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*Paul’s goal
is to arrive in
heaven and
be with Christ*
”

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Philippians 3: Pressing on toward the Goal



From the Bishop
Robert Bartholomaeus

Goals in life are very important. Goals give you direction. Goals help you identify what’s important to you. Goals help you to define what you truly think life is about. Goals also help you to prioritize things.

To achieve anything in this life you must have a goal and then plan. If you want to travel somewhere on a holiday, you can’t get up one morning and just set out. (Well, you can but you probably won’t get there.) If you want to holiday in Queensland you need to think beforehand and plan on how you are going to arrive there. Will it be by plane or by car. If by plane I need to book the tickets. If by car I need to ensure the car is road worthy and I have sufficient funds to buy the fuel I need to get there and back.

In Philippians 3 Paul introduces us to the goal of his life. His goal is to arrive in heaven and be with Christ. He did not decide this goal or achieve this goal. It was given to him by Christ himself who intervened in his life on the

road to Damascus and changed the direction of his life forever. Paul now wants to stay focused on this goal and not get distracted along the way. He says in verse 20, “our citizenship is in heaven”, implying that this is where his focus is, not on “earthly things” as he says in verse 19.

Many in his day were focused on earthly achievements. They included religious rituals; which tribe or family you belonged to; how well you followed cultural habits and rules. All of these were very important to the people of his day.

We too find some of these earthly things important. The achievements of our family; which clubs and organizations we belong to; sporting achieve-

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“
*Our citizenship
is in heaven*
”

LCA NSW and ACT District is *Walking together* IN MISSION by:



- Supporting congregations and ministries in mission and ministry
- Supporting congregations in transition
- Developing and supporting alternative models for ministry
- Planting and renewing congregations
- Developing and supporting networking and connections between congregations and ministries
- Developing and supporting leadership – through the Bishop leading leadership teams

DISTRICT NEWS

For your prayer
and care

Calls

- Pastor Paul Hannola (Tuggeranong) has declined the call to Cleve SA. Pastor Paul has now been called to Nundah, Qld.
- Pastor Will Frost (interim pastor at Albury) has been called to Albury.

Anniversaries

- Our Saviour Springwood celebrated its 40th Anniversary on 17 September.
- St Paul's Lutheran Kindergarten at St Marys celebrated its 50th Anniversary on 4 November.

Retirement

- Pastor Peter Fuhlbohm has concluded his ministry at Lavington upon his retirement in December.

Deaths

- Dawn Weiss, widow of Pr Noel Weiss, died on 11 September 2023.
- Pastor Peter Ravikumar died on 7 November 2023. Pastor Peter served Springwood and St Marys for 12 months.

Continued from previous page

ments for ourselves and for our team; the house we own and invest in; where we live. But these are all earthly things.

Paul says earlier in vs 8 these earthy goals and achievements pale in comparison with the new goal he has been given by Christ. In fact, he considers them all dung in comparison with the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ and being found in him. He says he wants to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering and becoming like him in his death. Nothing else matters.

Paul is concerned that followers of Christ will be distracted by earthly things and goals. He encourages us in Philippians 3 to be focused on where we are heading so we don't get distracted along the way.

“

*Keep on pressing
toward our heavenly
destination,
the only goal
which really counts*

”

So let's take to heart the encouragement of St Paul and keep on pressing toward our heavenly destination, the only goal which really counts.

Pastor Robert Bartholomaeus
NSW and ACT Bishop



Pr John Borchert installed at Walla Walla

Having served in the NSW District for nearly 28 years, many people already know who I am, especially those in the Riverina Region. However, prior to coming to NSW, my ministry began in the Loxton, South Australia, joining a team of three pastors serving eight congregations, a school and a nursing home. In this district, I have served the Burrumbuttock Parish for 7 years and St. Paul's College for 20 years as the school pastor.

Charmaine and I have been married for 36 years and we are blessed with four daughters, wonderful sons-in-law, and one grandson. I am also very blest to have the strong support of Charmaine in all that I do in ministry, and I support her in her career as principal of a school for children with special needs.

My hobbies and special interests involve woodworking, particularly using recycled hardwoods and imagining what a piece of timber can become as a furniture item. Holidays are often spent in areas that involve hiking and water for kayaking. These holidays are special times as usually they are spent with all the family creating many shared memories and experiences. Locally, I enjoy walking the two Labrador dogs each day and wandering through the Walla Walla Gum Swamp Reserve.

Over the years at St. Paul's College, I have participated in four ALWS supported student service-learning tours to Indonesia and Cambodia. Seeing first hand, the difference ALWS work does in their supported countries has grown in me a strong passion for their projects (Just a little plug here – we are nearing Christmas and this is an opportunity to 'see your love grow' with Gifts of Grace).

Beginning ministry as pastor to the Walla Walla Lutheran Parish has been a real blessing with the wonderful love and support of the faith community. I look forward to seeing how the work of God continues to unfold as we walk together in mission, discerning what that means and looks like in this context.



Pr John and Charmaine Borchert

Pastor John Borchert

We have joy, we have fun, we have seasons in the Son!

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens" Ecclesiastes 3:1

We Lutherans are good at observing seasons – seasons of the year (whether that's 2, 4 or 6, depending on where you live) and seasons of the liturgical calendar. And why not! It brings a great richness to our worship, a rhythm to our life and invites us into meaningful intimacy and concord with our Creator – the one whom we worship.

The Worship Committee at Holy Cross Belconnen have been working hard on leading our people into a couple of meaningful seasons of worship through the latter part of 2023.

Season of Creation

With many Christian Churches, we observed a 'Season of Creation' through September – inviting the solidarity of our friends and contacts as we celebrated, lamented, repented, reflected and considered our relationship with planet Earth and its environment – our temporal home.

Though not aligned with official Year A Season of Creation resources, we focussed on themes of 'Ocean', 'Flora and Fauna', 'Storm', 'Cosmos', and wrapped up with a reflection on St Francis of Assisi and our domestic animals. Using sensory stimuli (sights of storm & cosmos, timelapse videos, eucalypt & salt smells, ocean soundscapes, the touch of bare feet and the cool of ice) and a variety of creative ways of engaging with these aspects of creation, we engaged the ecological crisis facing humanity and our home, and renewed our faith in, and faith-filled stewardship response to, our loving Creator.

The serendipitous promulgation of 'Caring for God's Creation' (prepared by the LCA NZ's 'Commission on Social and Bioethical Questions' and adopted by the General Church Board) also challenged us into practical actions, and we undertook a community park clean-up to bring love to life.

Season of Advent – Women in the Christmas Story

Have you noticed that Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year? We have

prioritised our evening Christmas Eve service, not expecting many of our people to come to both a Sunday morning AND Sunday evening service. But we value the 4 Sundays of preparation through the Advent Season. What to do? What to do?

Well, just this once we have decided to tweak the liturgical calendar and begin our Advent Season a week early – 26th November (the Sabbath being made for humans and humans for the Sabbath... and all that!)

And, to assist our preparations for the incarnation of our Saviour, we will be focussing on Women in the Christmas Story – specifically Eve, Elizabeth, Mary and Anna. We are excited to hear their stories again. The reason for the inclusion of some is obvious. Others not so immediately obvious, perhaps. And we are using a combination of artwork exploration and dialogue sermon style to bring the story and contribution of these women to life as we prepare for the celebration of the birth of Christ.

You can join us on our livestream if you want to know more, (search 'Holy Cross Belconnen' on Youtube). We are happy to share resources with other congregations seeking to take a similar focus this year or next. (Pr Darren's email below).

May the ebb and flow of our liturgical seasons bring vitality and creativity to your worship.

May the season of Christmas renew your love and appreciation of Immanuel – God with us.

May your life, worship and faith be "seasoned" with God's grace.

