathered"). This is a unique responsibility, given by the church to ALC alone.
5. Therefore ALC is working with and for the congregations and agencies of the LCA as they "fulfill their own unique callings as Christ's witnesses and servants". ALC exists to model for the church "who it is in Christ, and who it is called to be for the sake of its neighbours".
6. In all of this, ALC is "a deep and profound symbol of the LCA's unity", and serves that unity through its diverse programs.

In conclusion, Pastor Winderlich states,

"In reviewing the LCA constitution ALC is eager to understand its identity and function within the LCA's life ... ALC is entrusted with the vital role of engaging deep and expert theological and confessional understanding with the Church's daily practices through its congregations, schools, and aged and community care agencies. All of which is surely a critical matter of identity and culture".

A comprehensive report from ALC is found as Agenda item 5.1 pgs. 168 -185 of the Book of Reports.

Local Mission

Local Mission collaborates with all aspects of the LCA and every department and agency because mission is at the heart of what we do (it is the Church's – the church catholic's - reason for being). 'It is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a church in the world', is often quoted. The theological term is the *missio Dei* (the mission of God).

Our current constitution says, firstly, 'The Objects of the Church are to 3.1.1 fulfil the mission of the Christian Church in the world by proclaiming the Word of God and administering the Sacraments...' Mission has been intentionally mentioned first, and Local Mission sees itself as supporting (serving) all congregations and agencies (and other departments) in their missional activity.

- Our work (as our work is to support God's mission, as expressed across the depth and breadth of LCA, in Australia and New Zealand);
- Our collaborations (as we collaborate across every congregation, District and agency of the LCA (and with other Christian faith traditions too); and
- Our challenges (our challenges are the same challenges as the whole of the LCA and its individuals parts).

Who are we now as LCA?

We are:

- members of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand, as well as self-identified Lutherans. We are gathered in congregations as well as in faith communities (which includes church plants, home groups, and school and aged care worshipping communities that may not be constituted congregations).

- an increasingly urban and regional church, and we value our rural roots.
- a church seeing green shoots of growth through an emerging church planting movement and other missional activity.
- a predominantly Anglo church and we are excited about our growing multi-ethnicity.
- a church in which many worshipping communities, Covid has been the impetus for us to pivot to online worship and some congregations are now exploring what digital mission and ministry looks like.
- a church which increasingly is finding that former ways of doing ministry do not necessarily meet the needs of Australian and New Zealanders (for example, a traditional confirmation format may not meet the needs of contemporary young people and their families). We are discovering how to meet the needs of those with whom we minister (for example, by viewing discipleship as life-long faith formation).
- a church in which for many congregations are still relatively pastor-centric in nature, and we are seeking ways to develop the resources of our common priesthood of all believers as we come to terms with a diminishing pastoral supply.
- a church in a liminal space discerning – as each generation needs to do - how to proclaim the gospel (to be God's hands and feet in His mission) in our neighbourhoods.

Why do we gather as LCA NZ?

We gather:

- as congregations which form the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand
- as congregational delegates at synod, both at District and at Churchwide levels
- to worship
- with the saints of all times
- in fellowship
- to serve our communities
- to grow (discipleship) and to go (to be sent in mission)
- as Christ-centred communities
- As Christians who proclaim the gospel, holding Scripture to be the divinely inspired Word of God and as people who accept the Book of Concord as a true exposition of the Word of God.

The Council for Local Mission brings together five departments (now committees) of the LCA NZ. These committees are:

- Care Ministries (incorporating the Ageing)
- Child, Youth & Family Ministry (Grow Ministries)
- Cross-Cultural Ministry
- New and Renewing Churches
- Lutheran Media

As an example of the breadth and depth of the services provided by the LCA NZ we can reflect on the vision and scope of just one of these committees:

Care Ministries' vision is to support and encourage Christian care in all its forms, in our congregations and in Lutheran aged care and community services. The Committee for Care Ministries acts as an advisory body that:

- Provides advice on ageing-related matters and ministry with the ageing
- Provides advice on community care related matters and ministry with vulnerable members of our community
- Promotes the Lutheran ethos of aged care and community services
- Facilitates the development and promotes the use of relevant resources
- Consults and facilitates communication with Lutheran agencies engaged in this ministry

Care Ministries, under the banner of **'Lutheran Aged Care and Community Services'** has churchwide:

- 23 aged care and community service organisations
- in over 90 locations
- employing over 3700 staff
- with over 1100 volunteers
- serving 18,000 community members.

These groups come together annually as a forum for Lutheran Aged Care and Community Service governance enhancement.

A comprehensive report from Local Mission is found as Agenda item 8.1 pgs. 219-234 of the Book of Reports.

Lutheran Education Australia

Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) is the research, policy development, publishing, pedagogical, programming and educational leadership entity of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand. LEA's work and engagement is broad, developing programs and materials for schools, teachers, pastors and the laity.

For the LEA engagement with CRWG, Executive Director Lisa Schmidt used the Objects of the LCA to fully detail how the LEA fulfils each of the objects which apply to the work of LEA, noting the strong collaboration with the ALC.

LEA provided CRWG with the recent MOU between LEA and LEQ and the LEA Constitution explaining that all that we needed to know for our report would be contained within these two documents.

The MOU uses the LEA constitutional objects (which align with the LCA Constitutional Objects) verbatim in 2.2.1 to 2.2.15 while enfolding and book-ending these objects in new clauses 1.6, 1.7 and 2.1, 2.3.

These new clauses talk of "work in partnership to enhance, grow and develop a consistency of understanding and expression of Lutheran education within diverse local contexts". (1.6) and acknowledging the need for collaboration, communication and understanding to facilitate each party's responsibilities in relation to the advancement of education within the church and its agencies." (1.7)

Introducing the objects of LEA clause 2.1 states that "...the principal object of LEA, is to set strategic direction and establish the overall policy environment for all Lutheran schools..." These three clauses are bookended by clause 2.3 which says "LEA fulfils this commitment to all Lutheran schools and early childhood services through the provision of resources, training and development programs, curricula, research projects, events, consultancy, advocacy, advice and guidance...."

These aspects of the LEA and its partnership with the three school regions in support of the schools and early childhood services in their diverse local contexts, together with the educational partnership with ALC provide an insight into the LEA is an educational entity for the whole church.

In summary, current LCA objects are highly relevant to what LEA believe and their practice and service. A comprehensive report from LEA is found as Agenda item 9.1 pgs. 234-245 of the Book of Reports.

First Nations

A personal submission from Malcolm Willcocks - FRM Pitjantjatjara Support Worker to the LCANZ Constitutional Review Working Group.

Some important background information

Aboriginal people, whether in remote communities or urban settings, growing up with any form of traditional law and lore will have a good understanding of the following:

- Family is the most important thing;
- The worst thing a person can do is bring shame on their family;
- Family includes many, many people, well beyond those who are biologically related;
- Aboriginal society is held together through an incredible complex, “hidden” network of reciprocal relationships. (For further information please refer to the “Reciprocal Relationships” document.)
- Living under a law with harsh penalties;
- The constant threat from malevolent spirits and those who use the powers of those spirits.

In my interactions with different Language groups, traditionally leadership within a clan was always shared between the elder men and women. Decision-making was always done by consensus not popular opinion. This could mean matters could “lie on the table”, as it were, for very long periods of time. They would be talked through, and talked through and talked through again until all elders were in agreement.

Where are we now?

We Lutherans are blessed with the number of Aboriginal Pastors and that we have many strong women Church Workers. Many have very good literacy and numeracy and speak a number of languages. Many are leaders within their communities and beyond in a number of civic roles.

We thank God for their dedication and faithfulness. Like the rest of the LCANZ, we struggle to find enough Support Workers to help encourage, teach and grow the Aboriginal leadership base in quality and quantity.

For the most part, communities that grew under the Lutheran Mission system remain connected to the Lutheran identity even if church attendance dwindles from time to time. It is not unusual for 25% - 30% of a community’s population to attend the Sunday Divine Service. Hundreds will attend for a funeral.

Why do we gather?

The Lutheran Church with its liturgy filled with the means of grace is life, food, succour and hope for Aboriginal people. Whether or not they are legally members of the LCANZ, Aboriginal Lutherans are Lutheran through and through. There is a strong core in most communities that are extremely committed to their Lutheran congregation. They gather for comfort, consolation and mutual encouragement, and to be strengthened for the challenges of caring for family. They gather for the peace of God to guard their hearts and minds so they can be peacemakers in the midst of dysfunction.

To achieve this we need more Support Workers being deliberately developed through the LCANZ. Not just for FRM but across all the Aboriginal Lutheran communities. Perhaps, something similar to the New and Renewing Churches model of planned and deliberative funding, support, training and mentoring of potential Church planters.

Note: Current FRM workers are all over the age of 60. Two are likely to retire in 2023, and we are already one Support Worker short.

Youth and Young Adults

Responding to the Growing need for Communities of Connection and Discipleship for Young Adults in Queensland - study which typifies challenges facing the church in connecting with young adults.

Background

The LCAQD Young Adult Ministry Report (March 2022) references 'recent research by Barna Group and World Vision....in Australia, only 29% of young adults who grew up in the church are still regularly involved. This represents a 71% dropout rate. (The Connected Generation - Australia / New Zealand report – Barna & World Vision, 2019, p22)' While the LCA has no measure for this within its own churches, anecdotal evidence would suggest an even higher dropout rate.

For many years, Lutheran churches have experienced a decline in the number of young people remaining involved in their local church. This represents both a significant challenge for our church, and a significant missional and discipleship opportunity. In response to this, a representative committee was formed to hear the voices of young adults, and to discover how our church can best respond to this challenge and grow its ministry effectiveness in ministry with young adults and young people.

Key Themes

- Faith in ordinary life – engaging in the 167 hours Outside Sunday
- Meaningful connection matters
- Empowering the next generation to reach the next generation
- A desire to see the difference Jesus makes

Young adults need to see and have conversations about how to apply the bible to their lived lives. Young adults are looking for a clear pathway for discipleship (Spiritual growth)

This is both a time of great challenge and great opportunity for our church. We must grapple with the reality that we find ourselves in. We must be honest about the effectiveness of our churches in ministry with young people. Even more so, we are invited to look to our saviour Jesus Christ who boldly leads us into the places that he is preparing for us to bring his Gospel. Our communities are open to the Gospel, our young people are looking for meaning and belonging in their lives. There is ample opportunity. Let us be bold in the choices we make next!

Why do we gather as LCA[NZ]?

We acknowledge that it is the triune God who creates, **gathers**, and builds the church. It is in this church **we are gathered** for worship, praise, witness, ministry, mission, and service to others.

Why do we gather as the LCA[NZ], from an ecclesiological perspective?

Ecclesiology is the study of the church: its character (what it is), its make-up (who we are), and what it does (why we gather). This means that our Lutheran ecclesiology is fundamental to this report

The founding documents of the LCA[NZ] presented the theological basis for the new church's self-understanding, from Scripture and our confessional writings. From this basis, the LCA[NZ] was organized and grew as a church from its existing congregational and synodical roots. A strong emphasis on the church's unity as the fellowship of believers, gathered around the ministry of word and sacraments, ensured that the church's Lutheran identity was maintained as it worked to establish itself as a significant and faithful presence in Australia and New Zealand. These documents also

explored the importance of recognising that the Christian congregation represents a full expression of the *one holy catholic and apostolic church* on a particular, local level.

