



SCRIPT FOR PRESENTERS

[It is appropriate for you to wear a white ribbon.]

Good morning/evening.

Today I am joining pastors and congregation leaders all across the Lutheran Church of Australia and Lutheran Church of New Zealand who are speaking to their congregations about a difficult and very important subject. It may be confronting for some of you. If it is, you might want to speak to or pray with afterwards.

Yesterday, 25 November was the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. In Australia it is also known as White Ribbon Day. This is a timely opportunity for the Lutheran Church of Australia to launch its campaign for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. The establishment of this campaign was a directive of delegates at the 2015 General Convention of Synod. They said:

That the Convention of Synod reaffirms its condemnation of all forms of violence in the family, and authorises General Church Council to commit resources for a church-wide campaign to address the prevalence of family violence among us.

Those final two words are especially important. 'Among us'. General Synod acknowledged that domestic and family violence occurs in churches as much as it does anywhere else in society. Domestic and family violence happens in our own Lutheran congregations. It happens among us.

The Synod delegates directed General Church Council to fund the development of resources, education initiatives and pastoral support for the survivors of violence, as well as for the perpetrators of abuse.

Our Lutheran Church's campaign aims to make everyone in our congregations aware of the scourge of domestic violence and its impact not only on victims themselves but also on their families and on entire church communities.

It aims to give everyone in congregations – from our pastors to every one of you here this [morning/evening] – the confidence to challenge a person who uses violence, and to say that violence in any form is never okay.

The campaign aims to give victims the love and care you need – no matter who you are or who you are married to. It assures victims that it is okay to leave an abusive relationship, and that your church will support you if you need to take that difficult step.

[Distribute flyers.] The flyers being distributed give you information about the campaign and where to seek help for yourself or for someone you know. There is also information about training, if you want to know how to help others. Every adult should take a flyer. I will leave the spares at/on [.....]. Take as many as you need for friends or family members.

Please pray for victims of family violence everywhere, including those in our own Lutheran congregations and communities, and for anyone you know personally who is a victim or an abuser. Please encourage them to seek help.