Pastor Darren Jaensch
Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Belconnen ACT
email darren.jaensch@lca.org.au



Season of Creation display at Belconnen



Mary and Eve, by Sr. Grace Remington, crayon and pencil, 2005. Used by permission.



LCA NSW and ACT District
Pastors' Conference
6-8 March 2024 - Wagga Wagga
District Convention of Synod
8-10 March 2024

Lutheran Primary School - Tamar Dr Wagga Wagga

Reports, Proposals, and Nominations due to office.nsw@lca.org.au
by 15 January 2024 for inclusion in the Book of Reports.

Pastors, delegates and visitors, please register online
at www.nswact.lca.org.au by 18 February 2024.

Enquiries to District Office phone 02 8660 1200 email admin.nsw@lca.org.au



PRAYER GATHERING



Intercessors gathering to praise, pray, reflect, and repent

3-5 NOVEMBER 2023

“Do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!” Isaiah 43:18-19

On November 3-5, we tried something new. We held our first ever District Prayer Gathering.

We know prayer is important, but too often it seems to be just something we do before we get into the real business of the church. Yet for Jesus, prayer is the first order of business. In Luke 10:2, Jesus says, “The harvest is great ... So pray.” (NLT).

Author and pastor Thom Rainer assessed hundreds of congregations that avoided death. He wanted to know the common denominators in revived churches. One of the seven key findings is ‘committing to powerful prayer’. He concludes the chapter by saying,

“We have seen again and again in our anatomy of revitalized churches that every sustained church revitalization is undergirded by a powerful movement of prayer. Every. Single. One. It’s just that important.”

This District wants to see revitalisation in our churches. We are heeding these words and committing to powerful prayer. During the October 2022 District Synod, it was announced that I would step down from a previous District role to focus on cultivating prayer in our District. One aspect of this has been regularly sharing prayer points (including from our District Prayer Calendar) with congregations and intercessors across our District.

The other aspect of this role has been planning our first ever District Prayer Gathering. With thanks from Pastor Paul Hannola, Cheryl Turek and Veronica Schwedes, we organised a gathering of 21 people for a time of praise, prayer, reflection and repentance. The District Church Council generously covered the costs for the weekend.

The prayer time focussed on praying for our bishops (district and national), as well as small groups praying specifically for every congregation and ministry in our District

Walking together IN MISSION a Bible Study series



Philippians 3: Pressing on towards the Goal

Join with members of the LCA NSW and ACT District in the next online Bible study led by Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus
Wednesday 13 December, 7.30pm
on Zoom

To register, please email office.nsw@lca.org.au

(making use of prayer points from the past 12 months plus others received before the event). We also included prayerers for the Lutheran Church in New Zealand (as our Bishop currently has an oversight role) and were blessed to have a participant from NZ join us.



Pr Darren Kupke led the Prayer Gathering

Throughout the weekend, time was invested in reflecting and listening to the Holy Spirit. Repentance included a time of individual and corporate confession and forgiveness for sins of the past, followed by God’s assurance of forgiveness in Holy Communion. There were also times of teaching, helping us experience various aspects of intercessory prayer (such as spiritual warfare, watchman prayer, praying over territories, and Christian meditation), as well as down time.

At the end of the weekend, one participant shared how they had seen a vision for this 3.5 years ago, and has been praying for this to happen ever since. She was overjoyed to see it come to fruition, and this joy overflowed to all present. We also had a team of people from across the LCA NZ praying for the weekend. We look forward to hearing of similar events occurring across our church in the near future.

Until then, we are planning for a *Time of Prayer* on Friday afternoon before the March 2024 Synod in Wagga Wagga, and another Prayer Gathering later in 2024. If you would like to join our email or WhatsApp District Intercessors Group or have suggestions for how we can encourage you to cultivate prayer for our District, please get in touch with me, darren.kupke@lca.org.au or 0458 774 757.

Thank you for your prayers for our District.

Pastor Darren Kupke,
a Prayer Cultivator for the NSW and ACT District



Participants at the District Prayer Gathering

NSW and ACT District provides oversight for the Lutheran Church of New Zealand

Māori have a whakataukī (a proverb) – *Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourouka ora ai te iwi*, which translates to, 'with your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive'. This whakataukī encapsulates the notion that while working in isolation might result in survival, working together can take people beyond survival and onto prosperity. It is with this expectation that the Lutheran Church of NZ and the NSW and ACT district are working together.

The Lutheran Church of New Zealand (LCNZ) at its last synod in June was unable to elect a bishop. The LCA College of Bishops asked that the NSW and ACT District provide oversight for the Lutheran Church of New Zealand till the next synod in two years' time.

Leaders from the NSW District Church Council and the LCNZ Council of Synod met twice and agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding of how this is to work and approved this arrangement on the 26th of August this year.

Essentially the MOU states that the NSW and ACT bishop will make a two-week visiting tour of all New Zealand churches twice a year, and provide all other oversight by email, phone calls and internet meetings from NSW. The two visiting tours will coincide with the New Zealand Church Workers Conferences, and with two of the Council of Synod meetings. The LCNZ assistant bishop meanwhile will cover all the events that pop up from time to time such as special anniversary events, installation of pastors, and intervention pastoral care.

To begin the fulfillment of his obligations of oversight, Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus commenced a trip on September 8, visiting the fourteen New Zealand churches, meeting with pastors and leaders. His wife Jenny accompanied him.

He attended the Church Worker Conference in Palmerston North and it was a most encouraging event as people shared around their learnings of mission and ministry.

Bishop Robert says he has seen a number of things on his tour which will be learnings for the NSW and the ACT district, and he has been



Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus, NZ Bishop Emeritus Mark Whitfield, and pastors at the Church Workers Conference in New Zealand.

able to share experiences from the NSW and ACT district with a number of New Zealand leaders. He returned to Sydney on September 22.

The NSW Office staff Russell Veerhuis and Kaye Simpfendorfer assisted locally in NSW on a number of matters while he was away.

On October 4 Debbie Venz took up the new LCNZ Administrator role, located in Christchurch. All the administration staff meet together weekly by Zoom. They work together to provide mutual support for each other and for the LCNZ and NSW and ACT Districts.

May God continue to bless our two Districts as we share our "food baskets" - the gifts and capacities with which God has blessed each District, so that the Gospel may flourish and the people who receive it may thrive. May this partnership of love and support in ministry be a mutual blessing.

*Whakapaingia te Atua e whakamine nei i a tātou.
Whakamoemitiā te Atua kua kotahi nei tātou.
Blessed be God who calls us together.
Praise to God who makes us one people.*

Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus, NSW and ACT District and Bishop Emeritus Mark Whitfield, LCNZ District

St Marys Kindergarten celebrates 50 years

St Pauls Lutheran Church, St Marys celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the St Marys Kindy on 4th November 2023.

Close to 100 people were in attendance for a great afternoon of celebration, reflection and catching up of 50 years of memories of the Kindergarten which has now had up to 3 generations of families enrol their children.

Attendees included Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus, former pastors of St Marys, past and present Kindergarten staff and Church Kindergarten Committee members, as well as current church members, kindergarten parents and children. Guests travelled from as far as South Australia to join in what was a great afternoon. Our local St Marys congregation members hosted several of the travellers.

Hans Meijer, St Marys Lutheran Church



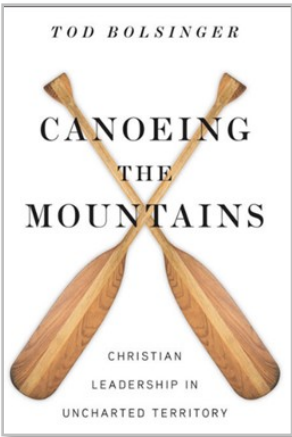
Past and present friends of St Marys Kindergarten joined in the 50th anniversary celebrations

Revitalisation: Being prepared for a different (and unknown) adventure

The current commentary around Christianity is that we are heading into a new future. Some refer to this as we are no longer in Christendom, which is often a statement saying that the Christian church is no longer the dominant and powerful institution it once was.