Now, we are being challenged to lay claim to a renewed awareness of the church in our current situation, an awareness that can bring about our growth as a living Christian community in 21st century Australia and New Zealand. This fresh understanding will reflect our biblical and confessional foundations, at the same time as we explore a vision of the church that embraces its character as an inclusive body, ecumenical and catholic in its outlook and practice, and committed to the work of the gospel in all of its diverse operations.

The ecclesiology that makes it possible to develop this vision includes themes that were also prominent in the original statements about the church. Today we still need to acknowledge the biblical, trinitarian foundations of the teaching that the church is the whole people of God, all those who are called together into God's family to fulfil the Father's grace-filled purposes. We confess that we become God's children only through faith in the Son of God, believers united as one body in Christ, who alone is head of the church. And we believe that in our present-day Christian communities we belong to the communion of saints, people called by the Spirit through the gospel and made holy by Christ's sacrificial love and forgiveness. As God's people, gathered in Christ and sent out by the Spirit, we are to share these same gifts as God's blessings for all creation.

This inclusive view of the church's origins and purposes offers us a greater awareness that ministry and mission are the task of the whole church, one in which every member participates according to her God-given gifts and abilities. The LCA from its beginning emphasized that the called pastoral office is a significant gift of God, providing ordained pastors to teach, lead and serve in congregations and in the wider church. Now, our radically changing circumstances have led us to discover that alongside its full-time public ministry the LCA is being blessed with the ministry of those who variously serve the church in particular local situations and contexts. We also have the opportunity to extend and enhance the reach of our ministry by developing the gifts and abilities of all God's people to work alongside their pastors in their teaching and preaching, worship and service. In the places where this is already happening, the church experiences a renewed sense of community and purpose and rejoices with Paul and all the saints because of "our partnership in the gospel" (Phil.1:5).

When in these ways we recognise the importance and significance of the church's ecclesiological core, and its consistency with our central teachings on Christ and salvation, the word and faith, it becomes for us a vital and transformative aspect of our common life in Christ, and the foundation for the ecclesial structures that support and underpin the essential work of the gospel among us.

Why do we gather and journey together synodically?

Who we are and why we gather as LCA can be understood foundationally through our faith - our teachings, and confessions. We gather and "witness to Christ Jesus and serve in contextually varied, culturally diverse and geographically scattered life settings through the LCA's congregations, schools, and aged and community care agencies" (*ALC Principal Pr James Winderlich*). We gather in our neighbourhoods, 'where love comes to life'. We gather synodically to do that which cannot be done alone or is best done together, walking the journey of faith together, supporting and encouraging each other.

What cannot be done alone is to unite in our wider fellowship of faith and purpose. What is best done together is determined by the way we organise ourselves to "participate in the work of the church and to promote its objects, especially those that congregations by themselves cannot effectively do alone" (*LCA Governance Framework 6.1*) to "witness to Christ Jesus and serve in contextually varied, culturally diverse and geographically scattered life settings" (*Pr James Winderlich*).

“The church, for the sake of good order and effective operation has established the General Synod as the highest decision-making body of the church” (*LCA Governance Framework 3*). Between General Synods the General Church Board appointed by the General Synod governs the church and ensures that synodical decisions are implemented in an effective and consistent manner across the church.

However, our synodality is not just discerned in the Convention of General Synod. The church is one united body of believers, consisting of many parts. These many parts walk together on their journey of faith in a spirit of unity through synodical fellowship. This synodical fellowship is found in every worship service, every council meeting, every committee, auxiliary, assembly, forum, commission, or convention – wherever one or two gather in Christ’s name. This is the grassroots of our synodical unity – where love comes to life.

Why do we gather for ministry, mission and service?

It is this understanding of the church’s true nature and purpose (our ecclesiology) that informs and then shapes the LCA NZ’s ministry, mission and service.

The CRWG has sought to discern “who we are now and why we gather” through our engagements across the church. These engagements have demonstrated, consistently with the Phase 1 Report (p 342 Book of Reports), a great desire of members to simplify our structures to achieve more efficiency, effectiveness and mutual support. The members plead that the church reduce the burden of the time and energy required to sustain our multiplicity of entities so that they can focus more on ministry, mission and service and less on governance and administration. Two quotations illustrate how these desires can be aligned with our view of the church:

“The Holy Spirit and we have agreed not to put any other burden on you besides these necessary rules”. (Acts 15:28)

*“The church is correctly ordered in the sense of Lutheran teaching when it is so constituted as to **offer the office of the ministry a maximum of possibilities** to accomplish its service of proclamation of the pure gospel and of the proper administration of the sacraments in the name and according to the commission of the church, **and when it preserves a maximum of possibilities for the congregation** which Jesus Christ himself has called through the Word and sacraments to live in the world and to carry out its service for human creatures. (Hermann Sasse).”*

Broadly understood, the Acts passage encapsulates the principle that where religious or cultural regulations impede the progress of the gospel, they should be laid aside. More pointedly, Dr Sasse (a founding theologian of the LCA NZ) prioritises the preaching of the gospel and the use of the sacraments as the fundamental ministry of service in the church and suggests that any church “order” must be oriented to promote these gospel purposes.

When we consider what this “maximum of (gospel) possibilities” looks like for the LCA NZ now and into the future, it is apparent that we need pastors and leaders who will challenge and equip the people of the church to fully participate in the gospel. This begins in worship where the believing community gathers around the means of grace. It feeds into the daily life of God’s people in all their relationships, in families, workplaces and in schools, and it becomes the driving force within every agency of mission and service that the church undertakes.

‘Nothing so attaches people to the church as good preaching’ – and ‘practical and clear sermons’ are the true adornment of the churches’ (Apology of the Augsburg Confession: Ap 24, paragraphs 50,51)

In summary, this means that as the LCANZ now governs and administers itself, regulating the work of its employees and pastors, and guiding the life of its people and parishes and agencies, it is always the divine purposes of ministry, mission and service that must come first. It also suggests that we best fulfill God's purposes for us as "church" when we maximise the possibilities for co-operation and communication between our congregations, parishes, districts, and synods as we work with and support the service agencies of the church. It also benefits these purposes for the LCANZ to work ecumenically in Australia and New Zealand with other like-minded church bodies, and internationally with other Lutheran churches especially in the areas of mission and humanitarian service

United and organised for ministry, mission and service

(a precied summary of a paper by Bishop Dr Mark Vainikka to the GCB Forum Tanunda SA
19 Feb 2022)

Do we fully understand, celebrate, and confess who we are as a church in mission, with a purpose connected to our environment? Are we too insular? Article 2 of our constitution states what we believe. How does this faith engage purposefully with the world in which we live? Do we focus so much on what we believe that the environment in which we exist becomes secondary? And are the demands of the operating environment so great for the church's agencies, that they often forget what we believe. We need an on-going interaction between what we believe and our environment, to form our purpose and our aims. Clarity is essential so that our governance entities are enabled to be purposefully efficient and effective. If a house is divided; the house is at cross-purposes with itself. And as Jesus said in Mark 3:25: 'A house divided against itself, cannot stand.'
Mostly we begin with structure and then try and fit our mission to that structure. This creates barriers. For example, some new emerging church plant communities feel pressure to conform to a structure that does not support their mission. This should not be so.

By Human Right, By Divine Right

The church's governance architecture must enable the gathering of the faithful, preaching of the gospel and the right administration of the sacraments whatever the geographical and historical place and time. The Lutheran confessions acknowledge that the church's external organisational governance and structures are by human right, while the authority of the office of the ministry is by divine right. The former can be changed from time to time and from place to place, but the latter cannot. Lutheran governance is informed by ecclesiology and must be responsive incarnationally to the church's context, realities and environment. Governance gives ecclesiology purchase and efficacy as it interprets theology for a specific context through church order.

How are we structured?

The word 'synod' originates from Greek and means 'walking together' or 'journeying together'. The LCA consists of congregations that have voluntarily joined together to form a wider fellowship of believers, submitting themselves to making decisions together, through synodical processes and structures. The LCA is not a hierarchical church, nor a congregationalist church. Since congregations form the LCA and not the other way around, congregations are the foundational entity of the LCA and have a level of constitutional autonomy.
The defining sacrament for membership into the Christian church, the community of the faithful, is baptism. A district's membership consists of baptised members of congregations within its assigned area. This relates back to our first Object of the Church, to 'Fulfil the mission of the Christian Church in the world, by proclaiming the Word of God and administering the Sacraments in accordance with the Confession of the Church.' While church constitutions clarify the church's ordering, constitutional documents need to establish church order based on ecclesiology.
Ecclesiology is an important starting point for a church's constitutional documents since ecclesiology does not stem from church order, but church order stems from ecclesiology (Koffeman, 2014).

The Lutheran confessions define the church as the assembly of believers, gathered around the gospel and the sacraments (Kolb & Wengert, 2000). This is a congregational and not a synodical perspective. The gathering of people within a congregational context amongst sacramental ministry creates and defines the foundational entity of a synodical Lutheran church.

Does our Constitution Reflect our Ecclesiology?

*The LCA's constitution defines the church synodically. The first article states that: 'The name of this Church is Lutheran Church of Australia Inc., hereinafter called "the Church. The definition for the capitalised word 'church' in the LCA's constitution is the LCA. Article 6 of the LCA's constitution states that the church consists of 'congregations voluntarily joined together to establish a wider fellowship in the Faith and to promote and do work which congregations could not undertake and do effectively alone' This is a synodical orientation, describing the church **as a gathering of congregations**. However, the Lutheran confessions state that the church is the **gathering of believers** around the Word and the sacraments in a congregational context. (Augsburg Confession, article 7).*

Is the synodical, centralised orientation of the LCA constitution coherent and consistent with Lutheran ecclesiology? Or does it create confusion. Instead of our ecclesiology, the preamble to our constitution testifies to our history.

The 'Synodical-Episcopate' Dynamic: The Essential Structure of Lutheran Governance

Our ecclesiology points to a governance structure which is 'synodical-episcopate' highlighting the relationship between the office of the holy ministry and the community of the faithful, gathered together. Synodical in this context acknowledges that congregations and parishes have voluntarily a joined together, to work towards fulfilling the mission of the Christian church in the world. Episcopate refers to those who serve the people's spiritual needs through sacramental ministry.

In this synodical-episcopate dynamic, 'The power of bishops is that command given by Christ to proclaim the Gospel, to use the ministry of the keys to forgive or retain sins, and to administer the sacraments' and the congregation is called to judge the exercise of the office of bishop-pastor and if the bishop-pastors teach contrary to the Word, the people should not obey (AC XXVIII Kolb & Wengert, 2000). This juxtaposition of the office of the holy ministry and the community of the people of God, provides the essential structure of Lutheran governance.

Lutheran ecclesiology identifies the congregation as the church's foundational entity and the locus of sacramental ministry, where the church's missional work is primarily located (AC VII Kolb & Wengert, 2000). This foundational understanding of Lutheran ecclesiology means that all other structures are an extension of the congregation, whether districts, the national church, or church agencies. From the perspective of Lutheran ecclesiology, the congregation is at the centre of church life in a synodical Lutheran church.

