

Together

DECEMBER 2023

'What the world should always be'

Blessing of the Animals a school highlight

Mural unveiled in Nuriootpa

An ecumenical approach in Yankalilla

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Front cover: Tatachilla Lutheran College student Keira and her cow, at the school's annual Blessing of the Animals event. Story page 10.

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Together

Together is published four times a year for members of the Lutheran Church of Australia SA-NT District.

Editor: Jessica Smith
Phone: 08 8267 5211
Email: jessica.smith@lca.org.au
Editorial address: 137 Archer Street, North Adelaide, South Australia 5006

Graphic Design: www.spicerscreative.com.au

Printer:  Finsbury Green

Advertising: Jessica Smith
Phone: 08 8267 5211
Email: jessica.smith@lca.org.au

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Editorial content in Together
Opinions expressed in articles, letters, news stories and features in Together are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the policy of this magazine or the Lutheran Church of Australia SA-NT District.

Publication deadline
Editorial and advertising copy deadline for the next edition of Together is Thursday, 1 February 2024. The magazine will be distributed in December. Online news content is published between editions on our website, Facebook page and eNews. To subscribe to our eNews 'Online Together', visit www.sant.lca.org.au/news/enews/



Editor's note

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things."
Philippians 4:8

I know we say it every year, but gosh Christmas has come around fast. With so many ups and downs going on in the world there has been much to distract us. I know I've even had moments of wondering whether it really feels 'right' to celebrate during the holiday season, given the imagery we've seen of so many around the globe enduring suffering and hardship this year. It's easy to get caught up in a mindset of fear and despair when we dwell on these things.

And yet I don't think this is how God wants us to think or to feel. In Philippians 4:8 he encourages us to look to whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable, and to think on and focus on these things. While I certainly don't believe he is telling us to ignore or turn a blind eye to the pain of others or the horrors of this world, I think his word points us to the fact that even within those things we can see and act with compassion and love for good, believe for change, and trust with hope and gratefulness that God is working through all situations.

Together is a magazine that takes on this ethos – we're about celebrating the moments of love, joy, collaboration and kindness that happen as our congregations reach out to those in the community. Big or small, these are moments worth focussing on. I hope the stories in this edition give your mind food to meditate on the good, just as we celebrate all that is excellent and praiseworthy about the presence of Jesus in our lives this Christmas.

Blessings for this season and beyond.

Jess

We welcome your story submissions, suggestions and feedback. Email the editor at jessica.smith@lca.org.au

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A word from your Bishop...

Pastor Andrew Brook
Bishop SA-NT District
Lutheran Church of Australia

Many questions

I've been in my role as District Bishop for three months now. I thank you for your warm welcome and your prayers, which encourage me and give me strength. I'm also grateful for your patience. There is so much I have to learn. I can't answer every question immediately, and I also have many questions of my own. 'Tell me about your congregation...aged care facility...school...community agency. What's your story? What's going on now? Why do you do what you do? What do you hope for the future in God?'

The Lutheran Church in South Australia and the Northern Territory has many moving parts: 170 congregations, 75 currently serving pastors (out of 90-97 possible pastor positions, which means 15-22 pastoral vacancies), 32 schools, aged care facilities, and agencies like Lutheran Care and Lutheran Disability Services. There's so much to learn about and so many ways that God is at work in and through us, ensuring that his mission to reconcile the world to himself in Christ continues, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

While I have much to learn, what I can say with confidence is that God is very much still working in and through you, the people of God, getting on with the work of worship, witness and service in your context. Already I've heard some heartfelt stories of God working through the gentle witness of a friend inviting someone to worship, of congregations that are grappling with why God has placed them in a local community, of leaders looking at new ways of working at being church so that people are freed up to love their friends and neighbours. While the environment is challenging in so many ways, I thank God for your faithfulness, resilience and hope in the God who makes all things new.

The SA-NT District Bishops - Assistant Bishop for Mission, Stephen Schultz, First and Second Assistant Bishops Adrian Kitson and Joel Cramer, and I - met recently for a retreat day. We came together for a time of worship, prayer, reflection on the word, and discussion. Our prayer was that God would grant us insight into how we can best serve in our oversight roles, to lead the District as it exists to "to resource, encourage and focus its communities to grow in Christ and make him known to all people".

