

TOGETHER

Magazine of the Lutheran Church of Australia South Australia – Northern Territory District



**LUTHERAN
SCHOOLS**
*Build for Fijian
Families*

**Yalata Celebrates
Pastor's Milestone**

**Yirara's
Royal
Visit**

**Lutheran
Community Care
50TH
ANNIVERSARY
GALA BALL**

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

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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 for the next edition of Together closes on the first Friday of February.

The magazine will be distributed in March.

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/

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FRONT COVER PHOTO

Students from Lutheran schools united to build two houses for Fijian families in need, as part of the Habitat for Humanity Build Program.
Photo supplied.



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From the Editor

Jessica Smith

Together Magazine Editor
jessica.smith@lca.org.au

Welcome to our December issue! This is my first issue of Together as your new editor. Thanks to all of you for the warm welcome into the Lutheran Church SA-NT District community.

In the lead up to this significant time of the year I'd like to share a past Christmas story recounted to me by a district pastor. To teach the message of 'there's no Christmas without Jesus' Pastor Neville Doecke had hidden a baby Jesus doll underneath straw in a makeshift manger and asked children attending the service in the remote Aboriginal community of Wallace Rockhole to find what was missing. A delighted two-year-old, Mariah, was so happy to find 'Jesus' that she couldn't resist scooping him up for a cuddle and started off with him excitedly.

But someone told her she had to put him back, so reluctantly she did and returned to her mother, crying. At the end of the service, as the blessing was being given, Pastor Neville's wife, Heather, noticed Mariah creep back to the front and stand quietly beside the manger.

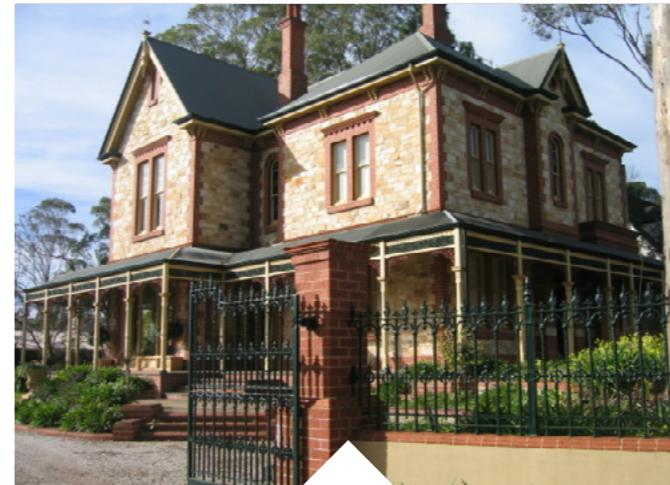
"My wife told me Mariah didn't take 'Jesus' this time, she just looked at him for a long while and then lovingly placed her little hand on him," recalls Pastor Neville. Heather managed to grab the camera and snapped a photo of the unspoken exchange between the little girl and 'Jesus'. It was a small but significant moment for Pastor Neville, who wonders what Mariah was thinking about the special baby she saw and prays that as she grows she will learn of Jesus' love for her.

"As a pastor you have all these things planned – a Christmas service, formalities and celebrations," Pastor Neville told me. "But sometimes God shows up unexpectedly, by moving in the hearts and lives of the children."

This Christmas may we all look for joy in the unplanned moments, knowing that it is often in the unexpected that God reveals himself. I wish you all a wonderful festive season and I look forward to welcoming a new year together as we move into 2020.



Pastor Neville Doecke, Mariah and 'baby Jesus', Christmas 2018, Wallace Rockhole. Photo: Heather Doecke



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A WORD FROM YOUR BISHOP...

By Pastor David Altus, Bishop, SA-NT District, Lutheran Church of Australia

"Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains"- James 5:7-10

We hear these words this year during the season of Advent, just before Christmas.

Our farming folk are indeed an inspiration to us when it comes to patience, but even their patience must be wearing thin or running out after many years of drought in some parts of Australia. Whole towns in parts of my earlier parishes are running out of water. I don't know how our farmers do it but I know they can do it tough for long periods.

You don't need me to tell you that we live in the driest state in the driest continent on earth. Maybe inside you feel like a lake that is drying up fast too. The level of your inner resources may be low at the end of another year. Perhaps you feel like you have been giving out and you haven't been replenishing the life you have given away. And as you look at the state of the church today we all sometimes feel flat and dry. The spiritual life has been sapped out of us for whatever reason.