As congregations unite for more effective work of the church, they come together as a district and ultimately as a national body. It is the congregations that form a national synodical body and not the other way around. Districts are established to do what congregations and parishes cannot do alone and the churchwide church is formed to do what congregation/parishes and districts cannot do alone or is best done together. However, this is not how the LCA constitution is expressed. It is more centralised, hierarchical, top-down orientation. The LCA's constitution states that 'For the promotion of its Objects by its members in prescribed geographical areas, the church shall be divided into Districts'.

The orientation of the LCA's constitution and by-laws is LCA => district => congregation-parish, rather than ecclesologically, congregation-parish => district => LCA.

Quality of our Connections

The church's ethos, identity, and interaction with its environment, all speak of its purpose. If the church's governance processes and structures do not reflect the church's purpose and mission at

all levels, over time this will result in fragmentation of the entire entity. Mission drift happens stealthily and may only surface through significant unprecedented adverse events. Governance at all levels must be arranged to fit the purpose and mission of the church.

The dominant organisational map of the LCA, still struggles to find a place for districts. And worse, congregations/parishes are entirely absent.

The church's organisational map is very difficult to draw because our constitution is not consistent with our ecclesiology.

Where are the connections with productive deliberation and meaningful participation exist between the various DCBs and the GCB? The success of our mission depends on the quality of our connections.

LCANZ NOW

The homepage of the **LCA** website provides the **LCA's** public depiction of 'who we are now as **LCA**' and 'why we gather as **LCA**'. The website portrays who we are as a people, our faith in Christ, our justification, and our worship. The LCA website also provides insights into our history, our departments, and our missionary purpose and where we are found.

The CTICR answers GCB's two questions by reinforcing that "Who we are" is a confessional church, and "Why we gather" is to undertake "the church's instrumental purposes and functions; contemporary actions" - shaped, clarified, and applied in faithfulness to the Scriptures.

And **now, who** do we say we are to each other, and **why** do we say we are gathered as the **LCANZ**?

CRWG finds a focus on **LCANZ's** ecclesial core, its central teaching on Christ and salvation, the word and faith, and communal life in Christ. From this core we have explored the outflowing purpose of the church in ministry, mission, and service. We have reflected on how we have organised ourselves to work together in our congregational settings, and synodically as parishes, zones, districts regions and churchwide. The CRWG has framed these understandings in the context of the world in which we live, the world which God so loved that he gave his only son for us and sent his spirit to us.

This core is the foundation for the ecclesial structures that support and underpin the essential work of the gospel in our communities. This is who we are, now as **LCANZ** the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ as understood and confessed in the Book of Concord of 1580. It is our one firm foundation, that God creates, gathers and builds his church. We are united as Christ's people rejoicing in God's word: worshipping, serving, and witnessing to God's love in local communities, throughout Australia and New Zealand, and out into all the world.

The **LCANZ** is formed of congregations where the word is preached, and the sacraments are administered. These congregation join as parishes, zones, districts, regions and churchwide to do what cannot be done alone or is best done together. These congregations have together ordered themselves into ecclesial structures that support and underpin the essential work of the gospel among us. The **LCANZ** has two overarching ecclesial structures:

- We are synodical at both District and Churchwide levels where we walk the journey of faith together and decide the direction of the church. The pastors and the lay delegates of congregations and parishes of the church meet together in synods to discern God's will for the church.
- We are also episcopal because we call the bishops and pastors of the **LCANZ** to serve and nurture the people through the ministry of word and sacrament.

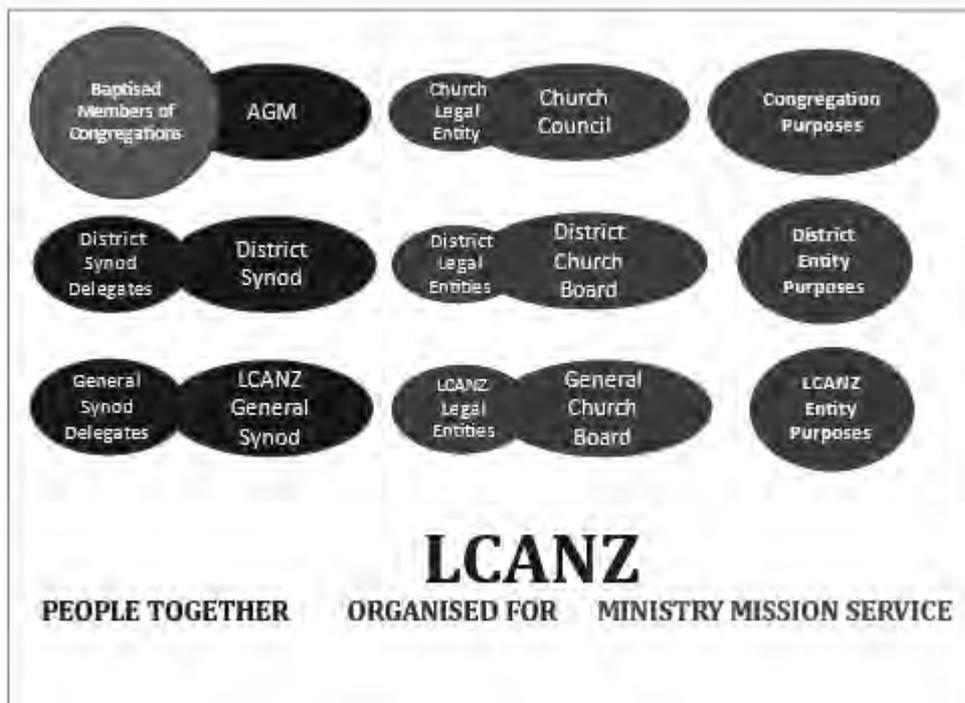
The LCANZ has many agencies which are variously structured to support the many purposes of the church in ministry, mission, and service. As a small church with a diminishing membership, we are facing considerable headwinds with limited human resources to support our purposes. LCANZ is positively adapting and pivoting to remain efficient and effective in its service. However, there is an urgent need to make some structural changes to achieve greater clarity in the way we work together, with a focus on more meaningful participation and more productive deliberations to create a maximum of possibilities for the congregations.

- The synodical relationship between the district and the churchwide synods is not formalized. The districts do not have an opportunity to share their journey at the General Synod even though synod is considered to be walking our faith journey together. The synodical structure is further constrained because at district level, not all congregations have a voice at synod. Not all agencies are represented. Some new and renewing churches, first nations people, and cross-cultural congregations have no voice.
- The episcopal structure is particularly conflicted over the exclusion of women from ordination. In the church where over 60% of delegates have voted at the last two General Synods in favour of the ordination of both men and women at churchwide conventions of synod there remains a win/lose paradigm. This paradigm challenges our tagline “where love comes to life”.

Themes include

- a deep sense of **commitment** to the work of the Gospel and to meaningful service within the key groups and in local communities.
- an **appreciation for Lutheran identity**, although often this is intuited rather than articulated.
- a recognition of the centrality of **Word and Sacrament** ministry, while also acknowledging the complex challenges in ensuring its delivery to all Lutheran communities that desire it. a desire to bridge cultural gaps and **reach the unchurched**, and those who have left the church.
- a desire to think creatively about how to **engage lay people** in the work of the Gospel.
- **significant fatigue** among committed lay people, pastors and bishops.
- a desire to **do things more efficiently and effectively**, and to share resources, so that the needs of the church can be met.
- an increasing willingness for communities to work **collaboratively** for the sake of the Gospel.
- the best work is often done, and obstacles overcome, where personal **relationships** exist.
- key groups are struggling to establish meaningful **communications** and the relationships needed to maximize the benefits of the work of the agencies of the church;
- there remain many challenges to find pathways for meaningful two-way participation and **connection** between the grass roots Lutheran Communities and the broader LCANZ and its work.
- there are examples of **networks developing organically** within and between some agencies of the church.
- the church is **broad and diverse**. contributing to tensions between ‘old’ and ‘new’, between different purposes, between the needs of different communities it serves, between interpretations of Scripture and between mature and new congregations.

The challenge for the LCANZ is to welcome and embrace this work of the Spirit in our communities. The LCANZ a missional church, and it is for God’s mission that **we are “gathered” together**.



This diagram shows the LCANZ as a synodical church which commences, top left, with our congregations, the baptised members that is, not the congregation as an entity. At an AGM the congregation agrees on a legal identity and a church council for its governance and all for the purpose of ministry mission and service. For those purposes which cannot be achieved alone or are better achieved with others, congregations unite as parishes or communities of witness and service, and sometimes zones. For those purposes best achieved at a state-wide level, we organise ourselves into districts and for purposes which are distinctly churchwide, we organise ourselves as the LCANZ of which we are all members.

For this synodical journey of faith and fellowship, we walk together through informal and informal networks and purposeful groupings and come together in synods to decide the direction of the church in unity. The LCANZ at churchwide, district and local levels agree on constitutions and create legal entities as required to fulfil purposes of the church. The LCANZ as a fellowship of faith in Christ, as a communion of saints, cannot be constituted, but it can create legal entities supported by constitutions for all and any purpose requiring such a legal identity.

Green Shoots – networking, partnering, collaborations

While formal church governance systems struggle to adapt to and benefit from these changes, the green shoots of adaption appear through formal and informal partnerships, collaborations and networks of mutual support. The church has accelerated the development of networked ways of communicating and collaborating over recent years. For example:

1. Directors of mission and ministry in the three larger districts meet regularly online to discuss, share, collaborate and encourage each other regarding the challenges they face.
2. District executives meet on a regular basis to collaborate on district matters.
3. Chairs of district boards/councils now meet regularly.
4. LEA and LEQ are resolving some difficult tensions over their respective roles in education with an emphasis on partnership, understanding of diverse local contexts, collaboration, and communication
5. ALC and LEA are collaborating on the development of courses for Lutheran Identity in schools.

6. ALC has developed online courses delivered through the LCA NZ Learning Hub under the motto 'learning for life'. It is a practical refocus from training for pastors to now offering training for all who are in the church and those who work for agencies of the church.
7. Local Mission has brought together under one umbrella five departments so that they can work in partnership within their diverse local contexts with collaboration, communication and understanding.
8. International Mission are looking at ways of sharing cultural understandings and contacts gained with Local Mission's Cross-Cultural Ministry.
9. The church has become more agile, pivoting to meet intense pandemic challenges, quickly developing on-line communications and services.

We the LCA NZ are a church:

- blessed with the gifts of grace
- blessed by the faithful work of our forebears
- facing headwinds of change in our context and environment
- of diverse people from many nations, dispersed over vast distances.
- struggling to find better pathways to being synodical
- in transition, ageing and in numerical decline
- with a significant pastoral shortage
- burdened with some contentious issues
- which is over governed and looking for greater efficiencies and effectiveness
- with significant challenges to address in governance conflicts at the interfaces between churchwide and district entities.
- adapting to the context of its current place and time
- gathering for worship and witness, for ministry and mission in an environment of numerically declining faith communities.
- recognising and trusting God's hand and the Spirit's presence within the communion of saints.