The watchword we used to guide us was from Isaiah 43:11-16. God's people were languishing in exile. God reminded

them of the way he rescued them from Egypt. This was a sustaining memory, but God had something new in store: Isaiah says, **'Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.'** Though God allowed them to be driven out of the promised land because of their disobedience, he is now preparing a new, hopeful future for his people. He will bring life out of death and deprivation. God will renew his people, and this renewal will bring life to all creation, as well as releasing his people anew so that they can proclaim his praises.

God did return his people to the land he had prepared for them and in which they had dwelt after the Exodus journey. But the ultimate fulfillment of this promise is seen in the birth, death and resurrection of God's chosen one, Jesus his son. At the right time, God executed the ultimate rescue mission. Through Jesus, he has created a people to praise and serve him, the church. This is how Paul addresses the church in Ephesus, and us too:

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."

What might these promises be saying to the LCA SA-NT District at the present time? The foundation story of the Lutheran Church in Australia involved a long and arduous voyage across the sea so that the church's founders could worship according to their conscience and confession. We rightly give thanks to God for the faith of these people, and what they have bequeathed us in the gospel. But almost 200 years have elapsed since the first Lutherans arrived, and the country in which we live has changed in ways that they could have hardly imagined. Indeed, many of us are struggling with how to live as faithful Christians in what seems to be a spiritual wilderness.

Isaiah's promise, fulfilled through Jesus Christ, is still a living word for us today. God is doing a new thing, each day. It

is founded in the cross and resurrection of his Son, and in the life that Jesus still shares with his people in Word and Sacrament. God is still at work, giving his people grace to drink, nourishing seeds of faith and growing these people into faithful, hopeful disciples. Not only that, but he is calling us to provide hope for a thirsty world by being people who proclaim his praise by modelling and sharing the good news. God is at work on the ground in local congregations and communities - **Real Grace. Real Life. Real Community.**

As the bishops met together in retreat, God gave us this picture: **One church, many doors.** We share this with you as we discern what God is up to amongst his people in the SA-NT District in this moment.

One church, many doors could be understood geographically. We have a significant number of multi point parishes with churches in multiple locations. In most cases, they maintain their longstanding governance structure of a parish council, and separate church councils for each individual location. There are many people responsible for oversight of each place.

One church, many doors. Some places have moved to one congregation, one council, and multiple doors where the faithful worship God, and invite others in to receive God's grace gifts. The doors are also open for the people behind the door to leave the building and continue their work of worship in their service and witness in their communities. How might streamlining the way we are organised release people to participate in the mission of God in their local community.

One church, many doors. Of course, we know that the church is not primarily a building, but the people of God. This picture isn't just about keeping the church doors open, but for the church to be renewed in its purpose: to exist for the praise of God's glory, and to speak of the good news of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, the hope. One church, many doors, beyond the church buildings, through our schools and agencies, and in the doors of each home, where households gather around the word, pray, practice hospitality and shine the light of Christ outside their homes. Each home, each household, is a mission outpost of the church.

I'm interested in your reflections on this picture. What might God be saying to you and your congregation through it?

From the Bishop's Diary...

- **District Pastors' and Church Workers' Retreat** took place in Adelaide in mid-September. Some fifty people attended, and were blessed by times of worship, mutual conversation and presentations from the Global Leadership Summit focused on leadership. This was the first time that pastors and church workers shared this event, and it is a pattern that we will continue into the future. Special thanks go to Pastor Joel Cramer and his organising team, and the District Office staff.
- **The Ordination Way Forward Team** has been established to deliver to the 2024 General Pastors Conference and Convention of General Synod a detailed framework through which the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand could function as 'one church with two different practices of ordination'. A call for submissions resulted in over 100 responses. These were evaluated to ensure that they were in line with the intent of the synod resolution. Three frameworks were released to the church for comment and feedback.
- A series of church-wide webinars were held in October, and these were well attended. There is more work to be done, which is why the church invites your participation and feedback. The church needs your help to improve these frameworks. Eight working groups will add detail to each to develop them into detailed frameworks.

