

**SERMON SERIES INTRODUCTION, OVERVIEW AND PLANNING**

**5 week Sermon Series**





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**Origins**

In June 2014 Bishop John Henderson produced a briefing paper for a proposed working group to attend to the LCA’s tagline, Where Love Comes to Life. The working group was convened in August 2014, under Rev Dr Noel Due, appointed by the bishop. Other members were Mrs Ruth Zimmermann, Dr Pauline Simonsen, Mrs Anne Dohnt, Rev Reid Matthias and Rev Joel Cramer. Rev Dr Greg Lockwood was not able to join the group, but offered his services to consult as needed. This paper is the first of the tasks the bishop set the group: to ‘investigate the theological origins of the theme, and prepare a background paper on its meaning and how it might inform the church … [by providing] a clear, scriptural, gospel centred explanation, retaining [its] emphasis on sanctification’. The paper was drafted by Dr Due and sent out to the working group for review and revision before being adopted as the foundational document for the rest of the group’s work.

In 2015 the Lutheran Church of Australia Committee for New and Renewing Churches decided to maximise the bible studies produced by this group to form the basis for a sermon and bible study series called RENEW Mission Life – *Where Love Comes to Life*. After adding some material by Graham Harms, further writing and editing by the Rev Dr Noel Due and Dean Eaton, this edited version of the original work was submitted to the Mission Directors of the LCA for approval (Rev Dr Steen Olsen, Rev John O’Keefe, Rev Brett Kennett).



***A five week season of renewing local mission in a congregation, school or other community setting***

# Overview of series

*Sermon & Bible Study Series Title:* ***Where Love Comes to Life***

*Big idea for the series:* Mission life flows out of who God is and who we are becoming.

*Explanation of big idea:* A missional life participates in the shared life of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As a consequence we are transformed to be a community where Gods love comes to life. The same love that transforms us is drawing our families, neighbours and friends into new life in Christ. “For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died.” (2 Corinthians 5.14 NRSV)

*Purpose of series:*To help people grow in their understanding and participation in the mission of God in the world.

Series Outline & Schedule:

*Week One: WHERE LOVE COMES TO LIFE* - Introduction to the series

WHERE LOVE COMES…MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY ONE

Week Two:

* WHERE LOVE COMES…SUNDAY SERMON
* WHERE LOVE COMES…MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY TWO

Week Three:

* LOVE COMES TO… SUNDAY SERMON
* LOVE COMES TO… MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY THREE

Week Four:

* COMES TO LIFE…SUNDAY SERMON
* COMES TO LIFE…MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY FOUR

Week Five:

* MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES…SUNDAY SERMON
* MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES…MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY FIVE

# Making the most of the RENEW Mission Life

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# The Season PACKAGE

1. RENEW Mission Life five week sermon and *Bible study series:* ***Where Love Comes To Life***
2. RENEW Missional Leadership – a series of ten devotions for your leaders that could be used as devotions at your normal  scheduled meetings (e.g. Ministry Team)
3. RENEW Missional Communities eight week bible study designed to form Missional Communities in your congregation.
4. Promotional Tools – digital flyers, promotional videos, useful web links.
5. Theme Chorus to teach your congregation pre-season so that you know it already when the Mission Life season commences.

# Launching RENEW Missional Communities



The final resource provided is the RENEW Missional Communities eight week bible study designed to form Missional Communities in your congregation. A Missional Community, or what we are calling Missional Communities, is different from a Mission Committee. A Mission Committee is designed to support missionaries (usually far away) through raising awareness, prayer and financial support. A local Congregational Missional Community on the other hand is a mission team working in the local community and social networks to sow the Gospel, reap the harvest and engage new converts in the initial stages of discipleship.



**PLANNING**

You can download the RENEW Mission Life package of resources and commence preparing. It is suggested that you designate five weeks post Pentecost for the RENEW Mission Life sermon series and Bible studies, however, so as to maximize the energy of a new year some Pastors are planning adapt the material to use for Lent.