So how do we respond to this changing situation as bearers of the Gospel? Some will be saying the church is dying, others will say no its not, but the church as we know it is dying. Some will put their hands up and give up. Others will ignore the current situation, try and continue being church they once knew, with a focus on maintaining everything about the past. And then there are others who will be focused on Jesus, the Gospel they have received and the Gospel they are given to share with the world they live in, adapting appropriately to the situation they find themselves in.

In 2015 Tod Bolsinger, released a helpful resource for Christian leaders and communities who are facing different and unfamiliar environments than the church has experienced or prepared for. His resource is *Canoeing the Mountains - Christian leadership in uncharted territory*. The title of the book is derived from the story of two earlier American explorers, Lewis and Clark, who were tasked with finding a way across the United States of America. They were well prepared with canoes to navigate the waterways, only to discover that whilst this had helped them get so far, the canoes were useless for the next part of the journey as the terrain was mountains and not waterways. They needed to adapt.



Much of *Canoeing the Mountains* is about helping us to adapt to our current situations in a healthy way. Some key messages from the book:

- If we can adapt and adventure, you will thrive.
- We will need to let go, learn as we go and keep going no matter what.
- When old ways of being church are no longer working, something within us dies, this can be painful but necessary, and needs to be replaced by new ways of being church.
- We are moving from an approach to ministry where speaking is the main form of leading, to ministry being multifaceted involving listening, speaking, being relational, being consultative, having a diverse team and being adaptive.
- Leaders need to have the combination of technical competence, being relational and have a willingness to adapt as we go along. Governing bodies need to create an environment for this leadership.
- Trust built around the mission is essential for the journey.
- Being clear about what the mission is, is essential. The mission becomes our guide and trumps everything else.

All pastors, lay workers, lay leaders and congregation members would benefit in reading *Canoeing the Mountains* by Tod Bolsinger. It is widely available from Australian Church Resources, Koorong, Word, Dymocks and Amazon in hard copy, paperback, kindle and audible.

Pr Richard Schwedes

Chinese outreach ministry

In September, the Chinese ministry at Lifeway Lutheran Church Epping hosted some evangelical events including a letter box drop of gospel pamphlets, a cookie baking demonstration and Moon Festival celebration.

We give thanks to our Lord that virtually the whole Chinese congregation participated in the letter box drop to the local area. The congregation has been moved by God to proclaim the Gospel as a way of showing their gratitude to Him.

More than fifty participants attended the cookie baking demonstration. We had invited a renowned baking professional from Hong Kong to give us the demonstration. A short message was given by Pastor Francis, inviting the



LifeWay Chinese celebrate Moon Festival

listeners to come to know God. At the end, there was cookie tasting.

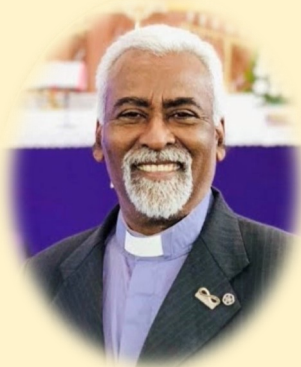
On the Moon Festival night, there were more than forty newcomers. We had dinner, hymn singing, a Chinese cultural and musical instrument performance, followed by Francis, again, giving a message on reunion with God.

Pr Francis Leung



Many visitors enjoyed the cookie baking demonstration

Rev Dr Peter Ravikumar Livingstone



Pr Peter Ravikumar Livingstone

10.8.1960 - 7.11.2023

Rev Dr Peter Ravikumar Livingstone was the pastor of Springwood and St Marys for just 12 months before his death on 7 November, 2023. A humble man, Peter was an accomplished scholar with several doctorates, a seminary lecturer, conference speaker and author. Pastor Peter had returned to India for medical tests, and was near to his family in the few short weeks before he died. A memorial service was held at St Marys Lutheran Church on 25 November.

We thank our Lord Jesus Christ for the gift of Peter to us. Although for only a short time, he was a true pastor to his people, preaching the Word of God, celebrating the Lord's Supper, leading in the study of the Scriptures, visiting us in our homes, generous with his hospitality and doing it all with warmth and grace and humility. The congregation mourns his passing, but knows Peter stands with Christ to all eternity.

Pastor Robert Hamann, Springwood

Pastor Peter spent many hours a week walking up and down the main street of St Marys, speaking to anyone who would stop long enough about his God and how much he loves each and every one of us. He enjoyed mingling with the children of the St Mary's Kindergarten during the week, and giving them mini scripture lessons about He who loves them most. This gave him great delight.

Martin Vanags, chairperson, St Marys

Peter was a very giving person, not only of himself, but he marked special occasions with appropriate gifts or tokens. At the Church Council Meetings Peter was diligent in his attendance and astute in his contributions. We will always remember Peter as our pastor, "a man called Peter", Pastor Reverend Doctor Peter Ravikumar Livingstone. Rest in peace.

Robert Brown, chairperson, Springwood

Peter will always be remembered as a man of great joy who always pointed everyone to Jesus. He had a big heart for loving people and was always real and genuine in his faith, I always found myself laughing a lot when he was around. Much loved and much missed.

What people won't necessarily know about Peter is that he was an incredibly well educated man with four Masters and a Doctorate, yet at the same time he was always the most humble and gentle man, and no one would ever know he was so learned. The one thing he was not so humble on, was he was always keen to share Christ with all he met.

Russell Veerhuis, District Administrator

When we learned that Pastor Peter Ravikumar had doctorates in both journalism and preaching we got him involved in the Frontier School of Mission program. I had the great privilege to co-teach two units with Peter, which basically meant sitting back and watching him go! He also participated in the Mission-Edge tract writing project. In total I spent

two weeks rooming with him at Warrambui so was privileged to get to know him reasonably well during that time. What stands out to me are the following:

Peter loved his family. He talked often about his wife and family in India and he managed to engage me in a couple of his daily video calls with his wife and daughter. He was so much looking forward to the chance to return to India to visit them.

Peter was a natural teacher. Whether he had a small or large group, he was able to adapt and keep the interest of the students. I have encountered few teachers as naturally engaging and apt to teach as Peter. His loss in our teaching program next year will be greatly felt.

I was also struck by Peter's passion for evangelism. He came to Australia at the end of a distinguished career as a pastor and seminary lecturer in India, in part because of a call to come to Australia to do mission that he had felt in his youth, and had never been able to follow through with. I was impressed by his willingness to take on such a big, new challenge when most would have been looking for a quiet place to ease into retirement.

And Peter was also bold about being a follower of Jesus. One time we stopped at a petrol station and as we came to the door he noticed that it was managed by Indians. Peter said, 'Wait a minute,' and headed back to the car. He returned wearing his clerical collar, explaining this would save time explaining who he was. He walked straight up to the counter and said to the two young men, 'Hello, I am pastor Peter. Do you know that Jesus cares about you?'

I remember thinking at the time, 'Lord, we could use ten Pastor Peters.' His loss both here and in India will be greatly felt.

Dr Mark Worthing, Dean of Frontier School of Mission

We got the opportunity to get to know Pastor Peter through his work with the Frontier School of Mission and him assisting in delivering training to our PNG Interns.

Though we only knew him for a brief time, we were struck by his kindness, gentleness and humility. He had a way of making everyone feel special with his friendly and generous nature.

Warrambui's mission includes 'serving people by living Jesus'. Pastor Peter was a great example to us as, in various ways, Christ-like aspects of his character shone through.

Dean Salzke, Warrambui Director

He was a good listener. Passionate of his journalism knowledge and keen to share always. I learnt a lot from late Pastor Peter. He will be sadly missed in our Frontier School of Mission programs.