- This is a challenging time for the church, and the danger is for us to retreat into our positions on the matter of ordination. Please pray for the wellbeing of the church, and especially for those with whom you disagree. I urge each one of us to maintain our focus on seeing one another as members of the body of Christ together. Paul writes in Colossians 3:12-14: **"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 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 all together in perfect unity."**

Pastor Installations

- Greg Page at Mount Barker on 4 February 2024
- Peter Klemm at Berri/Barmera on 18 February 2024

Ordinations

- Tim Chen and Malcolm Willcocks have been approved for ordination by the College of Bishops. Tim will serve the Grace Chinese Lutheran Church, which worships at Glynde and Adelaide St Stephen's congregations, and Malcolm will continue to serve the Finke River Mission

Bereavements

- We remember before God Una Reuther, wife of Pastor Tom Reuther, and Dawn Weiss, widow of Pastor Noel Weiss, who died recently, and we pray for those who were close to them and grieve. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Psalm 116:15



The mural features Gnadendberg Lutheran Church, as well as surrounding vineyards including Hentschke's Hill of Grace, which to this day supplies the church with their communion wine. In German the word 'gnanden' means grace, and the word 'berg' means hill.

'Faith of our Fathers'

Mural unveiled in Nuriootpa

A once non-descript corner in the township of Nuriootpa has been transformed into a bright and beautiful oasis with the unveiling of a new mural, thanks to the support of the local community.

The mural, entitled 'Faith of our Fathers', is on Murray Street, in the courtyard by the Barossa Ark Gift and Bookshop at the historic Schaedel Haus building, which is the property of St Petri Lutheran Church. What was once a red brick wall now features an idyllic scene that includes a depiction of Gnadendberg Lutheran Church at Moculta surrounded by vine-covered hills, a rainbow reflecting God's promise after the great flood, and a crystal stream of living water.

'The mural complements the beauty and peaceful scenery that our forefathers would have come to enjoy and love during their years, and the iconic presence of the church in their daily life,' says Chris Grieger, who was part of the organising committee that brought the project to life.

A host of local businesses and organisations came together to offer support, providing small grants totalling \$7000 as well as supply of materials.

It took self-taught artist Graham Smith around 123 hours to complete the mural, and he generously offered his time free of charge. While Graham is used to creating smaller works of art (several of his framed paintings are available for sale at the Barossa Ark store), this was the first piece he had

attempted at such a large scale. The mural, which has been described by community members as 'a masterpiece', has enlivened the outdoor space, which now lends itself as a gathering place for locals to socialise.

The mural was officially unveiled at a ceremony earlier this year, with the ribbon cut by Ashton Hurn MP. Pastor Richard Ansoul quoted words from John 7:37-39, "On the last and greatest day of the feast" and prayed a blessing over the mural.



Cutting the ribbon are (L-R) John Harris (Chairman, Barossa Ark Committee of Management), Ashton Hurn MP, artist Graham Smith, Dave de Vries (Councillor, Deputy Mayor, Barossa Council).

Photos Monica Schiller.

Photos courtesy Mike Cotton.

Strength in unity

How an ecumenical approach is benefiting Yankalilla

It might be small, but what the seaside town of Yankalilla lacks in size it makes up for in community spirit. This is evident in many realms including that of the Christian churches, who joined forces more than twenty years ago to establish the Yankalilla and District Inter-Church Council (YDICC). The ecumenical council consists of members from the five Christian denominations in the region, including Lutheran, Anglican, Uniting, Australian Christian and Catholic churches.

By coming together, the group has been able to make a real difference in the community. Sub-committees provide services like support to local school chaplains and a district food pantry for those in need, as well as organising community events including the annual Christmas carols, a New Year's Eve parade, a World Day of Prayer event, and more. The group also runs a weekly breakfast club for students at Yankalilla Area School and Myponga Primary School, with huge support from both children and teaching staff. It has also led to the opportunity to run Christian seminars at the schools during Easter and Christmas, sharing the biblical meaning of these special holidays with students.

Mike Cotton is one of the Lutheran members who founded the YDICC, and today plays an instrumental role in many of the activities the group is part of. Mike says that the local churches working together at an ecumenical level has not only meant more hands on deck, but has also opened up a dialogue between the different denominations and enabled people to consider alternative points of view.



Principal Christine Bell presents Mike Cotton with a Volunteer of the Year award for his work with Yankalilla Area School.

'This has helped us to develop the feeling that as Christians we are working towards the same goals, and serving the one true God,' says Mike. 'It provides opportunities for cooperation and collaboration, as well as showing the community at large that Christians are ordinary people just like them.'