Two weeks after the season is completed commence the next stage of your local mission development by starting your first **Missional Community**. This is a new team (community of practice) working in the evangelism space of your congregation. They will become pivotal to sowing and reaping the harvest God wants to send you. The RENEW Mission Life sermon series is an essential pre-requisite to commencing a **Missional Community** as it is designed to bring understanding of how to support those members of the congregation working in local mission.

**Missional Communities** are a new kind of small group in your congregation doing evangelism in social networks, the local community, Schools and other places.

**LEADERSHIP**

It is ideal to recruit at least a host and a leader for your first **Missional Mission Community** prior to commencing the RENEW Mission Life sermon series so that they can assist in promotions and preparation of the launch of the Missional Community. This may not be possible as it may take going through the RENEW Mission Life series to inspire some suitable people to sense the call into the missional space.

Induction for your Missional Community leaders will be provided by Dean Eaton utilizing YouTube to help leaders know how to prepare for, promote and recruit people to be a part of one or more Missional Communities in your congregation. Leaders will be encouraged to always work in a collaborative manner and in an accountability relationship with their Pastor.

Please commence praying and thinking about the right leader for such a team**.** Possibly the right person won’t be gifted as an evangelist but they will be a gifted leader with a passion and calling to local mission. You will need to release them and all of the people joining a Missional Community, from responsibilities in the ‘church space’ otherwise they won’t have the energy margin in their lives for engaging with people who are not yet Christians. If a vital leader or worker in your Congregation has to resign from duties in the ‘church space’ to join a Missional Community don’t be alarmed. Trust God to provide the workers you need to keep congregational life healthy. It may also mean that you decide to stop doing some things that are not bearing fruit in order to launch Missional Communities.

**PROMOTION**

The series of promotional videos for the Mission Life season. There are four videos;

**MISSIONAL** – Play this video at least a couple of times during announcement time in your Sunday Worship to flag the coming Renew Mission Life season. Suggested follow up remarks after playing:

“*Do you Missional? Do you know the God who brings life and love to all people everywhere? Find out more this year when we launch a five week sermon and Bible study season called – Renew Mission Life: Where Love Comes to Life. Commencing (date)…”*

**MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES 1** – This is to be played at the end of sermons 1 & 2 as listed in the sermon notes.

**MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES 2 -** This is to be played at the end of sermon 3 as listed in the sermon notes.

**MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES 3 (compilation of parts 1 & 2).** This is to be played at the end of sermon 4 as listed in the sermon notes.

**MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES 3 (compilation of parts 1 & 2).** This is to be played at the end of sermon 5 as listed in the sermon notes.

A flyer explaining what it’s all about is to be handed out and displayed in your digital spaces (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Email, Church Web site) as well as distributed in printed format for a few weeks in a row on Sundays.

**PREPARATION**

Someone needs to take responsibility for promotions, ensuring that all promotional material is distributed on time and that the videos can be played at the appropriate time during Sunday Worship as per the suggested schedule.

Pastors will need to prepare sermons utilizing (and adapting) the sermons and sermon PowerPoints provided. Please note if you change the sermon content substantially then you will also need to change the provided PowerPoints and weekly Bible Studies.

**PRAYER**

Without a call to prayer during this important season you may miss some of God’s surprises coming your way. It is suggested that the entire Congregation be requested to increase their prayer during this season with a specifically local focus. *“Lord who are you drawing into your Kingdom amongst our families, friends, neighbours, and how can we meaningfully participate in what you are doing?”* The Mission Life: Where Love Comes to Life Bible studies will include suggested prayers throughout the Mission Life season.

**THEME CHORUSES & VIDEOS**

These theme videos and choruses are presented as further resources rather than an essential part of the series.

**SONGS TO SING:**

*Where Love Comes to Life* – Adrian Kitson - LYRIC VIDEO, Length 3.45

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmJ7iwZhgZk>