"How then do we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" (Ps 137:4)

"See I am making all things new... it is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega." (Rev 21:5,6)

Bruce Lockwood

Chair Constitution Review Working Group

AGENDA 14.5

General Pastors Conference Advice

REGARDING THE PROPOSALS ON ORDINATION BEFORE CONVENTION

At Tanunda, during the Wednesday and Thursday sessions at the 2022 General Pastors Conference, 12 and 13 October, the pastors of the church discussed the proposals before Convention which addressed the matter of ordination. The pastors also considered what advice or guidance they should be giving to Convention on this matter. We prayed for the Lord's guiding hand on our deliberations. After small-group work and plenary sessions with debate, the pastors adopted the advice below. We continue to pray for the Lord's guiding hand as we present this advice to the Convention of General Synod in Melbourne in February 2023.

PREAMBLE

In serving the church, the pastors declare that, with the help of God, we desire to be faithful to the Lord of the church and to his word and to remain loyal to our Lutheran confessional witness. We love one another as brothers in Christ.

We acknowledge and lament that we are divided in what we believe is revealed in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 as identified in TA VI:11, but we have grown in our recognition of each other's exegetical and conscience concerns in this matter. We assure the church of our ongoing pastoral care for the people of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand in working through the ordination proposals before the Convention of General Synod 2023.

After considering the ongoing theological and pastoral issues relating to the ordination proposals, we offer the following advice.

ADVICE

1. General Pastors Conference supports the advice of the College of Bishops that the agenda of General Synod 2023 must include proposals on the matter of ordination which do not continue debate which leaves us divided.
2. General Pastors Conference believes that the Queensland proposal should be the first considered on the agenda of the Convention of General Synod 2023.
3. General Pastors Conference acknowledges that the Queensland proposal anticipates the ordination of women to the office of the public ministry in communities of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand.
4. General Pastors Conference acknowledges that the Queensland proposal also anticipates the continuity of the ordination of men only in communities of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand.
5. General Pastors Conference advises that the work called for in the Queensland proposal would be undertaken by the General Church Board and the College of Bishops as a matter of priority.
6. A majority of pastors at General Pastors Conference believe that TA 1:4 (particularly 1.4e) can be applied to our current impasse on the issue of ordination but there was not agreement on the outcomes of its application. It is expected TA 1.4 would inform the work by the General Church Board and the College of Bishops in addressing the Queensland proposal.

Pastor Matthew Bishop
Secretary, General Pastors Conference

Dr Nigel Long
Secretary of the Church

AGENDA 14.6

Anglican – Lutheran Dialogue Report

REGARDING THE REPUBLICATION OF THE REVISED BOOKLET *COMMON GROUND* INCLUDING THE ADDENDUM *PERSPECTIVES ON MISSION*

PREAMBLE

As the Christian churches of Australia and New Zealand find it increasingly difficult to continue serving their cities, towns and rural areas, working together is increasing in importance. Indeed, unless we do, some communities will have no organised Christian presence at all. Formal dialogues between churches help prepare the way for local cooperation in ministry and mission. As part of the process flowing out of *Common Ground*, we entered formal covenants with the Anglican Church in Tennant Creek (2002) and Katherine in the Northern Territory (2006) and included Anglicans in the Uniting–Lutheran Covenant in Wudinna in South Australia in 2013.

The first printing of the document *Common Ground* included only brief references to mission, and the current round of the dialogue (2013 to the present) was tasked with exploring this and have produced the statement *Perspective on Mission* as a third addendum to *Common Ground*. This will assist our congregations as they work to join God’s mission to his world in their local contexts.

ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE

In the process of dialogue we ask our friends—in this case the Anglicans—to help us to be better Lutherans. That is of course a two-way street. We each ask our partner what they can contribute to our life, ministry and mission. They also seek to receive from us. Today that is generally called ‘receptive ecumenism’. One fruit of such discussions is an agreed statement, such as *Perspectives on Mission*, which is now being presented to this Synod.

You will find that there are parts of the statements that were prepared by the Anglican team. We asked questions and at times, as we worked on it together, clearer forms of expression were found, so that both Lutherans and Anglicans accurately understand what is being said. Likewise, the sections prepared by our Lutheran team were discussed and clarified as necessary. Sometime this also identifies issues where we have somewhat different perspectives, and more work is required. There are of course also sections where we express our shared faith and understanding. This means that a statement by Lutherans alone would at times be expressed differently. However, this is a shared document, and the wording reflects that.

FIFTY YEARS OF BLESSING EACH OTHER

Anglicans and Lutherans have engaged in fruitful formal dialogue in Australia for fifty years. The first statement was on the *Eucharist* and adopted in 1973. Since then there have been agreed statements on *Ministry* (1975), *Baptism* (1981), *Anglican-Lutheran Marriages* (1983) and *Episcopate and Unity* (1993). In 2001 our two churches entered a process for covenanting for mutual recognition and reconciliation and issued a document called *Common Ground*. This document built on the previous agreements and led to formal agreements to work together in specific ministry contexts. *Common Ground* includes two appendices: the first is an agreement in faith and order, and the second an agreement on ministry. The proposal is now to add a third, *Perspectives on Mission*. The final section, Glossary of Terms, will then become Appendix 4.

To remain current, *Common Ground* also required slight revisions to take into account the LCA NZ decision to change from calling our District and Churchwide leaders ‘presidents’ to ‘bishops’. The list of participants in the dialogue over the years also has been updated. As part of the process, each dialogue team regularly confers with the responsible bodies in their church. In the case of the Anglicans, that is with their doctrinal and ecumenical commissions, and in our case with the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations.

The Anglican General Synod met on the Gold Coast on 8-13 May 2022 and resolved to adopt *Perspectives on Mission* as a third appendix to *Common Ground*, and it encouraged members of the Anglican Church of Australia to study *Common Ground* and *Perspectives on Mission* and to foster closer cooperation and relations with the Lutheran Church of Australia.

THE ADDENDUM PERSPECTIVES ON MISSION

Receptive ecumenism involves careful listening. We learned about the Anglican Communion’s Five Marks of Mission: The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ

- to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
 - to teach, baptise and nurture new believers
 - to respond to human need by loving service
 - to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
 - to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth
- <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/marks-of-mission.aspx>

We heard that for Anglicans the first Mark of Mission, identified with personal evangelism, is a summary of what all mission is about, because it is based on Jesus’ own summary of his mission. It is therefore the key statement about everything we do in mission. As Lutherans we were able to share that in understanding mission we distinguish between justification and sanctification, and the work of ‘God’s two hands’, or the ‘two kingdoms’, and so other aspects such as service, justice and the care of creation flow from the core teaching of justification.

Among the other topics considered in depth are *missio Dei*, vocation, the diaconate, creation and redemption, evangelists and catechists, and Shalom. As well as the work of the Anglican–Lutheran International Coordinating Committee (of which Anglican Co-Chair Bishop Tim Harris was a member) we also consulted various Anglican-Lutheran agreements from other parts of the world.

Perspectives on Mission (published on the following page) builds on the previous agreements, notably those on baptism, ministry and oversight, as we considered how this might work out in practice in the congregations and ministries of our churches. The dialogue therefore also listed several current opportunities for collaboration in ministry and mission (see 12.1 in the appendix). It is the dialogue’s hope and prayer that these may grow as actions and not merely theory, and that the possibilities may multiply in the years to come.

CONCLUSION

The dialogue commends the updated *Common Ground*, including *Perspectives on Mission*, to Synod, so that it may assist our bishops, mission departments, congregations and other ministries in collaborating with the Anglicans and other traditions in joining God’s mission to his world in their contexts. Our thanks are given to those who worked as part of the Lutheran team for this round of dialogue. At present they are Rev Ben Pfeiffer, Rev Matthew Thomas, Rev James Winderlich and Rev Dr Steen Olsen (Lutheran Co-Chair). In earlier meetings of the dialogue Rev Richard Haar, Rev Dr Michael Lockwood, Rev Dr Andrew Ruddell, Rev Dr Michael Semmler, and Rev Dr Stephen Pietsch were also members.

COMMON GROUND

APPENDIX 3 PERSPECTIVES ON MISSION

FOUNDATIONS

1 One God

- 1.1 From eternity to eternity there is one God—strong, pure and holy, good and righteous, true and loving, revealed to us as:
- the Father—from whom and for whom all things exist
 - the Father's Son, God's powerful Word, incarnate in Jesus Christ—all things exist through him and for him
 - the Holy Spirit—who brings to us all that is of the Father and the Son.
- Father, Son and Spirit love, serve, honour and give to one another, and to us.¹

2 God's Purpose

- 2.1 All creation reflects God's nature and character. In particular, human beings are made in God's own image and likeness, in relationship with God and each other. God has blessed humanity, male and female alike, to fill and exercise responsible stewardship of the earth, until the earth is filled with the glory of God. God's ultimate intention is to have a gathered and united people, children known and loved as God's family, transformed into the image of the Son, holy and blameless, abiding in God's love, in a renewed and fulfilled creation.
- 2.2 At the instigation of the evil one, in thankless defiance of God's will and purpose, humanity has sought to go its own way, for its own glory. This sinful state has given rise to all kinds of evil and has subjected us to God's judgment, resulting in death.
- 2.3 God, as our eternal Father and Redeemer, nonetheless has persisted in bringing his creational purpose to fulfilment, by redemptive saving grace upon all creation and the holy people of God, through the giving of the Son, and the sending of the Spirit.²

3 God's Mission

- 3.1 The Old and New Testament scriptures tell us all we need to know and experience of God's salvation. God renewed the blessings of creation in and through the offspring of Abraham, realised in the covenantal people of Israel, that they might be a blessing to all peoples. Abraham, Moses, David and the prophets were among those who knew God's justification, redemption and calling—forgiveness of sin, and righteousness from God, through faith—and were shown something of the one who would come to make this reality possible. Such righteousness is to be received and lived, both personally and communally.
- 3.2 At the right time, God sent the Son, named Jesus, as one of us in human flesh, to make God known as Abba Father, by his life, teachings and miracles, and particularly in his sufferings, crucifixion, and resurrection. On the cross, Jesus bore the sin of the world, with its terrible consequences, and defeated evil and death, to bring us reconciliation and new life with God. In

¹ Psalm 90:2; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Chronicles 29:12; Isaiah 5:16; 14:25; Psalm 36:5–6; Mark 10:18; Revelation 15:3; 1 John 4:8–10, 16; John 1:1–3, 14; Hebrews 1:2–3; Colossians 1:16; Matthew 10:20; Galatians 4:6; 1 Corinthians 2:10; John 3:35; 5:22–23; 10:17; 14:31; 16:13–15; 17:24, 26; Acts 17:25.

² Genesis 1:1–2:3; 5:1–3; Luke 3:38; Romans 1:19–20; Numbers 14:20; Habakkuk 2:14; Ephesians 1:4–6; Romans 8:29; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 21:1–22:5; Genesis 2:4–3:24, Romans 1:18, 21; Ephesians 2:1–3; Romans 5:12; Isaiah 63:16; John 3:16–17; Romans 8:1–4.

his resurrection and ascension, Jesus convicted the world, triumphed over evil, injustice, terror and abuse, and became the first fruits of the resurrection and the new creation.