Lutheran Pastor Nigel Rosenzweig says Yankalilla is a great example of how ecumenical relationships can benefit a town.

'Yankalilla is an example of a community where the churches are wanting to work together in many ways. In the future this is likely to increase as Christians in the area recognise the significance of being the body of Christ together.'

With people being drawn together as they serve others, the combined church presence is working well to maintain relevance in the community and has locals excited to see what the future may hold.

'At Yankalilla we often pray a prayer like "Jesus, prepare our hearts for what you have for us next, and give us a heart of faith to go where you are calling us to go,"' says Pastor Nigel.



Serving at breakfast club.



District update

By Angela Rogers
District Administrator

Advent is all about the anticipation of the birth of Jesus and for a lot of us this is the busiest time of the year. Many farmers in our District will be hoping to have harvest finished before Christmas, while others will be watching the weather carefully, hoping for a good ripening season. For our children the end of the school year couldn't come soon enough, and some wait nervously for exam results and uni offers. For parents this is often a time for ticking things off our extensive 'to-do-before-Christmas' list.

In the Church we also have much to look forward to. The bigger picture that sustains us is the knowledge of the coming of Christ. On a day-to-day basis, we look forward to worship and seeing our friends on Sunday, or at events during the week. Many are planning for Christmas services, and we look forward to hearing of all the creative ways your congregations have celebrated. Some are anticipating passing the baton of their role on to someone else in the new year – thank you to those who have contributed tirelessly to the life of their church. There are congregations who are looking forward to combining with others, albeit with a hint of trepidation, to

better utilise facilities and resources, releasing them from governance into new ways of ministry and care for people.

There are also changes afoot in our churchwide Safe Church training, as we transition into new forms of delivery in 2024. And we will learn more about the Way Forward project as we move closer to General Convention of Synod – this is a very important piece of work for the Church as a whole, and I encourage you to become involved by reading about it on the LCA website, subscribing to the Way Forward eNews, and talking to members of your congregation. We can rest assured that whatever the future holds, God is with us and wants to walk beside us through it all.

For the SA-NT District there are many things to look forward to. Our one-day Convention of Synod meeting will be held on 4 May 2024, at Lobethal Lutheran Church. Prior to this there will be Pastors Conference, as well as a special 'mini-retreat' for both pastors and church workers to attend. Our theme for all of the above will be 'One Church, Many Doors', and as part of this we'd like to share the good news stories that are happening in your congregations. We want to hear how God is working in your space – be it new members and how they found you, a new program you're running, an outreach activity, camp or family event. Please send your thoughts and stories to our Communications Officer, Jess Smith at jessica.smith@lca.org.au

I pray that this Christmas season will be a blessed time for you, your family and friends as we await the most precious of gifts.

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Footballer Aliir Aliir (second from left) with participants on the day.

ALWS inspires educators

Thirty-seven educators from 16 Lutheran schools gathered at Adelaide Oval in September, for the inaugural Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS) 'Ambassador Bootcamp'. The two-day initiative was designed to equip and inspire Lutheran teachers and principals from the SA, NT and WA regions to become champions for ALWS in their local schools and communities, which collectively include over 7000 students.

'The role of an ALWS Ambassador will be to connect the hearts of students, teachers and families with communities in need overseas,' says Aaron Glover, ALWS Community Engagement Manager. '(They will) grow compassion and understanding for some of the world's most vulnerable people and provide opportunities for people to express their faith in action.'

Throughout the conference, participants were invited to consider how they could be an ALWS Ambassador in their

school community and were equipped with practical skills and resources such as the principles and framework of service learning and effective fundraising. They also heard from AFL footballer Aliir Aliir who shared his inspirational journey from being a refugee in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya to becoming an elite athlete. Another guest speaker, Mary Obara, Lutheran World Federation Kenya Program Coordinator, spoke of her experiences and insight from working on the frontlines of humanitarian aid, giving attendees valuable context.

ALWS will now explore hosting similar events on an annual basis, rotating through the three Lutheran schooling regions in Australia.

'Our hope is that this inaugural Ambassador Bootcamp can have a lasting impact for participants, the students and school communities they serve, and the communities in need that our church serves overseas through ALWS,' says Aaron.

The Ambassador Bootcamp was generously sponsored by Lutheran Education SA, NT & WA (LESNW), LLL Australia, and RTG.