Rose Cajetan, Warrambui Intern

It was an honour knowing him and having him as our lecturer with the Frontier School of Mission. The time we spent with him and memories will linger in our hearts. He will be greatly missed.

Moreenicka Kei, Warrambui Intern

Pastor Peter was a very cheerful, kind and humble hearted teacher. We will miss him in our Frontier Mission program.

Florence Cajetan, Warrambui Intern Coordinator

***"The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."* Job 1:21**

*"A Christ-centred Community
Valuing People and Learning"*



CELEBRATING
75 Years
1948-2023

BUILDING COMMUNITY

St Paul's celebrated with our school and wider community a special breakfast, recognising International Men's Day. Thank you to the 65 visitors and our amazing guest speaker, Ben Kotzur, an old collegian from the class of 2009. This is the second event of this kind held this year as we continue to build connection with our old collegians celebrating their achievements after St Paul's.



In addition, we hosted our Graduation Dinner early November with Noah Knobel, class of 2016 old collegian sharing an extremely inspiration speech to our graduates. Noah was delighted to also present our departing students with a SPOCA certificate and badge.



SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY

In three sessions during term 4, several of the Year 9 Rite Journey students have collectively completed over 53 hours of volunteer work at the Wirraminna Environmental Centre in Burrumbuttock. This included; weeding, moving and spreading mulch, collecting and spreading dirt from holes that were dug, building of gabion basket stone walls, in addition to the planting of 400+ grass plants at the end of last term.



A fantastic opportunity to not only learn about the fantastic conservation work of Wirraminna but to also have the opportunity to help make a difference and get jobs done to support the long standing work of the volunteers who are there every week.

WALK MY WAY

Our Year 11 Service Learning group partnered with Victory Lutheran School, Wodonga to raise funds for Australian World Service (ALWS) through the Walk My Way Project. Students and staff wore blue for the day with a gold coin donation and supported a lunch-time sausage sizzle.



Empowering students to embrace the future with courage, confidence and creativity.



ST PAUL'S COLLEGE
WALLA WALLA, NSW



Enrolment opportunities for 2025 now open

Scan QR code for direct web link
For more enquiries, call 02 6029 2200



Warrambui Retreat & Conference Centre
322 Greenwood Road Murrumbateman 2582
www.warrambui.com.au
(02) 6220 1000

WARRAMBUI NEWS

December 2023

Prayer Points

- For our 2023 Interns from PNG (Grace, Moreenicka & Rose) as they move into what God is calling them to next
- For the Interns who will join us in 2024.
- For further bookings next year

Praise Points

- For the Primary School groups we have hosted and the chance to interact with children during activities.
- For the blessing that the first PNG Interns have been to our ministry and community
- For strong levels of bookings in November and January
- For the charitable groups we have hosted like the Indigenous Marathon Foundation

Centre Director's Update

2024 Coming to a Close

It has been busy last quarter at Warrambui making us feel like the weeks are flying by and that the end of the year is rapidly approaching.

November has been our busiest month since the pandemic began with a total of 12 groups and 895 people for 1769 bednights.

We have particularly enjoyed hosting a large number of primary schools' camps in October and November. These camps give us the opportunity to interact with the kids as we run activities for them including our obstacle course, orienteering, bushwalks, initiative games and bush art. The primary school



market has been one of our fastest returning markets as we emerge from COVID. Many teachers see the value of camps to help grow and bond their students after the disruption their schools have experienced in the past few years.

In mid-November we were privileged to host the Indigenous Marathon Foundation's (IMF) I-CAN Championship camp. This camp involved 50 indigenous children from remote communities as far away as Karratha in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, Bamaga and Injinoo near the point of Cape York, and Thursday and Horn Islands in the Torres Strait. The children participated in activities, met with leaders from the IMF's programs, and participated in the Stromlo Running Fest in the ACT. The camp program included a visit from IMF founder and Director, former marathon world champion Robert DeCastella. It was our privilege to support the IMF in hosting such an amazing camp. You can learn more about the Indigenous Marathon Foundation by visiting www.imf.org.au

Farewell to the 2023 Interns

As the year draws to a close, it is once again nearly time for us at Warrambui to farewell our Interns.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4:10**

The first year of having Interns from Papua New Guinea (PNG) has been an amazing success. The Interns have been a tremendous blessing, greatly enriching our community as they have shared their faith, joy and lives with us this year. We have been immensely privileged to learn more about their country and culture

We are incredibly grateful to the three 2023 interns – Grace Kei, Moreenicka Kei, and Rose Cajetan. Unfortunately, Grace returned to PNG in September for personal reasons. We have greatly missed her since her return, as we will miss Rose and Moreenicka when they depart in mid-December. You can read the farewell messages from Rose and Moreenicka on the following pages. We thank them whole-heartedly for their contribution to our ministry and community and we wish them God's blessings for their future.

Heading into 2024

Looking back, 2023 has been a time of many blessings and continued growth as we continue to emerge from the pandemic and recover from its impacts. Looking forward, plans for the year ahead are taking shape.

We are in the final stages of appointing Interns from PNG, with 5-6 young women set to participate in the program next year. At the time of writing, applications for Australian and New Zealand interns are still open.

One of the changes in our industry since the pandemic, is that many groups are booking their camps at much shorter

notice. Prior to 2020, many of our groups would book 12-24 months out. Some clients are starting to do this again, but we have found many groups are holding off to see how the year unfolds before committing to a camp. In August-September, we were still getting enquiries for camps to be held in November this year. Given this, bookings for 2024 at this stage look good, and we hope that many more clients will book as the year progresses. January 2024 will certainly be a very big month for us with groups booked in every day from the 6th.

We thank God for our many blessings throughout 2023, and we place our 2024 into His hands as we look forward to what He has in store for His place, Warrambui.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. The Warrambui team wishes you a blessed Christmas and a bright start to the year ahead.

Yours in Christ

Dean Salzke

Warrambui Centre
Director



Financial Information

Warrambui Income & Expenditure Statement 1 January - 31 October 2023			
	Budget	Pro-rata Budget	Actual to 31 October
Total bookings	100	83	76
Total occupied bed nights	11,639	9,699	8,791
Operating income	\$ 943,258	\$ 718,601	\$ 927,814
Operating expenses	\$ 1,210,565	\$ 998,082	\$ 1,150,630
Operating surplus/loss	\$ (267,307)	\$ (279,481)	\$ (222,816)
Non-operating profit, primarily from the quarry, is \$87,501 giving a net loss of \$135,315.			

Bookings and bed nights continue to be less than anticipated, but income continues to be higher than expected for those camps.

Warrambui's ministry contribution to the District is \$184,442 mostly from the Arise Volunteer Internship Program (with the PNG Interns and the Special Program Administrator), the Retreat Hut, and discounts for Lutheran groups.

We continue to monitor and respond to the financial situation and operational environment as we further emerge from the pandemic



2023 Warrambui Interns



The 2023 Interns Grace Kei, Rose Cajetan & Moreenicka Kei - the 1st Warrambui Interns from PNG

MOREENICKA



I just can't believe that this year is ending, it went by so fast. Within these eleven months I've learnt so much and had great experiences. Just by reflecting back on my life now, I can say that I've changed a lot spiritually and mentally. Being an intern here has built my spiritual life and I've learned to share with others what God has done for me. It also grew me mentally to be a strong woman and helped me learn to be independent. I was given the opportunity, daily, to speak my mind freely. That has built up my level of self-confidence and courage. I am now not the same person that I once was when I first set foot in Australia.

I just want to say thank you to the Lutheran Church of Australia - especially the NSW and ACT District, the Warrambui Board Members, my Warrambui family, the Frontier School of Mission, and other people who have supported and prayed for me. I wouldn't have come this far without you all. By God's grace and unconditional love, I'm proud to say that this year has been the best year of my life.

