



CHURCH PLANTING

Plant. Water. Grow

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it,
but God has been making it grow

(1 Cor 3:6)



NEW & RENEWING CHURCHES
LOCAL MISSION





a letter from Bishop John Henderson

Dear Pastor

It took only a few minutes on a Sunday morning for the pastor to baptise Jane and her three boys. This simple, profound event, the gift of new life, didn't happen by accident. Under God's grace and care, it arrived through years of patient witness and prayer. A small team of local Christians (Lutherans) had walked with this family through the grief and pain of losing their husband and father at an early age.

In the name of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Jane and her boys received new life and real hope. Living in a new housing estate, they are now the fourth family in a church group that gathers to worship Jesus as Lord. God's transforming grace and love binds it together. In this community, Jane and her boys continue to learn about Jesus. They grow daily in the 'love that comes to life', as promised wherever we gather around the living Word.

This is what church planting looks like on the ground. This brochure is an invitation for you, and your congregation, to participate with the LCA as we aim, under the Holy Spirit, to plant new church communities in Australia and New Zealand.

It is also an offer of support, training and mentoring by the LCA New and Renewing Churches department, as you and your congregation/s grow in spreading the gospel through evangelism and church planting. Now is the time, more than ever, for us to step forward in mission. Whether your congregation is new or old, large or small, urban or rural, you have an important role in bringing the gospel of hope to new people.

Please consider prayerfully how you can take up this offer and challenge, and talk it over with your congregation.

Yours in Jesus our Lord,

Pastor John Henderson

Bishop, Lutheran Church of Australia



THE PROPHECY

and the promise

Jesus planted the Christian Church in the world. His disciples were the first church. But that was only the beginning. Looking into the future, Jesus said, 'I will build my church' (Matt 16:18). It was always his intention that the church, his body on earth, would grow, and keep growing.

He knew we'd need a hand, so he promised to send us a Helper (John 14:16). Every baptised Lutheran in Australia and New Zealand is part of Jesus' prophecy fulfilled - we're part of the church he grew - and every one of us has received his promised Helper, the Holy Spirit, so that we can keep the church growing.

The LCA New and Renewing Churches department is taking Jesus' prophecy and his promise seriously. We are inviting you and your congregation to join us on the LCA journey

to plant 230 new churches in 10 years.

THE PLAN

Mobilise the whole church

For a whole range of reasons, not every Lutheran congregation can plant a new church. However, every congregation can support a church-planting team - through prayer, encouragement, finances, or commissioning a team member.

We do believe, though, that there are many Lutheran congregations who have the capacity to plant a new church. Could yours be one of them?

We currently have a number of Sending Churches in Australia and New Zealand, with more in the wings. The churches they plant will have church planting in their DNA; each new church aims to plant another church within five years. These may not look just like your church, but churches they will be. Partner Churches will support the Sending Churches.

We're inviting every Lutheran church in Australia and New Zealand to become either a Sending Church or a Partner Church.



God grows us as his people to a mature faith in Christ

***a faith that comes to life through effective witness and ministry,
so that people everywhere may know Christ and his love.***

(LCA Our Direction 2018–2024)

THE PRINCIPLE

Mature churches plant new churches

Just as it's natural for a generation of mature, healthy adults to give birth to a new generation, so it is with churches. Church planting is an expression of a mature and healthy congregation, which instinctively wants to create a new generation of believers in Christ. And just like it is with a human family, new churches may not look the same as the 'parent' church - they will reflect their own unique cultural context. Nevertheless, all church plants will bear a family resemblance - they will be shaped by the gospel and the enduring marks of the Christian church.

THE APPROACH

Churches need to grow in order to go (and to go in order to grow)

Mature, healthy and reproducing churches don't just happen. The New and Renewing Churches department is developing a team to mentor and facilitate the leaders and members of Sending Churches for church planting. Sending Churches will grow in understanding the principles of evangelism and incarnational mission, and how to plant a church for people who are not yet Christians. This process involves learning how to listen, to serve and to make disciples - in effect, the Sending Churches become learning communities around mission.

This growth will not occur overnight - Sending Churches will make a big commitment. The New and Renewing Church department church planting team will journey with each Sending Church and its pastor through a three-to-five-year church planting formation process. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, specific training will be provided which is tailored to the unique needs of each congregation.

In addition to providing this support, the Committee for New and Renewing Churches will assist each Sending Church to raise funds for church planting.



THE STATS

The local congregation is the key instrument that God uses to build his church. The National Church Life Survey reports that people who come to faith in Christ do so primarily through attending a local church. The research also indicates that new congregations are more effective than established ones for reaching people with the gospel and growing the church through new converts. The facts are compelling.