Photos by Martin Scharnke.

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'What the world should always be'

School's animal blessing tradition a highlight

It was a case of all creatures great and small as hundreds of beloved pets descended upon Tatachilla Lutheran College on a sunny September morning, for their much-anticipated



Blessing of the Animals ceremony. Conducted in remembrance of Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals and ecology, the event has become one of the highlights of the school year.

Tatachilla's school pastor, Jon Goessling, began the college tradition of the Blessing of the Animals ten years ago, inspired by a similar event he'd seen at a city parish. He was moved by the obvious connection between humans and their animals that was spiritual in nature and based on deep love.

'My job as a college pastor is to make the invisible God visible and to help students understand their spiritual selves and the transformative power of love,' says Pastor Jon.

'At Tatachilla, the annual Blessing of the Animals event has become an unwitting gateway for students to see God in nature, with animals acting as the language of love and community. There is nothing so intuitive and profound as the love we have for the animals in our lives: it is Godly and transformative.

'I will never forget one Blessing of the Animals event at the college, where I came upon a senior student laying on her back on the grass looking blissfully up at the sky, seemingly breathing in the atmosphere of the animals around her. I asked her if she was alright and she responded, "This is the best day of my life. This is what the world should always be."

Photos by Greg Adams from Imagestix, courtesy Tatachilla Lutheran College.



Image right: Pastors Albert Gast (in the sombrero) and André Meyer blessed the many beloved animals of Tatachilla Lutheran College families.



At the school's first Blessing of the Animals event in 2013 there were some 30 pets brought along. This year there was an astounding response from the college community with approximately 400 animals on campus. Three horses, a cow, a sheep, a dove and even a hermit crab were in line to be blessed, along with droves of cats, dogs, bunnies, guinea pigs and budgies. With Pastor Jon on extended leave the task of blessing the enthusiastic mob fell to Pastor Albert Gast, affectionately coined "Past Al" by students, who is filling in as college pastor for 2023. Pastor André Meyer from Calvary Lutheran Church in Morphett Vale was also called in as a reinforcement, due to the huge number of animals in attendance.

There was plenty to keep everyone entertained on the day. Bluegrass band Miss Ohio had toes, paws and claws tapping, and a mobile petting zoo full of baby animals from The Farm Barn at Hahndorf was a hit with young and old alike.

Pastor Jon, who is looking forward to being part of next year's event when he returns from leave, says the connection between humans and animals evident in the college community is a special thing.

'I love that in my job at Tatachilla I can step outside of my office and see a family walking their alpaca up the school path on their way to see a staff member. This part of the 'college normal' – where people and animals can interact lovingly every day – and what a wonderful normal it is.'



Reaching a new crowd

Hundreds of first-time campers welcomed this year

By Ian Crambrook, Camping & Event Ministries Coordinator

Late last year LLL Australia announced that they would continue their generous sponsorship of camping ministry across the LCA for the next three years, until 2025. In the SA-NT District, we have been using this sponsorship to generously subsidise young people to attend their first Blueprint Ministries camp.

Through this first-time camper sponsorship program we have been blessed to welcome around 200 new young people to our wider community this year alone! This has been particularly impactful for our regional communities, with around 85 first-time campers being reached by our programs in these areas.

While some of these first-timers have been excited to come to camps having seen their older siblings attend in the past, many are brand new to our community, and without this sponsorship likely would not have heard about camp, or been able to attend. Increasingly, we are also seeing young people with little or no church connections at all joining us, meaning we are able to teach the good news of Jesus to those who otherwise may never have the opportunity to hear it!

Of special note this year was the return of the Eyre Peninsula Christian Life Week (EPCLW) camp. Nine years ago the decision was made to cease running EPCLW due to low booking numbers, but this year a team from the community came to us with a passion to see this camp return to the region. Through their hard work we were able to hold CLW during the October school holidays for 25 young campers, 22 of whom had never before attended a camp with Blueprint Ministries.

We would like to thank the SA-NT District and LLL Australia for their ongoing support of our camping ministry, and look forward to continuing our partnership in 2024.

Parent feedback

‘The camp has started some Bible conversations at home that were previously hard to get going with the kids. It’s been great to see their growth and enthusiasm – and that it hasn’t slowed down since returning.’