I would like to take this time to remember the late Rev Dr Peter Ravikumar. As a journalism student, he had so much impact on my life through the courses he taught us with the Frontier school of Mission. He was such a happy soul who brought so much joy, love, peace and laughter into my life. The saddest thing that happened to me this year was losing Pastor Peter. Your memories will still linger in my heart until one fine day, I'll see you at the pearly gates of Heaven.

I am honoured to be one of the first interns from PNG. I have grown to love Warrambui, and what I do here brings joy to my soul. I have this passion and satisfaction at the end of the day, knowing that I'm serving Jesus Christ through all that I'm doing here. Warrambui has and will always have a special place in my heart. My life here was a wonderful experience but now the hardest thing for me to do is saying good bye to my Warrambui family.

Thank you Warrambui for everything and may God Bless Warrambui and Lutheran Church of Australia.

Moreenicka Kei



Moreenicka and Rose with Rev. Dr. Mark Worthing and their certificates from the Frontier School of Mission

ROSE



Hello everyone. Wow! Has it been 10 months already. Time flies when you're having a blast learning new things, working, and meeting new people with an open heart to serve, learn and grow more spiritually.

It has been a full-year for me undertaking theology studies, doing hospitality tasks and leading programmed activities. I've gained knowledge, practice and experience. I'm grateful also for the privilege to have studied under Dr. Rev Mark Worthing and the late Dr. Rev Peter Ravikumar from the Frontier School of Mission. Studying God's word and the Lutheran faith developed my personal relationship with Jesus. It motivated me to be confident, lead staff devotions, speak openly and share what I have learnt without fear. I also had real life fun visiting different places and meeting people that broadened my knowledge of Australian culture and environment.

I enjoyed running activities with school groups - meeting and working with kids from different age groups and backgrounds. Some even ask why crosses are in the buildings and at certain locations around Warrambui. I find this as an opportunity for me to share about Jesus. I find that working in the kitchen, cleaning, and preparing venues for our visitors, are ways I portray Jesus in my actions. To serve and be of service to others with a kind, loving and caring heart.

Worshipping at different Lutheran churches (including Holy Cross Belconnen, Immanuel Woden, Trinity Temora and St Peter's Port Macquarie) has given me the chance to interact with other mature believers. Being an intern also presented me with the opportunity to meet the Pastors of ACT & NSW, as well as the district and national Bishops, at their conference. This was a highlight of my mission work. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to speak in front of the congregations and people, especially men and elderly people. I will rarely, if ever, get such opportunities in PNG.

It is all a blessing to be part of the internship program this year. I will take with me the lessons and skills I've acquired to live for Jesus. Thank you to everyone who made it possible for me to be an intern this year.

God Bless Warrambui.

Rose Cajetan

"The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge." Ruth 2:12

10 MONTHS TO GO!

In October 2024 General Synod delegates will be voting on a proposal to allow for the LCA NZ to function as 'one church with two different practices of ordination'.

Ask your pastor, congregation chair or General Synod delegate for updates and ways to...



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

www.lca.org.au/wayforward

Sign up to Way Forward eNews www.lca.org.au/wf-signmeup



TURNING POINT
MINISTRIES

*Faith filled events,
growing disciples of Jesus Christ*

Turning Point Ministries is the child, family, youth and young adult event ministry of the Lutheran Church of Australia NSW and ACT District

TPM Leadership Camp

On the weekend of 24-26 November, 25 TPM young adult Leaders came together in the Warrambui Dome for our annual leadership camp.

As always, TPM camps are like a family away from home, and these young leaders quickly settled into Warrambui like they had never left. The theme for the weekend developed from Pastor Mat von Stanke's Leadership studies that started with looking at how Christian leadership and discipleship are one and the same.

The rest of the weekend then focused on how as leaders discipling young people how do we sow into them and love and support them regardless of the background they bring to camp. We looked at how we do this through small group studies, games and all the other adventures that are TPM camps and still manage to keep leaders and campers safe.



On the Saturday these young leaders had a go at painting a Bob Ross painting using only condiments. Some great results were cooked up.

Comments from the camp included:

- A great reminder on how we as leaders are still disciples
- It helped me get a better understanding of how to lead different groups
- This camp has given me more confidence in my own leadership skills, and made me think more about scenarios and how to manage working with different types of campers and leaders.
- A highlight of the camp was seeing the next generation of leaders step up.
- It was good to go back to basics of Jesus' leadership example and as leaders dive into the honest and vulnerable parts of our lives.

TPM Leadership Team



Register at tpm.org.au for:

HISTORY MAKERS Year 7-12

16 - 19 January 2024 Warrambui

JUNIOR YOUTH CAMP Year 3-6

19 - 21 January 2024 Warrambui

Registrations close 31 December



TURNING POINT
MINISTRIES

tpm.org.au



FRONTIER
SCHOOL OF MISSION

An initiative of the Lutheran Church of NSW and ACT
Practical Training for life and ministry today

Online Information Sessions

Tuesday 12th December
12.30pm and 6.30pm

**Interested in gaining skills
for Christian living and ministry?**

Come meet our Dean Rev Dr Mark Worthing
and discover the courses available,
how our program operates
and explore what may suit you and your ministry.

Register by 11 December
by emailing frontier@lca.org.au



FRONTIER
SCHOOL OF MISSION

Intensives 2024

Frontier School of Mission will be offering
the following intensives in 2024

Semester One

Foundations in Christian Belief
February 5-9, Port Macquarie

Missional Discipleship
March 18-22, Albury

Leading Worship
April 15-19, Port Macquarie

Semester Two

Perspectives in Mission Sydney

Preaching Port Macquarie

Jesus and the Gospels Port Macquarie

Creative Christian Writing Warrambui

Contact the FSM dean, Dr Mark Worthing, at
mworthing@mst.edu.au for more information.



I'M JOINING IN GOD'S MISSION THROUGH *Stamps for Mission*

We are always thrilled when a package of used stamps
collected for stamps for mission arrives at our place!

This year the proceeds of the sale of these stamps go to
support:

- Pastor Murray and Tracy Smith in Papua New Guinea at Senior Flierl Seminary
- International Lutheran Seafarers Mission Singapore
- Ogelbeng Seminary Papua New Guinea located in the Highlands
- Lutheran Study Centre Malaysia which trains pastors, lay members.
- Immaunel Orchestra Music for Life Foundation Thailand.
- Lutheran Church Cambodia Sports Ministry.

Last year funds raised for our project amounted to
\$26,330 which was \$10000 more than the year before!
A terrific effort and thanks are expressed to all involved.

Marie Hamann, NSW Representative

To support mission projects, send used stamps to:

Marie Bahr
Unit 1, 452 Kemp St
Lavington NSW 2641

Arthur Schuster
A310 Greenway Views
260 Soward Way
Greenway ACT 2900

Ruth MacConachie
16 Village Bay Cl
Marks Point NSW 2280

Marie Hamann
39 Raymond Rd
Springwood NSW 2777



Lutheran Nurse of the Year Award

The 2024 Lutheran Nurse of the Year award is now open to receive nominations. The award recognises faithful and outstanding service during the preceding calendar year by a Registered or Enrolled Nurse who is an active member of a Lutheran congregation in Australia or New Zealand. It comprises a certificate and a \$100 monetary gift.

Nominations may be submitted by congregations, schools, aged-care facilities or other bodies or agencies within the LCANZ.

This annual award was initiated in 2020 by the Lutheran Nurses Association of Australia to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, who is recognised as the founder of modern nursing.

It is now time to start thinking about whether there is anyone in your congregation/community who may meet the criteria for nomination as 2024 Lutheran Nurse of the Year. Nominations only close on 31 March, but experience has shown that it takes time to gather the requisite information and references for nomination.