Yet I know God's people, including those on the land will continue to gather, looking to him, waiting on him in prayer, and yes, they will continue to sing the song of faith in him – of what he has done for us in the past and what we hope and know he will do in the future. They will sing the faith and the hope that carries us through anything and everything because we know God's face in the person of Jesus Christ, the face of God that he promises will never turn away from us.

Jesus once said: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within them. By this he meant the Spirit" - John 7:38-39

That was the gospel at a joint service of four congregations in the Adelaide Hills recently. God's people there felt blessed and so devoted the whole offering and the fundraising afterwards to drought relief. It was meant to be a sign that we not only pray for rain but show our love by putting our hands in our pockets for brothers and sisters on the land during a time of need as a sign of care and to help sustain our "patient farmers".

The service had two themes "Praising God with music and song", and "Drought relief". On the surface those two themes jarred and didn't fit together, but for Christians they do. Whether it rains or not (and we pray it will), we will gather around the manger again at Christmas and sing, believing God is still with us, he has come to us and he hasn't left us. All the life and all the love we need is found in that manger in Jesus. His Spirit flowing within us keeps us believing, hoping and yes, waiting with patience.

Christians keep on singing because our hope is more than the things of this life. Our hope is in Jesus. Jesus who spent 40 days in the desert for us and whose body dried up and wasted on a cross for us. Jesus who says he will never leave us or forsake us. Jesus who promises to be with us always and promises the best is yet to come.

So we keep on singing, with one eye on the clouds for rain and the other looking for our Lord to return on the last day. With the prophet Habakkuk we can say, and even sing:

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen

*and no cattle in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Saviour
- Habakuk 3:17-18*

My prayer is that all of you will find reason for joy and praise again this Christmas, whatever the year has been for you personally, for your parish, and especially those of you who have been doing it tough on the land.

Calls accepted

Greg Vangness (Naracoorte) to Mid North Lutheran Ministries

Avito Da Costa (Pt Adelaide) to Riverview Aged Care Loxton

Greg Priebebenow (Blair Athol) to Indooroopilly Qld

Mathew Ker (Warrnambool Vic) to Barossa North Parish

Lee Van Rossen (Graduate) assigned to Whyalla

Tim Castle-Schmidt reassignment from McLaren Vale to Onkaparinga Parish

Vacancies in SA-NT

7 Parishes can afford a full time pastor and are calling

1 Pastor for FRM is being sought

7 Parishes can no longer afford a full time pastor and are considering options

3 Colleges are calling a pastor

2 Colleges have called a lay-chaplain



FROM THE BISHOP'S DIARY...

Team installation

Our three Blueprint workers - Ian, Joanne and Jeanette - were installed at a service in St Michael's Hahndorf on November 3rd. They are working well together and I hope you are getting to know them and will be blessed as they serve children and families, youth and young adults in our District.

LCC/LDS merger

The process of bringing together Lutheran Community Care and Lutheran Disability services to form Lutheran Community services has taken time but needed doing carefully and in stages. We thank members of the steering committee for their diligence and time devoted to this task. We also thank members of both Boards, and all staff for their patience. DCC has endorsed appointments for a "Board in waiting" as the legal process reaches its conclusion. Pray for the significant work that will be undertaken in 2020 to live out the objectives of Lutheran Community Services as one organisation.

Regional discussions

Conversations toward a more sustainable ministry future have begun in some of the northern and southern suburbs of Adelaide and will take place on the Yorke Peninsula early in 2020. It is pleasing to see leaders of some congregations that don't have an immediate need

willing to be at these tables. I encourage you all to think about ministry in the region around you, not just shoring up your own needs. I also encourage you to think beyond how you can pool enough money to pay a pastor between you, rather how the ministry of both pastor, other workers and all God's people might best happen in your region.

College of Bishops

Meetings in the latter part of the year included:

- Considering a plan to train key people in each District for reconciliation case work
- Progressing implications of the Royal Commission recommendations such as the Seal of Confession, professional pastoral supervision and annual reviews for all pastors
- Ongoing work on the recommendations of the review into the Call process
- Meeting with General Church Board for a whole day in October considering "where to" for the LCA with respect to the issue of ordaining women and men. Bishop Henderson's communique is publicly available. We will meet again early in 2020 to follow up further. It is a work in progress, which may frustrate you for different reasons. Please respect that it is a complex situation to resolve, and please pray for your leaders.