‘My girls were first time campers, one of whom didn’t know a single person before departure, yet returned with a bus full of caring friends who chose to show kindness and compassion to all they met. Having an opportunity to immerse themselves in their budding faith with like-minded people was wonderful and they have both asked to go again next year.’

‘From a parent perspective, the camp was the highlight of their holiday. I think they had a deeper encounter and awareness than what they are even sharing with us. Thank you for facilitating the camp and giving the youth a safe space to be young, to be Christian, and to still have fun.’



Back, and better than ever! Eyre Peninsula CLW returns

By Jackie Lutz, Camp Director

What a week! What a glorious, blessed week! It’s been nine years since the last Christian Life Week camp on the Eyre Peninsula, and it was always going to be big boots to, walking fill in the footsteps of giants – the legends that came before us.

We started on Sunday with leaders meeting, to set up our campsite for the week ahead and run through leader training. We were fortunate to have leaders come from Murray Bridge, Barossa, Adelaide and Loxton, with a handful of trusty locals chipping in too.

We had 25 campers in attendance - a mixed bag with kids from all over the Eyre Peninsula, some from worshipping families and some who had never been to church before, but all the same, what a terrific bunch of kids!

Each day started with a rather loud wake-up call including James Brown, Day-o, the Star Wars Imperial March, and good old bagpipes. We had loud worship after breakfast, then straight into small groups for Bible study prepared by our very own Pastor Peter Klemm from Cummins. Our study was based on the text for camp – Psalm 34:19, of which we shared a few different versions including: “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those whose spirit is crushed.” Then another louder and longer worship each night.

We had a vast array of games and activities planned for the campers and messy games was the favourite for many. Who would’ve thought getting covered in tomato sauce, spaghetti and flour would be their highlight!

Many commented on what a relaxed vibe and feeling there is here, to which us locals would respond: West Coast is the best coast!

2024 diary dates

9-12 January
SPIN camp (Year 4-6 year olds)
Camp Kedron, Barmera

9-12 February
RENEW (young adults)
Dzintari Campsite, Yankalilla

19-22 April
NOVO (Year 7-12)
Unity College, Murray Bridge

24 February
Young Adults Welcome Event
North Adelaide (venue TBC)



(L-R) LCANZ Bishop Paul Smith, LCA SA-NT District Bishop Andrew Brook, Pastor Mark Welke, former ADCC pastor John Hoopman, Pastor Julian Mazzeo.

Signs of a promising future

Julian Mazzeo ordained to the ADCC

Deaf Ministry has officially entered a new era, with the ordination and installation of Specific Ministry Pastor Julian Mazzeo, to serve the Adelaide Deaf Community Church (ADCC).

The joyful service, held in a mix of Australian Sign Language and English, took place in October at Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Magill. Pilgrim is a church where both the ADCC congregation and a hearing congregation worship at different times.

Julian says he was excited to be ordained and prays that he can continue to make a positive impact in his congregation and beyond.

‘I am already enjoying my new ministry job,’ Julian says.

‘I want the ADCC to be a place where everyone feels welcome. My commitment to supporting the Deaf community on their spiritual journey is inspired by my faith, and the teachings of Jesus. I’m motivated to help more people become disciples and followers of Christ.’

In the months prior to his ordination Julian joined Pastor Michael Prenzler on a 12-day study tour in the United States, attending a Deaf ministry workshop hosted by US group Deaf Outreach. The trip was a great opportunity to share and learn from one another, and for Julian to develop a network of likeminded Deaf ministry leaders who he will be able to keep in contact with, thanks to the wonders of technology.

Support Deaf Ministry

The District has set up a fund which will go towards supporting Julian’s ministry, his ongoing training, and to assist with providing interpreter services when he attends church events. If you or your congregation members feel led to contribute, the bank account details for donations are:

Account name: LCA AGFund
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Never to late to be baptised

*Do you feel like it's too late in life to make a change? The heartwarming story of Waikerie local Michael Hass, as recounted by **Neville Beelitz**, might make you think again.*

It was mid-2022 when I first met Michael Haas. Michael came to our community of Waikerie in South Australia to live in one of our aged care facilities, and had no way to commute to church.

Despite his age, then 96, he was a very fit and active person and quite keen to walk the 450 metres to the church building, if accompanied, on a fine day. Waikerie Lutheran Church soon assembled a small roster of helpers to either pick him up or walk with him to church.