A copy of the Nomination Form is available from the Lutheran Nurses Association of Australia secretary, Mrs Rose Howard (rosekazz@gmail.com) or Pastor Bob Wiebusch (revbob@ozemail.com.au)



Young leaders in our congregations

Many older people in the church wonder where those younger than themselves are when it comes to the administration of the church. When will younger people take up some of these positions?

The following three testimonies show that young people are already taking responsibility in our church councils. All three are in their late twenties to early thirties and have prominent responsible positions in their local churches. May these three young leaders encourage many more.

John Mawbey, Chairperson, Temora



I am currently the Chairperson for the 'Temora Lutheran Community Church' congregation. I have been in this role for about a year and a half.

There were many people who asked me if I would consider taking the role. However, I still hadn't decided when the 2022 AGM came around. It was only when I was nominated that I had a clear mind but I still wasn't sure. So, I stood up and God said

yes for me. I know this is true because I was extremely surprised as I was just about to say no. Since then, I have taken on the role for a second year, which I am now halfway through.

The main thing I have learnt is: God must be your strength and motivation to lead in the role he gave you.

As I said, God said yes for me and because of this I have learnt that God calls the unqualified. This is so God can teach you how to become a leader by taking the step of Faith into the great unknown.

1 Timothy 4:12 - Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

The biggest challenge for me is because I am so young and certainly unqualified. God is definitely changing that. I am still learning what it means, to be a Chairperson and how God wants to use me while serving in this role.

Gillian Brooks, Secretary Liverpool



I've been Secretary of our Church Council for six years. Since then, I've also taken on the roles of Safe Place Coordinator and Churchwide Synod delegate, and I help as a lay reader.

There was need in our congregation, and I could clearly see God directing me to the opportunity! I'm glad that I can use my communication and admin skills in ways which can serve my church, and in so doing, serve God and His mission.

I also felt comfortable serving and being involved in various ways at church, having grown up in another congregation (Good Shepherd, Sutherland NSW) where young people were always empowered to be involved.

I've learned the importance of listening to others, especially everyone on the team, and mentors who are guiding you. Of course as well, the importance of coming to God prayerfully with our needs, and asking others to support us in prayer, too. I definitely understand leadership as most fundamentally being about serving others, and teamwork.

I work full-time as a secondary teacher, so at times it can be challenging to make time for church tasks after or during a busy work week. Bigger picture, trusting in God's sovereignty over our church, particularly in times of change and vacancy, can be challenging at times.

David Brooks, Chairperson Sutherland

I have been Chairperson of Good Shepherd Sutherland since August 2022. I had previously been Secretary since 2011. I have also been a communion assistant since around 2009 and was in charge of preparing service orders and powerpoints for lay services for most of the period that Sutherland was vacant in 2013-2014.



I originally joined the Church Council at Sutherland in 2011 after being approached by our pastor at the time to become Secretary because the previous secretary (who was only about a year older than me and had served for a few years) was not able to continue in the role. I accepted because I wanted to give something back to the congregation I had grown up in and where so many members had given me a good example of Christian service. Being approached personally made me feel like I could make a valuable contribution and I think that is important to remember when working out what role young adults can play in the church. I then accepted the position of Chairperson in 2022 because the previous Chairperson who I had worked with on Church Council for 10 years was unable to continue in the position and I was the obvious successor due to my many years as Secretary.

As I was only 22 when I first joined Church Council I have learned a lot about managing working relationships and people's expectations and interacting with people of different ages and backgrounds. These lessons have also helped me in my legal career. It has also been encouraging to learn more about what's going on in our District and the LCA as a whole that the ordinary worshipper isn't always aware of, to know that God's work is being done even if we don't always see it.

Fitting church work around being a full-time solicitor can often be a real challenge when it comes to time management. Dealing with other people and managing their expectations in a way that reflects that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ when there are differences of opinion about things that should be done and how they should be done is always a challenge. Being Chairperson of a congregation with members who are nearly all quite a bit older than you and include people who taught you in Sunday School, Step Up to Communion and MAP adds a whole different dimension to it.

Do you know other young leaders in your congregations? Please let District Office know!

District Church Council News

Supporting Congregations and Ministries in Mission and ministry

Canberra Churches Signage

A collection of Canberra Churches, including Holy Cross Belconnen, Immanuel Woden and Good Shepherd Tuggeranong approached the District for support to purchase electronic Signage for their various Churches. The Canberra Churches have a unique opportunity that by and large they all reside on main intersections that provide a great opportunity to communicate with the broader public. The District Church Council recognised this opportunity and provided a grant of up to \$45,000 (50% of the installation costs) to support the purchase and installation of the electronic Signage at these three Churches. The DCC further approved that the remainder of the cost could be drawn by a loan from the Mission Development Fund on various terms.

Frontier School of Mission

The District Church Council heard an update on the Ministry of Frontier School of Mission from Dr Mark Worthing. Frontier has now completed one year or a three-year plan. FSM has noticed changing developments in the ministry training landscape. Where it was initially thought people would want to do accredited training, they have found the vast majority of training and engagement has been with those who are not seeking accredited training but rather seeking training so they are better able to serve the ministry space they are in. FSM will continue to assess this space and pivot the training so that it meets the ministry training needs of our congregations and ministries. What has been recognized by the DCC is the benefit of coming to an FSM intensive and soaking in the mission heart of FSM as it opens the door for God to transform individuals to be mission focused.

Alternative Models of ministry that best serve the District

Lavington Financial Support

The Lavington Congregation has been in discussion with the Albury congregation about what it would look like to do shared ministry together. This will include the sharing of a Pastor and Administrative support. As they transition towards this point, the Lavington congregation were in need of financial support to continue to fund their existing ministry including Pastoral costs. The DCC agreed to provide a Cashflow top up as required to the Lavington Lutheran Church as they transitioned across to this new model.

Planting and Renewing Congregations

Jindera Church plant AV equipment

Jindera Lutheran School made an application for AV equipment to support the Church Plant that is being established in the school hall, this will allow the provision of AV equipment in the Hall as well as for those students supporting the Church Plant. The equipment will also have the dual purpose of enhancing the music ministry of the school that will further support the Church plant. The District Church Council resolved to provide a \$61,500 grant to support the purchase of essential music and audio equipment and the school will contribute additional funding to further support this initiative as part of a larger development.

Lifeway Westside

The District Church Council received an update from Danny

Brock on the ministry at Lifeway Westside (The Western Sydney Church plant). Danny shared the many challenges to the ministry and the doors that have opened. It was noted that the lack of team for Danny makes the plant a lot harder work. Danny indicated that he has made over 40 meaningful connections at various levels of the community. The District Church Council recognized this as an important ministry that has had to struggle through Covid in its inception. The DCC agree to extend the support for Lifeway Westside for an additional 2 years at \$85,000 per year.



District Leadership through the Bishop Leading teams

MOU with Lutheran church New Zealand

The LCNZ approached the College of Bishops for support in finding someone to provide Pastoral oversight of their district after they were unable to elect a bishop. They in turn approached the NSW and ACT district if they could supply oversight for two years till the next synod. Given the experience of Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus serving two parishes in New Zealand it was a natural synergy. The District Church council saw this as a wonderful way to bless and support the LCNZ, and so supported the proposal that Bishop Robert serves approximately 20% of his time serving the LCNZ as Bishop. An MOU has been finalized between the LCA NSW and ACT District and LCNZ on this sharing relationship. The administrative support for LCNZ will continue to be supplied from New Zealand.

District Synod Theme

The Theme for the District Synod 8-10 March 2024 has been chosen to be "It's all about Jesus" focusing on the text from Colossians 2:6-7 "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."