Welcome back...

It is good to have Assistant Bishop for Mission Stephen Schultz back after three months R&R leave. He certainly earned a good long break that refreshed him for the challenges ahead.

Farewells & Retirements

Pastor Greg Priebebenow's last service at Blair Athol was on November 3rd before transferring to the Queensland District. We thank Greg for his service in our District and pray God's blessing on his future.

Pastor Wally Schiller enters retirement at a service at Strait Gate on Jan 19th. We thank God for his service in our District over many years including in ADF Chaplaincy. We pray God will grant him and Joan a long and blessed retirement.

Pastor Mike Pietsch will "retire" at the end of the year too, although he will continue to serve Morphett Vale for a while during their vacancy and says he isn't finished serving the Lord yet. We do thank Mike at this time for his faithful service, including 19 years as tertiary chaplain.

District Office renovations

When you next visit the District Office after mid-January, you may not recognise the ground floor interior, which will be renovated over summer. It will become a better functioning space for workers, visitors and meetings - and will look less like the era in which it was built.

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA | SOUTH AUSTRALIA NORTHERN TERRITORY

49TH CONVENTION OF
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Further information will be emailed to all congregations.
Details can also be found on our website www.sant.lca.org.au

All enquiries to the SA-NT District Office
administration.sa-nt@lca.org.au or 08 8267 5211

THE HOPE WE HAVE
1 PETER 3:15

LLL Mission Outreach Grant 2020

Applications are now open for the 2020 LLL Mission Outreach Grant (formerly Mission Stimulus Grant). LLL Australia is offering a grant of up to \$25,000 for a congregation in the SA-NT District to put a mission idea on the ground locally.

Further information and application forms are available from our website www.sant.lca.org.au. Completed applications must be received by 31st March 2020.

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LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA | SOUTH AUSTRALIA NORTHERN TERRITORY



Students and group leaders celebrate their build with locals. Photos supplied.



Lutheran Schools Unite for Fijian Families

By Jessica Smith

Building houses, and relationships, was the focus of a recent trip that saw five South Australian Lutheran schools join forces for Fijian families in need.

The group of 37, including 25 students from schools including St Martins (Mt Gambier), Cornerstone (Mt Barker), Concordia (Highgate), Endeavour (Mawson Lakes) and Immanuel (Novar Gardens) travelled to Nadi, Fiji, as part of the Habitat for Humanity Global Village Build Program. The team constructed two cyclone-proof houses from the ground up in just a week, assisting villagers who have a desperate need for safe, disaster resilient homes after over 10,000 families in the region were displaced due to increasingly violent weather over the last 3 years.

Concordia College Business Manager Mick Hoopmann, who led the group along with his wife Ali, says the trip was an outstanding success, with profound connections being established between the Fijian locals, the students and volunteers.

‘The Fijian families were overwhelmed with heartfelt gratitude to the group for putting themselves out to make a difference to their lives,’ he says.

Mr Hoopmann says the Lutheran Church motto ‘when love comes to life’ was strongly evident throughout the trip, with participants experiencing Christ’s love in action in the villages.

‘Through our interactions with the locals we felt we were not just building another house, but rather a home for the people we came to get to know and love in a short period of time.’

Concordia student Ella says the trip made her reassess her view of poverty when she saw the positive attitude and happy demeanour of the Fijian people.

‘The trip changed my idea of poverty and the perception that people who live in poverty are sad, helpless and bitter,’ she says.

‘It also shows that while poverty can take different forms, we can recognise the dignity of every human being and do

what we can to encourage and connect with everyone.’

For Cornerstone student Lucy it was the faith of the Fijian people she met that made an impact.

‘God plays a big part in their lives and each build day began and ended in prayer,’ she says.

‘Even though lots of people live with very little they are all happy, generous and kind and thankful for what they have and they all appreciate what God has done for them and what He has given them.’

At the end of the build the new homeowners asked the volunteer group to name their houses and they were appropriately christened ‘The Ark’ – for the house built on the edge of a flood plain – and ‘Tawamudu’, meaning ‘to last for an eternity’.