- 3.3 This reality is conveyed to us, in the word and experience of the gospel, by the Holy Spirit, through the gifts of repentance and faith, bringing us into direct relationship with the Son and the Father, with the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control that are the fruit of the Spirit, as a present foretaste of the sure and certain hope of the resurrection life to come.³

4 Mission and Church

- 4.1 God lives and works in, with and through his multi-ethnic family, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church of Christ. This church is a witness to the world and a foretaste of God's ultimate intention to bring the countless multitude from all nations, tribes, peoples and languages into one saved and cleansed community that worships in the presence of God. The church is also God's chosen means of bringing this about. Christ has given his disciples God's authoritative word, to live by and to proclaim, and the dominical sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, by which people are brought into and sustained in the life of God.
- 4.2 God has commissioned us to convey in word and action the good news to the whole creation and make disciples of all nations. We have the protective and active elements of God's armour in the gospel, and all necessary gifts of the Spirit, to be able to engage in this spiritual struggle.
- 4.3 The participation of God's people in the unity of the Spirit, which is ours in the love-relationship of the Father and the Son, is essential for the effectiveness of God's mission through his church. As people respond to the gospel in the power of the Spirit, practical life together flows from the love of God—within the church, and out into the wider community.⁴

AN ANGLICAN PERSPECTIVE

- 5.1 In recent times Anglicans have come to express their understanding of mission through the identification of 'five marks of mission'. While the first two marks come from a stance of Christian faith, overall the marks reflect responses to God's grace available to and invited of all people. Marks 3-5 are framed in terms of the church providing exemplary commitment regarding responsibilities and concerns enjoined on all humanity, and all marks are to be addressed collectively.
- 5.2 The Five Marks of Mission are:
1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
 2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
 3. To respond to human need by loving service
 4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
 5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth
- 5.3 As noted on the Anglican Communion website, the first mark of mission 'is really a summary of what all mission is about, because it is based on Jesus' own summary of his mission (Matthew

³ 2 Timothy 3:15; Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 22:1-19; 2 Samuel 7:1-29; 12:13; Psalm 32; 51; Isaiah 6:1-8; 26:2; 52:13-53:12; Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 3:21-26; 4:1-25; Philippians 3:7-11; Galatians 4:4-5; John 1:14, 18; 14:6-7; 17:6-8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; Galatians 3:13-14; Romans 8:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 10-12; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; John 6:39; Acts 2:38; 5:31-32; 11:18; 15:8-9; 16:30-31; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Ephesians 2:18; Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:6; 5:22-25; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10; Romans 8:11.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 12-13; 15:20-28; Revelation 7:9-17; Mark 16:15, 19-20; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8; John 17:14; Matthew 10:7-8; Mark 6:7-13; Matthew 28:16-20; 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 10:14-17; 11:17-34; 1 Peter 4:10-11; Ephesians 1:3; 4:3, 7-16; 6:10-20; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 27-31; 13:1-13; 2 Corinthians 6:2-10; 10:3-5; John 17:11, 20-26; Leviticus 19:1-37; Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-34; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4; Colossians 3:12-4:6; 1 Peter 2:11-3:16.

4:17, Mark 1:14-15, Luke 4:18, Luke 7:22; cf. John 3:14-17). Instead of being just one (albeit the first) of five distinct activities, this should be the key statement about everything we do in mission', encompassing both evangelism (encouraging people in gospel faith) and evangelisation (the outworking of the gospel within society and culture), empowered and transformed through the Holy Spirit.

A LUTHERAN PERSPECTIVE

- 6.1 Lutherans articulate mission in terms of proclaiming the gospel of justification by grace, through faith, on account of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, which brings forgiveness of sins and righteousness before God and therefore gives birth to believers and gathers them into the church. Other matters, such as service, justice, equality and care of creation flow from this central dynamic of justification.
- 6.2 When we reflect on service, justice, equality and care of creation, Lutherans distinguish between two aspects of God's work; often spoken of as the work of God's left hand in providing government, law, structure and care for the world (Rom 13:1-4, Eph 6:1-9), and the work of God's right hand through the law and the gospel of Jesus Christ to bring people to repentance and faith so that they may be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:18-21, John 20:21-23). These two aspects of God's work are to be distinguished but not confused or separated. It is the same God who works in both spheres and Christians participate in both spheres. The church is primarily called to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world.

OUR COMMON CALLING AND VOCATION FOR MISSION

7 Our Baptismal Identity

- 7.1 The church is constituted and sustained by the triune God, at work through his word and sacraments.⁵
- 7.2 In Holy Baptism we are united with Christ and with one another.⁶
- 7.3 The rite of baptism implies further instruction in the faith.⁷ Therefore our mission is not only to those outside the church but also to those within it. So Christian activities such as catechesis, confirmation and adult instruction, can rightly be called participation in God's mission.⁸
- 7.4 In the Eucharist God nourishes the body of Christ in faith and hope and strengthens it for witness and service in daily life.⁹ Therefore the Eucharist is both preparation for, and participation in, God's mission.¹⁰ New believers sharing in the Eucharist is a goal of missionary activity.
- 7.5 All members of the church are called to participate in the apostolic mission according to their God-given gifts.¹¹ When God calls us into the Christian church through Holy Baptism, God also sends us out to be part of his mission.

⁵ Common Ground 13.1

⁶ Common Ground 14.1

⁷ Common Ground 14.2

⁸ See also the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20. These words highlight the important connection between baptism and an ongoing life of learning and discipleship. Both Anglicans and Lutherans include these words in their baptismal rites and recognise them as foundational to an understanding of baptismal identity.

⁹ Common Ground 15.4

¹⁰ See 1 Corinthians 11:26

¹¹ Common Ground 16.1

8 Our Personal Callings

- 8.1 The ordained ministry of word and sacrament is a divinely instituted gift to the church. This ordained ministry is essential to the mission of the church, and enables the mission of the whole people of God.¹²
- 8.2 Every Christian, as part of the priesthood of the baptised, is called to offer prayer and praise to God, to intercede for the church and the world, to witness to the gospel and its impact in their life, and to serve their neighbour in love.
- 8.3 The way Christians participate in God's mission will necessarily be different depending on their God-given gifts, abilities and opportunities.¹³
- 8.4 The Lutheran Church recognises the authority of the church to establish auxiliary offices within the church to serve its life and mission such as evangelists. Similarly, the Anglican Church licenses and authorises various lay ministries including in collaborative team ministry.
- 8.5 Every age looks for the distinctive gifting of evangelists as an essential ministry of gospel mission and similarly we encourage the rediscovery of the calling of catechists as instructors and coaches in Christian faith and living.¹⁴
- 8.6 The Anglican Church has identified *diakonia* as a key missional sphere and mode of ministry for the whole people of God, with specific training, deployment and support. In the Anglican Church, this ministry is embodied in the order of deacons. Deacons minister in a sphere that bridges the gap between the church and the wider community, between liturgy and outreach. The role of deacons therefore provides special opportunity for witness, acts of mercy, ecumenical cooperation and the furthering of God's mission to the world.¹⁵
- 8.7 The Lutheran Church has identified a Christian's personal situation in life, with its relationships and callings (stations and vocations) as a key sphere for mission. A Christian's various roles in the local congregation, family, workplace and society provide the setting in which God's mission can be carried out. Simple examples might be parents leading their children in home devotions, or one colleague providing a Christian witness to another at work.¹⁶

9 Our Collective Callings

- 9.1 Beyond these unique and personal callings, we also have collective or communal callings. By sharing time, talents and treasures, by careful planning and prayer, groups of Christians are called to participate in God's mission in ways that Christians working alone may find difficult.
- 9.2 The primary example of this is the local congregation or Christian gathering, which is called to serve and witness in a particular location. This brings specific opportunities for mission. Congregations can establish missional communities to engage with people in their locality or begin other endeavours to build relationships with those who are not yet Christian.
- 9.3 The way these local congregations and gatherings relate to one another is also significant when it comes to mission, both exemplifying gospel fellowship and enabling a greater missional diversity and identity.
- 9.4 The Anglican Church has affirmed a diocese to be its unit of organisation, under Episcopal oversight, together with synodical governance, with responsibility for leading the missional activity across a number of local congregations, Anglican entities or a particular geographical area.
- 9.5 The Lutheran Church has established its synod as its highest constitutional authority, under oversight of the bishop of the Church, and working together with its districts and their bishops,

¹² See Common Ground 17.1, 17.2 and 18.1

¹³ 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, Ephesians 4:11-13, 1 Peter 4:10-11

¹⁴ See Bleby, Martin, *Evangelists and Catechists* 2018

¹⁵ See Lee-Barker, Jane, *Diakonia and Mission: For Discussion on the implications for missional training, deployment and support* 2014

¹⁶ See Pfeiffer, Ben, *Vocation and Mission: A Lutheran Perspective* 2014

and mission boards, with responsibility for leading missional activity across a number of local congregations, Lutheran entities (especially schools and aged care facilities) or a particular geographical location.

- 9.6 Together we recognise a comparable ministry of oversight, as stated in Common Ground 17.2. Our diocesan bishops and district bishops work together for the sake of cooperation in mission, for example, in overseeing shared pastoral care and Eucharistic hospitality agreements in their areas.

MISSION AND THE GOAL OF ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

- 10.1 Full unity and communion is not the ecumenical goal in and of itself. It is a spiritual reality already established in Christ. Our mandate by God's grace is to most effectively participate in the mission of God. *Koinonia* in mission serves that end as a sign, foretaste and instrument of that mission, the full realisation of the Kingdom of God.

OUR SHARED CONTEXT, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MISSION

- 11.1 We affirm our calling to minister as partners in the gospel and mission, as an expression of our fellowship in Christ.
- 11.2 We recognise we share the same mission field, and face a range of common challenges as we seek to respond and undertake, in God's grace, our participation in the creational and redemptive mission of God. This is a constantly changing context throughout Australia, as social, demographic and geographic movements reshape the neighbourhoods, regions, towns and cities we inhabit. There are many instances where we live and minister alongside one another as local churches and allied ministries, and more intentional consideration of partnership and strategic approaches would serve the work of the Kingdom.
- 11.3 In like measure, our appraisal of limited resources and facilities also has much in common, and as we undertake ongoing review of strategic missional priorities and initiatives, we recognise the value of greater collaboration, consultation and training. Such questions ought be asked in all contexts we share in common, but particularly so in areas where resources are scarce and viable church communities difficult to sustain.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SEEK MOST EFFECTIVE AVENUES FOR COLLABORATION IN MISSION AND MINISTRY

- 12.1 There is a range of areas where in the spirit of receptive ecumenism we challenge ourselves to explore opportunities for greater collaboration, partnership and mutual recognition. The following are provided as possible examples to encourage ongoing specific discussion about local, regional and church-wide opportunities:
- Rural and remote ministry and mission.
 - Congregational renewal in mission.
 - Greenfield, inner urban and suburban church planting.
 - Joint establishment of missional communities.
 - Workshops, seminars and mentoring for evangelists and church planting teams.
 - Joint sponsorship of events with significant local and international presenters.
 - Defence force and industrial chaplaincy.
 - Joint enlistment, training and resourcing of catechists.
 - Training of teachers and staff for schools, and staff for aged and community care ministries.
 - Training of clergy and church workers.