Governance of Specific Ministries

Lutheran Aged Care Albury

Wendy Rocks the CEO of Albury Aged Care reported on the challenges facing the aged care sector. The limited workforce and financial challenges given changes in Government regulation and support have been a constant test. Regular staff shortages has meant the need to use FIFO (Fly in fly out) staff in regional areas. It is noted many small, aged care operators will not survive. As a larger operator, whilst times are tough, Albury aged care is well situated. Wendy also noted that the ongoing development at Albury Aged Care Stage 5 is now almost complete, with a view that the development at Dellacourt will be completed by Early March 2024.

Lutheran Education in Victoria, NSW and Tasmania

Julian Denholm from Lutheran Education Victoria, NSW and Tasmania updated the DCC on how the NSW schools are travelling. Whilst all schools are travelling well, some with more challenges than others, it was noted one of the greater challenges was the NSW Government agreeing to increase teachers wages by 8% when 70% of a school budget is staff costs. It was noted that we don't want to be losing staff

Continued next page

Sydney – a potential harvest needing labourers

In two places in scripture we find Jesus saying 'the harvest is plentiful, and the workers are few, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest field.'

When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Matthew 9:36-38

He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Luke 10:2-3

And with a population of over 5.23 million, with people representing over 180 different nationalities, this is exactly the situation for us in Sydney. The potential harvest is very large, but the numbers of people actively involved in our congregations is few. Yet God is continuing to do surprising things through the number of people in our congregations.

For instance, on 22 October St Paul's Sydney again filled its church with a multicultural service, with songs and readings from Koreans, Germans, Papua New Guineans, Indonesians, Finns, Americans, Norwegians, Tamils, Chinese and Hong Kongese. And we were further blessed afterwards with a multicultural banquet. What a great witness and encouragement this was for us, showing how our cultural differences can be a blessing when we are focussed on Jesus and his gospel message.

St Paul's church and manse are located very close to the city, so throughout the year we have the opportunity to welcome and assist newcomers, not only to Sydney but also to the Christian faith. Recently, Ahmed from Morocco knocked on our congregation's door and asked 'how can I convert to Christianity, I want to follow Jesus'. Following some discussion and exploration of what Christianity is about and who Jesus is, he was baptised. We don't know how God led him to us, but we do know why. We are located close to the city and pastor and our members were

open to encouraging and helping him with the Gospel, taking the time be with him. Ahmed is one of a number of people who have approached us for assistance in connecting with Jesus.

Arising from the challenges of Covid a blessing has occurred. The congregation continues to use technology which sees it reaching people through a weekly zoom bible study and livestream worship (also recorded worship). People not just from Sydney join us, but also from places around Australia and overseas where there is no or limited Lutheran presence.

But we continue needing God's help and yours to live out this ministry of being God's light and presence amongst the potential harvest. You can:

- Pray for us and the ministry God has given us in Sydney, including in your prayers pray for the people of Sydney, for those needing Jesus - to connect with us or another church and for more people to connect with us and be active in God's ministry in Sydney.
- Connect with us when you are in Sydney especially for worship. This is always a great encouragement for our community. Our worship is 10:30am most Sundays but check www.sydney.lutheran.org.au for updates.
- Consider relocating to Sydney to be involved in God's ministry. You are always welcome to talk to Pastor Richard (see email below)
- Encourage your friends and family to connect with us either in person or online, visit our YouTube channel (search St Pauls Lutheran Sydney on Youtube) or contact Pastor Richard about other ways to connect.
- Give financially to God's mission and ministry so we can continue connecting people to Jesus (St Paul's Sydney Lutheran REG account BSB 704942 Account: 100369413)

Pr Richard Schwedes
pastor@stpaulssydney.org

Continued from previous page

in this already challenging environment and thus all schools are having to work through how they graduate this change through given most had budgeted for a 3% increase.

St Pauls College perpetual award

St Pauls college approached the DCC asking if they would like to support a perpetual award at the College that is in line with the College and the District's vision. As the District is the owner of St Pauls College, they agreed to support an award that recognizes an individual(s) who demonstrate Christ like service to the college with maturity, humility and leadership. The DCC is excited to be able to sponsor such an award.

Warrambui Retreat and Conference Centre

Neal Mason on behalf of the Warrambui Board reported that Warrambui is continuing to improve after Covid. The PNG intern program has been a great success and brought a new vibrancy to the site. They still have some staff vacancies and continue to work at filling them.

The District Church Council were pleased to appoint both Anita Short and Dennis Obst to the Warrambui Board. Anita comes with experience serving on the Queensland District Church Board. Anita is originally from the Sutherland congregation, and after a period of teaching in Queensland has moved to Canberra at the Immanuel Woden congregation. Dennis Obst has served as a Pastor in a variety of congregations across Australia and in the past two years has served in locum roles in a number of congregations across the District. Dennis brings a wealth of wisdom to his role on the board.

DCC secretary

It was with much joy that the District Church Council was able to appoint Leigh Caldwell to the position of DCC Secretary. Leigh comes to the role most highly recommended with a breadth of governance experience as well as an education background. Leigh is a member of the Albury congregation and we look forward to the wisdom that she is able to bring to the DCC team.

Russell Veerhuis, on behalf of DCC

District Administrator

Financial update

The LCA NSW and ACT District finances continue to largely track the budget, with a few variations largely in the investment space.

The District Church Council continues to invest in Ministry across the District as the support ministry grants for various projects in a range of congregations. For 2023 it is anticipated that the district will invest over \$500,000 in ministry initiatives across the District. These include Church plants and church planters, ministry facilitators and coordinators, Frontier School of Mission, Pastoral Training, Turning Point Ministries, and Church signage to name a few.

On the income side, Distributions from our investments continue to exceed market expectations and thus support the many ministry initiatives above. It must be noted that our Share investments have had a good season of returns, and we continue to budget for more conservative returns in the future. Contributions from congregations that are used primarily to support the Office of the Bishop and the Broader LCA continue to remain roughly the same, although as some Churches start to struggle for numbers this is reduced accordingly, these contributions are mainly received in term 4. Turning Point Ministry Income is lower this year, as is TPM expenses due to lower participation rates which has also led to the cancellation of some camps.

The value of our share portfolio has increased by a little over \$740k this year, so the value of our asset base has increased to \$28.2M. This together with a liabilities of \$519k, leaving a total equity of \$27.72M.

Russell Veerhuis

2023 NSW District Budget		
	2023 Budget	2023 Jan - Sept
Revenue		
Congregations Contributions	\$152,300	\$66,600
Contributions from individuals	\$12,500	\$57,900
Turning Point Ministry	\$107,870	\$26,611
Frontier School of Mission	\$97,500	\$12,966
Other District revenue	\$46,700	\$9,665
Earmarked Grants and donations	\$34,000	\$14,600
Investment income	\$478,020	\$478,455
Total Income	\$928,890	\$666,797
Expenses		
LCA Budget	\$218,000	\$163,500
Employee benefits expense	\$387,993	\$288,187
TPM Camp expenses	\$107,450	\$30,957
Frontier expenses	\$91,700	\$59,202
Depreciation Expense	\$178,900	\$133,285
Other expenses	\$235,800	\$168,989
Mission and Ministry	\$474,230	\$368,260
Total Expenses	\$1,694,073	\$1,212,380
Net Profit/Loss	-\$765,183	-\$545,583

Protecting our people and buildings

The New South Wales Police Force recently held a workshop for religious and multi faith communities, to help us in protecting our people and our buildings.

Being contextual and doing what suits your community's situation was a key underpinning message of the forum, as not all worshipping communities are in the same situation or face the same risks or threats.

6 basic things we can do to protect our people and buildings:

- Check doors, windows, and the locks. Are they secure? Can they easily be forced open?
- Lighting – ensure your premises are well lit, especially outside, using either sensor or continuous lighting. Well lit premises have proven to be an effective deterrent.
- Alarm System – consider an alarm system.
- People activity – the presence of people at churches is a deterrent to would be thieves and vandals. Encourage congregation members to visit the premises during the week and drive or walk past the building especially outside advertised event times. Let your neighbours know who to contact in case of any suspicious activity.
- Encourage congregation members to report any suspicious people or activity or any damage to their local police or in case of an emergency 000.