- **New congregations attract more newcomers than older churches do.** At church plants of mainstream denominations, 32% of people are newcomers, whereas in established LCA churches, newcomers represent only 3% per cent. In some cases, new church plants have 75% newcomer attendance.
- **Church plants reach younger people.** Not only are new churches better than others at reaching newcomers generally, they are also attracting a younger demographic. In new churches, 69% of people are between 15 and 49 years, compared with only 48% in churches generally. There is also a slightly higher proportion of males than females in church plants, the opposite of the trend in established churches.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

This bold church-planting plan is a critical piece of the Committee for New and Renewing Churches' vision under the LCA national mission strategy, but it's not the whole picture. **A supporting element is the development of the mission capacity of all LCA congregations, including yours.** So New and Renewing Churches will also be assisting you with local mission strategy development and training.





THE 'SENDING CHURCH' JOURNEY

STEP 1 *Contact us*

If your congregation is considering becoming a Sending Church, contact the LCA's New and Renewing Churches department, and one of our team members will conduct a local mission assessment to see where your congregation is up to on its journey of participation in the mission of God. If you're ready to start the Sending Church journey, a training and development program will be tailored to your unique circumstances.

STEP 2 *'Becoming a Sending Church' formation*

In the first years of the journey, the leadership team of the Sending Church will attend workshops conducted locally or regionally. This will be supplemented by online resources and forums for dialoguing with church leaders from the other Lutheran congregations on this journey. Pastors of Sending Churches will engage their leadership team in an action/reflection dialogue around provided resources. Free small-group studies and online resources for all church members will be provided. In summary, the 'Becoming a Sending Church' formation training sets up a continuous cycle of congregational spiritual renewal that prepares it to give birth to new congregations.

STEP 3 *Church Planting team formation*

At the three year mark, recruiting and training of the church-planting team will commence. A facilitator/mentor will work with the pastor of the Sending Church to organise the recruitment, evaluation, training and launching of a new church-planting team. They will be assigned a mentor for their first year in the field. Team members will have ongoing opportunities to dialogue with other church planters.

STEP 4 *Church Planting*

The resulting new congregations will be designed to evolve into inter-dependent but self-propagating Lutheran congregations. In turn, each new congregation will aim to start a new congregation.

STEP 5 *Multiplication*

Longer term, it is envisaged that Sending Church leaders will be equipped and invited to assist other Lutheran churches to start and complete the same journey, resulting in a multiplication movement of church planting.

THE 'PARTNER CHURCH' COMMITMENT

Partner Churches support Sending Churches in these ways:

- **Prayer:** Church planting is hard work - the teams will need much prayer support. Partner Churches will receive regular updates and prayer bulletins from the church planting teams of Sending Churches.
- **Encouragement:** Church planting teams and their families need encouragement. Partner Churches can do this by visiting the teams in their new congregations or by writing to them to let them know they are being prayed for.
- **Finances:** Most church planting team members will be tent-makers (self-funded lay workers) who may need financial help to keep themselves and their families afloat.
- **People:** There may be individuals or families whom Partner Churches will commission to be part of a church planting team.

Partner churches stand alongside Sending Churches for the long haul.

Your part

We invite you and your congregation to join this church planting journey with the LCA Council for Local Mission, through its Committee for New and Renewing Churches, as:

- **A Sending Church:** This church becomes a 'parent' of a new congregation (church plant). A mission facilitator will be provided to journey with each Sending Church for three year to five years to develop a continuous cycle of listening, learning and growing together.
- **A Partner Church:** Your congregation might not be able to be a Sending Church, but every congregation can be a Partner Church. Partner Churches provide support to church planting teams of Sending Churches through prayer, encouragement or finances, and possibly commissioning members to join a church planting team.



How to...

BECOME A SENDING CHURCH

Engage your congregation's leaders and members in this invitation. Please let us know you if are interested and currently processing this with your congregation. Email Noel Due or or Noel Due (see below). Talk it through, discuss the commitment required and pray about it at every opportunity. If your members are supportive and you believe this is where God is leading you, then apply to be a Sending Church using the form found at www.lca.org.au/new-churches. Note that there are limited spaces available for this training at any one time.

Need to talk this through some more? No problem. Noel Due or Dean Eaton will be happy to receive your phone call or email (details below), and they will contact you so you know what's involved before

BECOME A PARTNER CHURCH

As with Sending Churches (above), engage your congregation in this invitation. Discuss how you might be able to support a sending church and pray about it whenever you and your leadership team meets. If you have any questions, give us a call (see details below). We are always happy to encourage mission-minded people.

SUPPORT CHURCH PLANTING RIGHT NOW

This Church Planting venture is financially possible because of the LLL Local Mission Permanent Fund. You and your congregation can support the LCA's church planting ventures by contributing to this fund.

lll.org.au

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