Our commitment to greater and intentional *koinonia* in mission

13.1 Informed by the above, our respective churches hereby commit ourselves to encourage greater awareness and understanding of each other's self-identity, values and commitment to gospel mission and ministry, as expressed in local contexts. Fellowship is a relational term, so we undertake to explore opportunities to pray, study, worship, evangelise and serve with one another. As we recognise the grace of God in and through each other, we affirm our calling to consult, encourage, support and collaborate in our discernment of mission and ministry vision and strategic priorities. We encourage greater use of covenants for eucharistic hospitality, pastoral care, evangelistic endeavours and local shared ministry or team arrangements.

AGENDA 14.7

Lutheran – Uniting Church Dialogue

THE DIALOGUE OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

AT THE TABLE

The Eucharist

June 2022

PREFACE

1. In our 2010 Declaration of Mutual Recognition, the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) and the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) committed to work together towards 'intentional sharing in pastoral ministry and in mission' and a 'Concordat for full communion, so that members from either denomination may share in Holy Communion in each other's churches'. At the Table represents a stage on the way towards such a Concordat.
2. At the Table builds on decades of fruitful dialogue between our two Churches that has patiently and prayerfully, with humility and gentleness, reflected our common desire to grow into and maintain the unity which is ours in Christ. We participate already now in the unity as promise. We share in one Body and are called to the one hope that belongs to our call – one Lord, one faith, one baptism. At the Table builds on the work that has gone before to deepen our bonds of unity and enrich our shared understanding of the Eucharist.
3. A preliminary version of At the Table was submitted to the two Churches in early 2018 for study and feedback. Subsequent feedback led to this final version which, we pray, will serve our two Churches and the whole church catholic well.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO *AT THE TABLE*

At the Table is a product of the Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) and the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA), which itself has its origins in a preliminary meeting on 14 October 1978, which proposed that the general aim of the Dialogue was ‘to establish pulpit and altar fellowship between the Churches’.

The Dialogue produced five major statements which were accepted by the two Churches at national level in the years that followed:

- *Agreed Statement on Baptism* (1984)
- *Agreed Statement on the Eucharist* (1985)
- *Agreed Statement on the Ministry* (1986)
- *Agreed Statement on the Church* (1988)
- *Agreed Statement on One Christ in Church and World* (1990)

Our two Churches officially received these five statements as ‘stages on the road to altar and pulpit fellowship’.¹⁷

After a pause for several years, the Dialogue recommenced in 1997. The following agreed statements were produced in this second phase of the Dialogue:

- *A Doxological Affirmation* (1997)
- *Revisions of A Doxological Affirmation* (2006 and 2009)
- *The Declaration of Mutual Recognition* (LCA 2009; UCA 2010)¹⁸
- *A Great Prayer of Thanksgiving with Commentary* (2013), as a guide for cooperating LCA-UCA congregations, and as an educational tool in both Churches

Along the way, the Dialogue also completed a number of documents designed specifically to help LCA and UCA congregations desiring to work in a cooperating arrangement with each other. These documents include:

- *Guidelines for Establishing Shared Ministry* (2009)
- *Rites of Installation and Induction* (2009)
- *Guidelines for the Oversight of Co-operating Congregations, LCA-UCA* (2012)

The Dialogue started fresh work on the Eucharist as the first stage on the way towards a Concordat. From 2011 the Dialogue gave its attention to this collaboration with good results, particularly in resourcing the cooperating congregations coming together to share a minister or pastor on the basis of *The Declaration of Mutual Recognition*. The situation has been reached where it is permissible for a minister of either denomination to administer Holy Communion to all members of cooperating congregations under certain conditions.

The Dialogue has drawn on the principles of ‘Receptive Ecumenism’, which urge partners to engage in both robust exchange and appreciative listening to perspectives other than their own. Through this we become open to new insights which have not been a focus of the tradition or doctrinal confession of

¹⁷ R K Williamson (ed), *Stages on the Way* (Melbourne: Joint Board of Christian Education, 1994), 174.

¹⁸ *Declaration of Mutual Recognition by the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia*, submitted by the LCA-UCA Dialogue, November 1999; adopted by the 9th Assembly of the UCA, July 2000; revised by the LCA-UCA Dialogue, November 2008; adopted by the LCA, October 2009; adopted by the UCA Assembly Standing Committee, 2010.

our respective Churches. In this way too, the Dialogue has been blessed to move beyond presumed, and even false, understandings of the other Church, and to a better understanding of our own. The practice of Receptive Ecumenism has taken us to a new place in the conversation, rewarding us with the refreshing discovery that our two Churches' positions on the Lord's Supper complement one another far more than previously thought. The statement on each of the key topics below reflects the consensus that has been reached; in other words, the statements indicate the place of arrival. Rather than regarding the characteristic emphases of each Church as barriers to communion, we now realise that they broaden our respective horizons and enrich our understandings.

A chronicle of Dialogue proceedings was prepared along the way, charting progress over the years from initial questions and misgivings about the other Church's teaching, to the far deeper appreciation of the mystery of the sacrament that embraces our respective positions, without compromise. A summary of this chronicle is available separately.

In preparing *At the Table*, the Dialogue used fresh terminology that avoids the shorthand expressions of each tradition which can cause unnecessary misunderstanding, because these often bear richer meanings unknown to the other Church. The work has been done with humility, in the knowledge that no human language will fully comprehend the mystery of the divine presence and gifts in the sacrament. An effect of this new language is that familiar expressions or emphases may not seem explicit enough to readers. We believe, however, that the work done by such familiar terminology is also done by the new language.

1.2 PREVIOUS STATEMENTS OF AGREEMENT ON THE EUCHARIST

The following review of the achievements of the Dialogue up to the point of *At the Table* will help to set it in context.

The most succinct statement of the Churches' agreement is found in the Declaration of Mutual Recognition (2010):

We believe that the body and blood of Christ are truly present in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. Thus, the bread and wine we eat and drink are a participation in the body and blood of Christ and join us with the whole creation in thanksgiving and praise to God our creator and redeemer. We believe that we receive the grace of divine forgiveness and new life offered in the sacrament and respond with the thankful offering of ourselves for God's service. (Section 3.7)

The Doxological Affirmation (2009) is a prayer which includes the following:

You have given us the Eucharist, in which Christ comes to us; Christ who died for our sin and lives for our salvation; Christ who gives himself to us as the bread of life to nourish us for his mission into the world.

More extensive statements are made in the 1985 Agreed Statement on the Eucharist, of which the following excerpts are the most pertinent as preamble to the affirmations in Part 2 of *At the Table*:

I. The Nature and Importance of the Eucharist

Both the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia hold the Lord's Supper to be a sacred act instituted by Jesus Christ himself (1 Cor. 11:23-25). They hold it to be a precious sacrament which sums up in a unique way the whole Gospel of the redemption through Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation he has won for all people. Through it the Lord of the church feeds his people on their way to the final inheritance of the kingdom...

II. Gift and Presence

There is agreement in great part among us as to the gift of the Lord's Supper. It is the gift of Christ's presence with his church in a unique way. In it Christ feeds us with the bread of life and gives us spiritual drink. In it Christ gives us himself to feed on in our hearts. In it we are partakers of his body and blood...

III. Reception of the Gift

While all receive the essential gift offered, only those who receive the gift in faith receive the blessing of the Sacrament. The Sacrament in this respect is just like the Gospel, which is to some a fragrance from life to life, while to others it is a fragrance from death to death (2 Cor. 2:15, 16). Nevertheless both churches would want to underline the objectivity of God's gift alongside the importance of faith in the recipient...

V. Liturgy

Very much that is common is found in the services of the Lutheran Church and the Uniting Church. As long as the dogma is preserved, variety in forms does not bother Lutherans. In respect of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, Lutherans would insist that the real heart of the Lord's Supper as gift and reception (words of institution, distribution, eating and drinking) be kept as the central and most important part of the service and that it not be concealed or obscured by elaborate ceremonial, however fine.

The Uniting Church also allows a variety of forms for Eucharistic worship, while stipulating that certain essential features must be included. (Basis of Union, Appendix 1 says: 'Christ's words of institution as found in the Gospels or Epistle, and the manual acts there commanded: the breaking of the bread, the taking of the cup, and participation in both kinds by ministers and people')...¹⁹

At the Table builds upon these earlier Dialogue statements, examining theological and liturgical matters in greater detail. Important resources have included:

- *The Basis of Union* (UCA)
- *Uniting in Worship 2* (UCA)
- relevant reports and theological statements in *Theology for Pilgrims* (UCA)
- The Lutheran confessions contained in the *Book of Concord*
- *Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions of the LCA*
- *LCA Church Rites*, approved liturgies and other worship resources
- other resources indicated in the footnotes.²⁰

¹⁹ This paragraph references the Appendices to the *Basis of Union*, which are not properly part of the *Basis* and so do not share in its authority in the UCA. The 'manual acts' are nevertheless taken up as an expectation in eucharistic celebration, in *Uniting in Worship 2* (see the Notes to the Service of the Lord's Day in *Uniting in Worship 2* [Sydney: The Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, 2005], p.140 note 6).

²⁰ Many of these Dialogue and other documents are available in the two Churches' online repositories.

PART 2: AT THE TABLE – AFFIRMATION

The purpose of the Dialogue's work toward At the Table was to expand on our Churches' common understanding of the nature of the Eucharist, with particular attention to agreement on the understanding of the nature of the mystery of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. This common understanding has already been expressed in our revised Declaration of Mutual Recognition (2010):

We believe that the body and blood of Christ are truly present in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. Thus, the bread and wine we eat and drink are a participation in the body and blood of Christ and join us with the whole creation in thanksgiving and praise to God our creator and redeemer. We believe that we receive the grace of divine forgiveness and new life offered in the sacrament and respond with the thankful offering of ourselves for God's service. (Paragraph 3.7)

The affirmations below treat the principal concerns – the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the effect of that presence and its honouring by communicants. Several liturgical matters important for testing our Churches' developing recognition of an understanding of Christ's presence in the Eucharist that we hold in common are then considered. It was the recognition of notable differences in tradition and practice which gave rise to some of the particular themes treated here.

2.1 DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: ANAMNESIS

WHAT WE HOLD IN COMMON

Just as it is Christ, the risen and exalted Lord, who speaks to us whenever the gospel is proclaimed in words, so also in the sacrament of the Eucharist Christ continues to give the church his crucified and risen body, as he did to the disciples on the evening when he first instituted this holy meal. This is a making-present-again of Christ in the Eucharist, designated by the Greek anamnesis in liturgical studies. The LCA and UCA agree that Jesus' eucharistic words, 'Do this in remembrance of me', do not mean that the Lord's Supper is simply a memorial meal, an opportunity to call to mind Christ and his sacrificial death for us on the cross. Rather, the Eucharist makes the crucified and risen Christ present to us, uniting us with him here and now in a way that transcends everything that we otherwise call remembrance. The centuries between Christ's last supper with his disciples and the church's celebration of the Eucharist in our day disappear and the time interval is bridged. This is accomplished by the Spirit working through the sacramental word, the effective promise of Christ, to make Christ present in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper.