It is always a treat to sit and chat with Michael about his life. Michael has an intriguing story and will proudly tell you that he was born in the same year as the late Queen Elizabeth II. He has lived through much world conflict, including fighting and being a Prisoner of War during the Second World War. Michael and his family immigrated to Australia in 1966.

Through all that life has dealt Michael over the years, he has continued to display his faith in Jesus and understands the gift of grace and eternal life. Through discussions and some research it became apparent that through the upheavals and the lack of opportunities, Michael had never been baptised. Well, this didn’t seem right! Could we do something about this? Yes we could!

So, on October 1 2023, Michael Haas was baptised, aged 97, at Waikerie Lutheran Church by Pastor Julian Bayha. A lively morning tea followed to celebrate with the congregation. All praise be to God!

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3: 5-6



Photo caption: L-R Pastor Julian Bayha, Michael Haas, Neville Beelitz, Sue Beelitz.

IN BRIEF

Exhibition a visual feast

An art exhibition held recently at Glynde Lutheran Church was a feast for the eyes and a window to the artists’ spiritual inspiration. The six-day exhibition was held in response to an invitation from LCA Visual Arts, asking congregations to interpret the theme of ‘Come to the Banquet’ as part of the Churchwide Simultaneous Art Exhibition 2023.

There were over 25 different pieces on display from artists of all ages, with varied backgrounds and experience. Some of the artworks included an eight-metre long exhibit entitled ‘The Last Supper’; cleverly crafted dishes created by the Korean congregation Sunday School children which together made up a faux-food version of a Korean family banquet known as ‘Janchi’ (pictured); works in acrylic, collage, mixed media, and more.



150 years for Appila

By Merrelyn Zanker



The church building; Bishop Paul Smith and Pastors Brian Keller, Robin Zadow, Stephen Noblett, Len Gerschwitz, Michael Parker and Rodney Witmitz.

The congregation of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Appila (Pine Creek) recently celebrated their 150th anniversary with a thanksgiving service, attended by around 160 people. LCANZ Bishop Paul Smith and Pastor Stephen Noblett led the service, with previous pastor Robin Zadow assisting with Holy Communion. Other pastors who have served the congregation in the past who were also there on the day included Michael Parker, Len Gerschwitz, Rodney Witmitz and Brian Keller.

After the service there was a re-dedication of the bell tower, which was recently constructed by a group of the congregation members. The bell was cast in Germany in 1910, and originally dedicated in 1911. The congregation’s oldest member, Stanley Wegner (who has sadly since passed away and is now with his heavenly father) had the honour of cutting the ribbon to officially unveil the plaque of dedication.

Images supplied

Deaf Ministry photo courtesy Angela Rogers.

LLL walk the talk



LLL Australia hosted a sunny Walk My Way event in October, with LLL staff and friends meandering ten kilometres through the tree-lined streets of North Adelaide, raising \$3,600 to support vulnerable children and their families through Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS).

A BBQ breakfast provided everyone with the energy needed to get started on the right foot, with their journey beginning at the LLL carpark, and concluding at the Wellington Hotel, where many participants enjoyed a well-earned beverage or meal.

‘Partnerships are at the heart of everything we do, and LLL has partnered with ALWS to support its humanitarian efforts across the world for years, with grants, donations and sponsorships,’ says Scott Ross, LLL Chief Relationship Officer.

North Zone Fellowship Day

By Betty Wilhelm



Held at The Ark Lutheran Church in Salisbury, the North Zone Fellowship Day was based on the Bible text Psalm 145:4 – “Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts: let them proclaim your power”, reminding attendees that their stories are important, and to never underestimate their impact on others.

Guest speaker Mark Underwood, Pastoral Care Worker at Lake Windemere School, shared his personal story of coming to faith and aspects of his work where he can demonstrate God’s love to other by being creatively involved in the lives of students and their families when they’re going through difficult circumstances. Mark also oversees an on-site food pantry and hamper provision, and many have been blessed through this.

In the afternoon the group was entertained by an energetic presentation of songs by kindergarten children (pictured), business formalities, and presentations from Susan Richards from Lutheran Care and Jeanette Mann from Blueprint Ministries. A closing devotion by Pastor Joel Cramer concluded the inspiring day.

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