- Have an evacuation plan and make it known.

A key approach in dealing with threats and risks is for the congregation leadership to consider –

- do we consider avoiding risk?
- do we consider reducing the risk? or
- do we consider accepting the risk?

While the likelihood of a threat is low, the rising concern for NSW Police is the increase in religiously or ideologically motivated extremism and violence, especially by individuals. They often believe in conspiracy theories. They rely a lot on the internet for their information. They often use language that reveals hate or extreme dislike for others. They may be mentally unstable. If new to a group, they are concerned when people become friendly and begin asking personal information, like what brings you here, where are you from, etc. They will at times display suspicious behaviour, taking unusual interest in people, buildings, routines, and activities.

The general advice is, if we are suspicious of someone and their behaviour, we should tell someone, either a congregational leader or the police directly.

Australian Government portal for reporting suspicious activity can be found at <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/what-can-i-do/report-suspicious-behaviour>

Pr Richard Schwedes

Professional Standards

As the year draws to a close, I want to ask your congregation to reflect on its Safe Church profile. Have your leaders and ministry volunteers maintained their:

- Safe Church training
- Working with Children/Vulnerable People checks
- Completed Planning and Risk Assessments and gained Permission to Proceed for all activities.
- Updated the NSW-ACT District Audit sheet from the District office

Hmmm... not sure?... However, I do need to remind you that all these things are very important parts of conducting Safe ministry.

If you are unsure of what your congregation needs to be doing, please contact me for a conversation.

There are some important changes for the delivery of Safe Church training coming in 2024. Adding to the existing self-paced online training, there will be the addition of live-online training. This is currently being developed. Recent communication from the LCA NZ notes that face-to-face training will be phased out during 2024.

As I mentioned in the last Contact, many congregations have submitted their LCA Child Safety plans and I'm hoping

that your members have noticed some of the identified 'next steps' being implemented. Recently there has been communication from the LCA about some changes to Child Safety Standards (CSS) submission timelines. The next round of Child Safety Plans will now be due in 2025. This change will allow congregations to focus on the implementation of their plans, to strengthen the foundations already built. Many Child Safety Standards resources, including resources for children, are available on the LCA NZ website. I'm happy to assist with provision of resources if required, just contact me.

Everyday we see and hear of many awful situations in our world, some very close to home. As we enter the season of Advent, my prayer is that each of you will be able to find time to focus and prepare your heart for the most wonderful gift that ever comes to us, Jesus – our Saviour.

May God continue to bless all the ministries your congregations undertake.

Carolyn Kiss

LCA NZ Professional Standards Officer (NSW/ACT)

Ph: 0457 770 100

email: carolyn.kiss@lca.org.au

District Prayer Calendar

To join the NSW and ACT District Intercessors Prayer List, email Kaye.office.nsw@lca.org.au



I urge, then, **first of all**, that requests, **prayers**, intercession and **thanksgiving** be made **for everyone** — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live **peaceful** and quiet lives in all **godliness** and **holiness**. This is good and **pleases God** our Saviour, who wants all people **to be saved** and to come to knowledge of the truth. For there is **one God** and **one mediator** between God and people, the man **Christ Jesus**, who gave himself as **a ransom for all** — the testimony given in its proper time.

1 Timothy 2:1-6

	Parishes / Congregations	Pastors & Church Workers (and family)	Location
December	3 District Committees	District Church Council, Lutheran Women NSW, all other district committees	
	10 Strategic Directions Facilitator	Pr Ian Rentsch (Suzanne)	
	17 NSW and ACT District Office	Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus (Jenny) Tanya Cunningham, Communications Kaye Simpfendorfer, Receptionist Russell Veerhuis, Administrator	
January	14 Turning Point Ministries youth camps and campers at Warrambui		
	21 Central West NSW	Pr James Leach (Adele, Amelia, Keziah, Zeek, Eliora, Netanya, Tobias)	St John's Forbes St Peter's Orange St Paul's Parkes
	28 Gilgandra/Dubbo	<i>vacant</i>	St Mark's Dubbo St John's Gilgandra Preaching place Nyngan
February	4 Gunnedah/Tamworth	<i>vacant</i>	Trinity Gunnedah St Paul's Tamworth
	11 Leeton/Griffith	<i>vacant</i> Pr Ian Kotzur, locum (Yvonne)	St Paul's Griffith St John's Leeton
	18 Temora	Pr Darren Kupke (Lee-Anne, Zakea)	Trinity Temora Zion Trungley Hall Chapel on the Hill
March	25 West Wyalong	Pr Darren Kupke (Lee-Anne, Zakea)	Immanuel West Wyalong
	3 Bass Hill Finnish	Pr Lassi Pappinen (Iida, Sylvi, Taimi)	Sydney Finnish
	10 Campbelltown	<i>vacant</i>	Good Shepherd Campbelltown
	17 Central Coast	Pr Allan Taruste (Tina, Matthew, Scarlet)	St Matthew's Woy Woy
	24 Chinese (Mandarin)	Matthew Wan	Sydney Hills District
31 Estonian	Pr Allan Taruste (Tina, Matthew, Scarlet)	St John's Estonian, Sydney	

Walking together IN MISSION

a Bible Study series

Philippians 3: Pressing on towards the Goal

Join with members of the LCA NSW and ACT District in the next online Bible study led by

Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus

**Wednesday 13 December, 7.30pm
on Zoom**

To register, please email
office.nsw@lca.org.au



Like and Follow the District Facebook Page to keep up to date with news and events. Search Facebook for LCANSWACT, or go to www.facebook.com/LCANSWACT



Upcoming Events

- Dec 12** **Frontier Information Sessions**
Online 12.30pm and 6.30pm (details page 14)
- Dec 13** **Bible Study with the Bishop**
Zoom, all welcome
- Jan 16 - 19** **History Makers**
Warrambui, Years 7-12
- Jan 19 - 21** **Junior Youth Camp**
Warrambui, Years 3-6
- March 6 - 8** **District Pastors' Conference**
Lutheran Church Wagga Wagga
- March 8 - 10** **NSW and ACT District Synod**
Lutheran Primary School Wagga Wagga
- March 15 - 17** **LW NSW & ACT Retreat**
Warrambui, for women of all ages
- April 27** **LW NSW & ACT Convention**
Lutheran Church Dubbo
- October 4-7** **LCANZ General Convention of Synod**
Concordia College, Adelaide, SA



LCA NSW and ACT District Pastors' Conference 6-8 March 2024 - Wagga Wagga District Convention of Synod 8-10 March 2024

Lutheran Primary School - Tamar Dr Wagga Wagga

Reports, Proposals, and Nominations due to office.nsw@lca.org.au
by 15 January 2024 for inclusion in the Book of Reports.

Pastors, delegates and visitors, please register online
at www.nswact.lca.org.au by 18 February 2024.

Enquiries to District Office phone 02 8660 1200 email admin.nsw@lca.org.au



Contact Newsletter

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Assisting regional people coming to Sydney

If you are coming to Sydney for hospital treatment and require pastoral care, or if you know someone moving to Sydney for work or study, please let your pastor know. You can also contact District Office and we will endeavor to put you in touch with a pastor who may be able to visit.

District Office 02 8660 1200



LCA COMPLAINTS

Many complaints can be resolved before lasting hurt is caused, by addressing them quickly in a non-threatening manner and by raising the issue directly with the relevant person or organization in a thoughtful and courteous manner.

If this is not applicable or possible in your situation, you may lodge a complaint with the Professional Standards Department in any of the following ways:

Phone the freecall number 1800 644 628

Email complaints@lca.org.au

or write to

Confidential, PO Box 519,
Marden SA 5070