2.2 THIS IS MY BODY, THIS IS MY BLOOD: THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST

WHAT WE HOLD IN COMMON

Both Churches affirm the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and have previously agreed that the Lord's Supper is 'the gift of Christ's presence with his church in a unique way';³⁵ Christ 'comes to us' in the Eucharist, and 'gives himself to us as the bread of life to nourish us for his mission into the world'.³⁶

We jointly affirm the presence of Christ in the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist; Lutherans have traditionally called this the 'real presence' of Christ in the Eucharist. Neither Church adheres to a

³⁵ *Agreed Statement on The Eucharist*, section II.

³⁶ *A Doxological Affirmation*.

'how' of the realisation of Christ's presence, or seeks to pinpoint a particular liturgical moment at which Christ is held to 'become' present. We jointly affirm simply that Christ is present for us in this holy meal, as he has promised.

We jointly affirm that the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is a dynamic and effective presence in which we encounter Christ, specifically as the Christ who is present for us with all his benefits.

We jointly affirm that the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is distinct from other ways in which he is present. Jesus gives us his body and blood to eat and drink in the tangible elements of bread and wine, with the promise that whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup receives Christ himself.

We jointly affirm that Christ is present and active in the eucharistic liturgy with its range of liturgical elements which variously acknowledge and teach how it is that God approaches us with reconciling grace in this celebration.

LCA EMPHASES

The LCA emphasises that in the Lord's Supper Christ is present in his body and blood 'for you', for the forgiveness of sins, i.e. personally. Since Christ forgives sin through this sacrament, it is received as gospel by all who recognise they are undeserving of attendance at the table. In order to stress the gospel character of the Eucharist, LCA pastors and assistants, when they distribute the sacrament, will usually say the words: 'This is the body of Christ, given for you; this is the blood of Christ, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins'.

This is not meant to be a denial of the corporate and communal character of the Lord's Supper (the 'for you' in Matthew 26:27 and Luke 22:19f is plural), but is intended only to highlight its personal dimension. The LCA also affirms that the Eucharist feeds God's people for life and service in church and world. There is an intimate connection between the sacramental body and the ecclesial body as the former nourishes the latter. So, when the LCA distinguishes between the particular presence of Christ in the consecrated bread and wine and his general presence in his body, the church, it wants to stress the priority of the sacramental body as the source of life and forgiveness and not to separate them, for they belong together and are one in Christ.

UCA EMPHASES

The UCA is concerned to preserve recognition of the communal telos (end, goal) of the gift of Christ in the Eucharist. The UCA affirms that Christ signs and seals his continuing presence in the Eucharist. Like every presence of Christ, this is a dynamic, effective, influential presence. It extends beyond any particular moment or location in the liturgical movement, from communal thanksgiving to consumption of the elements. The Christ who promises in the words of institution is the Christ who is received in our consumption of the elements, and is the Christ whose body is realised in the reconciliation of his disciples to each other. This reconciled body is the sign, the concreteness, of our reconciliation to God.

Our 'participation', 'sharing' or 'communion' (Greek: *koinonia*; 1 Corinthians 10:16) in Christ's body and blood by consuming the bread and wine is both a conforming to the humanity of Christ and a conjoining to the body of Christ. The Spirit-enabled conforming of the individual to Christ and the conjoining into Christ's one body-community are, together, the shape of the divine forgiveness and new life graciously given in the sacrament as a foretaste of God's coming kingdom.

The UCA recognises that its understanding of the intent of the Eucharist has shifted to its present communal orientation from more individualistic understandings in the Uniting Churches."

2.3 FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS: RECONCILIATION AND MISSION

WHAT WE HOLD IN COMMON

We agree that both personal forgiveness and relational aspects of reconciliation are important for understanding the sacrament. We agree that the Eucharist is a communal action by which individual believers are gathered as the body of Christ to be sustained by the body of Christ. As members of the body of Christ, formed by God through their participation in the sacrament, believers are forgiven and reconciled to God, others, and the world. Once-for-all divine forgiveness of sin and cosmic reconciliation in Christ are made personal and communal now in the Eucharist as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. This forgiveness and reconciliation is not for individuals, or the church only, but is offered for the whole world, prompting us to mission and opening us to a vision and hope of the reconciliation of all creation with God.

LCA EMPHASIS

The Eucharist is a communal sacrament which profoundly personalises the gift of forgiveness as believers receive Christ's body and blood on their own lips and in their own mouths, removing all doubt that 'this truly means me'. In traditional Lutheran language the Eucharist thus provides certain comfort for troubled consciences through the forgiveness of sins. The emphasis on forgiveness 'for me' (pro me) is pastoral in intent; it confirms for individuals that they are released from sin and guilt and freed to live for God and others. Forgiveness and salvation are never purely private matters between an individual and God alone, but are given personally to empower forgiveness of, and reconciliation with, others.

UCA EMPHASIS

By viewing the Eucharist as a sacrament of reconciliation, the UCA emphasises that divine forgiveness transforms the whole community and, just so, works at an individual level. The body of Christ makes the body of Christ. Individual bodies are formed into the body which is the church. The scope of the reconciliation indicated and effected in the Eucharist embraces the individual, the communal, the cosmic and the eschatological dimensions of God's work. These dimensions are all interconnected: the communal points to the individual in reconciliation, to each other and to God; the being-reconciled community is pointed to the wider world, to take its share in God's reconciling mission in the light of eschatological call and promise.³⁷

2.4 TAKE AND EAT, TAKE AND DRINK: FITTING PARTICIPATION

WHAT WE HOLD IN COMMON

The Dialogue reflected on how each Church admits people to the Eucharist, and the related matter of 'worthy reception', drawing from 1 Corinthians 11:27: 'Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord.' The Dialogue rejoices that we are in substantial agreement about 'worthy reception' expressed in this agreement as 'fitting participation'. In particular, we agree that the sacrament presupposes the baptism of those attending, and faith in the words and promises of Christ regarding the sacrament. This

³⁷ Cf. *The Basis of Union*, paragraph 8.

includes recognition of the body and blood of Christ in the consecrated gifts, recognition of the body of Christ in the gathered congregation, and the intention to live in conformity with the gifts received. We agree that candidates for baptism and confirmation should be appropriately prepared to receive the sacrament 'in a fitting manner', and that there should be ongoing teaching in regard to the sacrament. We also agree that participation in the liturgy itself serves to prepare for fitting participation through, e.g., the hearing of the gospel, the confession of sins and declaration of forgiveness in the name of Christ, the sharing of the peace, the recollection of Christ's saving death and resurrection, and our Lord's words instituting the sacrament and declaring its benefits. Through the liturgy, God refreshes our faith in what God gives in the sacrament.

LCA EMPHASIS

LCA pastoral guidelines on responsible communion practice affirm that what everyone receives who eats the bread and drinks from the cup is the body and blood of Christ, regardless of personal piety '...[but] the benefits of the sacrament – forgiveness, life, and salvation – are received only by penitent believers who accept Christ's words and trust his promises expressed in the words of institution.'³⁸

The LCA has taken careful note of 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11: 27-35 in the matter of 'fitting participation'. Sharing the bread-body of Christ and the cup-blood of Christ unifies the many members of the one body. There is a connection between the sacramental body and the ecclesial body. In particular, the LCA has included with its understanding of 'fitting participation' a clear confession that the Lord's body and blood are received 'in, with and under' the bread and wine of the sacrament. Luther's Small Catechism also directs the matter toward faith in the personal reception of forgiveness, responding this way to the question, 'Who then receives this sacrament worthily?'

Fasting and bodily preparation are a good and external discipline, but that person is truly worthy and well prepared who believes these words: 'for you' and 'for the forgiveness of sins'. On the other hand, whoever does not believe these words, or doubts them, is unworthy and unprepared, for the words 'for you' require truly believing hearts.

LCA teaching on responsible communion practice has moved beyond historic general guidelines that reserved Lutheran altars for confirmed Lutherans. Pastoral guidelines formulated by the LCA in recent years have resolved challenges posed by past tradition. While it is desirable that all who commune together at the table share a common understanding of church fellowship and teaching about the Eucharist, LCA pastoral guidelines state that 'we have no clear direction from Scripture that this is always an essential qualification for attendance at the Lord's Table.'³⁹

UCA EMPHASIS

The 'words of invitation' in the liturgy state who may come to the table. The UCA holds that through the Lord's Supper '... the risen Lord feeds his baptised people on their way to the final inheritance of the Kingdom',⁴⁰ and so recognises that the table is for all the baptised, but respects that members of other Churches may not be able to receive communion in the Uniting Church due to their own teachings.⁴¹

³⁸ Paragraph 1 of 'Some pastoral guidelines for responsible communion practice', *Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions of the LCA Volume 2E, The Sacraments*, 1990 (Edited 2001).

³⁹ Paragraph 11 of 'Some pastoral guidelines for responsible communion practice'.

⁴⁰ *Basis of Union*, paragraph 8.

⁴¹ 'Doc.bytes: Discussion starters offered by the National Working Group on Doctrine, Worksheet 8: The Lord's Supper' (Sydney: Uniting Church in Australia-National Assembly, 2009).

The UCA has a particular focus on the discernment of the body of Christ in and as the community constituted through the Risen One who was rejected and put to death on a cross. There is an expectation that ministers and leaders prepare candidates for Baptism and Confirmation to receive the sacrament and offer ongoing teaching concerning the sacrament. In terms of the UCA's expectation doctrinally of those who receive, this is more implicit than explicit, and is captured in the formal options in *Uniting in Worship 2* for words to be offered by the communion server, 'The body/blood of Christ, given for you', with the communicant's response, an affirmative 'Amen'.⁴² The UCA regards the whole liturgy as the Eucharist and considers that the journey of the liturgy itself prepares people to 'eat and drink in a worthy manner' through hearing the word, confession, declaration of forgiveness, and the sharing of the peace. The UCA maintains, with the World Council of Churches' 1982 document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, that the Eucharist is not only '... a sign but a means of grace.'⁴³ At core, fitting participation in the Eucharist is dependent on the grace of God poured out in Christ who is the host at the meal.

2.5 CHILDREN AT THE TABLE

We jointly affirm that baptised children are members of the church and participate in its life and worship, including the Eucharist.

Baptism and the Eucharist are closely connected. These sacraments are gifts from the Lord 'for the life and nourishment of Christ's followers' (John 3:5; 6:53-58).⁴⁴ The faithful are strengthened and nourished in the Eucharist and are called to return daily to their baptism in repentant faith. In this way the sacraments sustain the faithful 'from cradle to dying breath'.⁴⁵

With regard to the appropriate age for admitting children to the Eucharist, the UCA affirms that 'there is no minimum age for participation that can be justified theologically. ... Part of the nurturing ministry of the Church is to ensure that children are welcomed and prepared for participation. Pastoral sensitivity to the corporate and individual issues involved will suggest an appropriate age in each case and appropriate guidance generally.'⁴⁶ Similarly, after the LCA's Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations conducted an extensive study of the theology, history, and pastoral benefits of communing children, the LCA College of Bishops affirmed the study's conclusion that the Church can offer to families 'the preparation and admission of children to communion at the earliest possible age, as part of the Church's responsibility to children, to strengthen their life in Christ, and in his body, the church.'⁴⁷

Both Churches uphold the connection between communion and life-long catechesis and the need to ensure children admitted to communion are being appropriately catechised. We recognise as unhelpful the extremes of claiming that God's grace can come only to those who understand it; or claiming that preparation and education are unnecessary. Rather, children and adults enter into the drama of the Eucharist, where meaning is conveyed through words and actions. Understanding is a complex process: theologically 'to understand is to recognise signs pointing to and affirming mystery'.⁴⁸ 'Children can learn the gospel fundamentals at their level by participation in this celebration; the experience of belonging can deepen faith and confirm their place as members; and the

⁴² Doc.bytes: ... Worksheet 8', 182.

⁴³ R Bos and G Thompson, *Theology for Pilgrims: selected theological documents of the Uniting Church in Australia* (Sydney: Uniting Church Press, 2008), 'Response to *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* by the Uniting Church in Australia', 217.

⁴⁴ 'Infant communion: a reappraisal', 2012, *Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions of the LCA*, vol. 3. See also Bos and Thompson, 483.

⁴⁵ 'Infant communion: a reappraisal'.

⁴⁶ Bos and Thompson, 501.

⁴⁷ See 'Infant communion: a reappraisal'.

⁴⁸ Bos and Thompson, 491-492.

traditional Christian education programs can build on what is learned experientially.⁴⁹ Confirmation is an important step in formation in both Churches, but is not considered a rite of admission to the Eucharist.

PART 3: LITURGICAL LEARNINGS

Our understanding of the Eucharist takes particular liturgical form, and part of the earlier work of the Dialogue was to compose a Great Prayer of Thanksgiving with Commentary for use in cooperating congregations and as an expression of our agreement.

While there is much in common in the accepted liturgies of the LCA and UCA, we have found it important to explore differences in emphasis and in the elements regarded as ‘essential’ in our respective Churches. The following statements of agreement relate to those liturgical emphases in one tradition which most caught the attention of members from the other: the explicit anamnesis and the prayer for the Holy Spirit within the Great Prayer (the Epiclesis), the practice of breaking bread within the context of the celebration (the Fraction), and the practice of taking the Lord’s Supper to congregational members not able to attend public worship. Most of these liturgical elements were more commonly present, or emphasised, in UCA liturgies than in LCA practice, but both Churches have been enriched with fresh liturgical insights from one another in our wrestling with these.

3.1 ANAMNESIS

While anamnesis (literally ‘remembrance’, from the words of Christ in Luke 22:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:24-25) refers to the general ‘concept’ of a continuing presence of Christ to the church (section 2.1, above), it also denotes a particular liturgical element in the eucharistic prayer which is common in UCA liturgies and present in some LCA orders of service.

The UCA’s perspective on anamnesis as the action of the liturgy embraces a high view of remembering that involves the whole sweep of Christ’s saving activity, past, present and future. This is given expression in *Uniting in Worship 2*, which reminds us that, in the Eucharist, ‘we are “re-membered” in Christ, “rejoined” to him as he is present with us in the action of this meal. We are “re-called” to the presence of Christ in our midst. This meal anticipates and actualises the reign of Christ....’⁵⁰

The LCA affirms the understanding of the UCA. In the LCA’s *The Service – Alternative Form*, there is an example of a prayer in which ‘anamnesis’ is made explicit.⁵¹ The second half of this prayer has been included in *A Great Prayer of Thanksgiving with Commentary* produced by the Dialogue (2013,6): ‘We thank and praise you for keeping your promise to the people of old and sending your Son Jesus Christ, whose life, death and resurrection for our salvation we remember as he comes to us in this holy meal.’

3.2 THE EPICLESIS

The LCA and the UCA agree that it is in and through the Spirit that Christ is present in the sacrament, according to his word, forgiving us our sins, conforming us to his body, and empowering us for service. There should be no attempt to explain the mystery of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, or to identify consecration with a particular moment or action within the eucharistic liturgy. It is enough to say that

⁴⁹ Bos and Thompson, 492.

⁵⁰ *Uniting in Worship 2* (Sydney: The Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, 2005), 136.

⁵¹ *Lutheran Hymnal with Supplement*, authorised by the Lutheran Church of Australia (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1989), 72.

Christ is present in the consecrated elements of bread and wine, according to his promise, in the power of the Spirit. A suitable Epiclesis (prayer for the Holy Spirit) gives expression to these things. For the UCA's part, the incorporation of an Epiclesis into the Great Prayer reflects its appreciation of important shifts in Western theology towards a recovery of more deeply trinitarian expressions and experiences of faith, including in the liturgy. The Epiclesis, among other things, is held to contribute to a fuller doxology. This is, in part, because it makes explicit what is implicit in any invocation or 'remembrancing' of Christ; namely, that, in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ is present, reconciling us with God.

In the LCA, when it is included, the Epiclesis is expressed as a prayer over the people for a faithful and fruitful reception of Christ's body and blood, as distinct from a prayer over the elements. The LCA is concerned that the Epiclesis not overshadow the words of institution. The LCA agrees that the prayer emphasises that what happens in the sacrament is not created by us, or dependent on our faith or our words, but is dependent solely on Christ and his words in and through the Spirit.

3.3 THE FRACTION

The early church used the words 'the breaking of bread' (Latin: *fractio panis*) to refer to the Eucharist itself (Luke 24:35; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 27:35; 1 Corinthians 10:16; see also the accounts of the feeding of the 5000 [Matthew 14:19] and the 4000 [15:36]).

The Fraction has been one of the items that has traditionally distinguished Reformed from Lutheran celebrations of the Eucharist. In preparation for the distribution, the presider takes the bread (a single loaf, or a large wafer) and breaks it in full view of the congregation with the words, 'The bread we break is a sharing in the body of Christ'. Then the cup is raised, with the words, 'The cup we take is a sharing in the blood of Christ' (1 Corinthians 10:16). Then the bread and the cup are extended towards the people with the words, 'The gifts of God for the people of God' (A Great Prayer of Thanksgiving, p.9). Our two Churches agree that the commands to take and eat the bread and to drink the wine, and the promise associated with them, are essential to the Lord's Supper.

Breaking the bread in the sight of the people evokes the image of Christ's body being broken for us and for our salvation – handed over to suffer and die in lonely abandonment. The word 'broken' speaks of Christ being broken in mind, body and spirit, in total solidarity with his broken and needy church and a broken and hungry world.

As the one loaf is broken into many parts and distributed amongst the many so that they participate in the one body, a graphic image is given of Christ's self-giving to restore a broken people, reconciling their broken relationships with God and each other, drawing them into communion, and conforming them into the one body of Christ. Broken recipients are called to identify with the brokenness of the world, to hear and respond to the cry of the needy, and thereby to minister to Christ himself (Matthew 25:40).

The loaf made of wheat from the field also evokes the image of the incarnation: God entering into the materiality of our world, the Word become flesh, present in the bread, offered for our sakes, shared out amongst us, in order that we might receive life. In the eating and drinking he lives in us and we live in him (John 6:56-58).

The Fraction also has eschatological overtones. The broken pieces of bread well represent all people from the ends of the earth who are ultimately gathered and unified to become the one body of Christ, in communion with him, with each other, and with all creation.

Dialogue members concur that the Fraction enriches the Eucharist for purposes of proclamation and teaching.

The Fraction is one of the three manual acts that the UCA regards as essential for a full diet of the eucharistic liturgy – but not as essential for a valid Eucharist. (The other manual acts are the taking of the cup, and participation in both kinds by minister and people).

While the Fraction is not mandated in the LCA, it is certainly permitted and the promotion of the Fraction in the LCA could well lead to a broader and deeper appreciation of the Eucharist within the LCA.

3.4 LAY DISTRIBUTION BEYOND THE GATHERED CONGREGATION

Both the UCA and the LCA have rites for distribution of the sacramental elements from the altar or table to those unable to attend worship – for the LCA, ‘Lay Distribution to the Housebound,’⁵² and for the UCA, ‘Communion beyond the Gathered Congregation.’⁵³ Recipients typically include communicants in the normal pastoral care of the congregation who are housebound due to age or hospitalised due to illness. Distribution from the altar or table is carried out by a prepared and authorised lay person taking the elements consecrated in the congregation’s communion service to those unable to attend, using the rite provided. Both the UCA and LCA do this with an understanding that the practice extends the one celebration of the sacrament beyond the church doors to those served this way. The rites for distribution beyond the gathered congregation do not include consecration of the elements but recall the nature of the sacrament, its source in the worship service of the congregation, and the inclusion of the person being served in it.

Our Churches agree with and affirm each other’s practice. The UCA rite includes these elements: greeting, prayer (which may include invocation and adoration of God and the confession of sin), Bible reading, reflection (which may include a brief summary of the sermon), prayers of the people (intercessory prayers which may conclude with the Collect of the day and/or the Lord’s Prayer), reception of communion, the peace, prayer after communion, and blessing. The LCA rite includes these elements: the peace, announcement of source, invocation, confession of sins and declaration of grace, prayer of the day, reading, reminder of words of institution, Lord’s Prayer, distribution, thanksgiving, and blessing – with summary of sermon, Lamb of God, Song of Simeon and more extensive prayers as optional.

Our Churches agree that this practice does not depend on a theory of perduration or imply ‘reservation’ of the elements. It is based simply on pastoral need and a congregation’s single celebration of the Lord’s Supper in the usual way, albeit geographically extended.

While both our Churches also have the practice of serving those unable to attend by a separate communion service conducted by a minister in the home or hospital, we agree that there is great pastoral benefit when those unable to attend are served by lay distribution beyond the gathered congregation. It includes them in the congregation’s own celebration of the sacrament, and hence in the unity in Christ which the sacrament enacts. It brings them to the heart and mind of the congregation when they are named as the lay distributor is given the elements. It alerts them to their inclusion in the congregation and extends the community of care. Finally, it widens the community of care by the inclusion of the lay people who distribute the sacrament this way. We rejoice that such rich benefits are available in each of our Churches.

⁵² *Rites and Resources for Pastoral Care* (Adelaide: Openbook Publishers, 1998), 45.

⁵³ *Uniting in Worship 2*, 226.

CONCLUSION

We rejoice that we have discovered so much agreement around our theology and practice of the Eucharist. Indeed, we are delighted that this agreement extends to the point that we see no substantial matters in regard to the Eucharist itself which would prevent table fellowship.

We recognise that the celebration of the Eucharist is a pastoral and liturgical act in a gathered community with its ordained minister. A Concordat between our Churches for 'intentional sharing in pastoral ministry and in mission' and 'for full communion, so that members from either denomination may share in Holy Communion in each other's Churches' therefore involves study and agreement in regard to the ordering of ministry, including the matter of the ordination of women – not currently permitted in the LCA, although a matter of continuing debate and exploration within it.

We gratefully receive the gift of dialogue within the principles of Receptive Ecumenism, which have challenged us to share openly and listen intently. Through this, we have seen and received new things and been encouraged into deeper understanding and richer liturgical practice.

We give thanks for the stirring of the Spirit, who has urged on many theologians, ministers, pastors and laypeople to labour in patient listening and careful scholarship towards these affirmations. We encourage our Churches to receive this document in such ways that we might be strengthened and enabled further for our part in God's mission in the world.