As an aside from their building efforts the group was also lucky enough to experience Fijian culture, visiting various local villages and a school, taking in scenery on hikes, sampling local delicacies and even mud bathing. But it was the kinship, connection and enriching impact of service that made the biggest impression, changing the lives of all involved - volunteers and locals alike.

‘While we certainly intended to go there to serve and help as a way of encouraging the people of this part of Fiji, what we discovered is that God blessed us and encouraged us through them and the faith that we shared in common,’ Mr Hoopmann says.

St Martin’s student Naomi says the experience has cemented her desire to serve.

‘It showed me that I would love to spend more of my life serving, whether it is my future career or as a side, volunteering,’ she says.

‘This trip also showed me how lucky and blessed we are to have access to everything we need here in Australia - many of us were appalled at how we often take things such as houses, school, food and more for granted, especially after seeing the people in Fiji being so grateful for the little they had.’

Students interview PM to Wipe Out Waste

by Jessica Smith

Immanuel Primary School Novar Gardens has made a pact to help heal the planet and their message has gone right to the top, with students putting some tough questions to Prime Minister Scott Morrison, as part of a segment for television show Behind the News (BTN).

This is the second time the ABC TV show has featured the school’s dedicated ‘Immanuel Wipe Out Waste’ program, or iWOW. The scheme was devised three years ago as a result of a Sharing the Planet unit completed by year five students, in line with the Lutheran Earth Care Charter 2017, and aims to move Immanuel towards being a zero landfill waste school.

Initiatives that have already been implemented include a green waste management system for food scraps and compostable paper, a 10c recycling system with money being returned to environmental programs and a paper recycling and reusing system.

Students were invited to share their earth-care program as part of the BTN episode and were given the opportunity to chat to Prime Minister Scott Morrison about Australia’s recycling crisis and how he plans to action the nation’s growing recycling problem.

‘We are so proud of our students’ communication skills and commitment to helping our school become more environmentally friendly,’ says Immanuel Primary School’s Sarah Nash.



PM Scott Morrison snaps a selfie with an Immanuel PS student and BTN presenter. Photo supplied.



HRH The Prince Edward with Tim Stollznow and College Captains. Photo supplied.

Yirara’s Royal Visit

By Kaylene Lindner and Donna McAskill

Yirara College was honored to be chosen to host His Royal Highness, The Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex KG GCVO, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award, acknowledging the 60th Anniversary of the Award in Australia. We were proud to share the special event with fellow schools delivering The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award; Acacia Hill, Centralian Senior School, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and St Phillips.

Students at Yirara College have been participating in The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award program since 2014. Yirara students log hours in activities they are already participating in, giving them additional opportunities to earn credit points towards their NTCET with successful completions of Bronze and Silver Awards, and in 2019, Yirara has two students working towards their Gold Award.

The Award consists of four development areas; Physical Recreation, Skills, Voluntary Service and an Adventurous Journey which challenge students to develop their character.

Some of the activities students have participated in include Physical Recreation; Basketball, AFL, weights training, soccer, softball, swimming, bike riding, table tennis and volleyball. Skills; Driving lessons, first aid training, VET training and hairdressing. Voluntary Service; Picking up rubbish, spending time at

Old Timers, Chapel Band, Riding for the Disabled, Hetti Perkins aged care, assisting with community events and soup kitchen.

The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award program supports students in achieving goals, and acknowledges their participation and successes. Some of the ‘soft skills’ such as confidence, leadership, resilience and initiative are developed in this program, encouraging students to become valuable community members.

Yirara students are from remote communities and some of the activities that take them out into the wider community, such as assisting with the preparation for the Finke Desert Race or Clean up Australia Day, expand their worldview and give the outside community a positive view of our young people.

Through Finke River Mission the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) provides Christian secondary education at Yirara College to Aboriginal boarding students from remote Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland communities. Yirara is located seven kilometres south of Alice Springs.



Where will YOU Walk My Way in 2020?

In 2019, our Lutheran family stepped out to bring love to life through ALWS Walk My Way. 731 Walkers, and their sponsors, now support 8,840 refugee children to go to school! In 2020, Walk My Way is coming to the Barossa Valley!



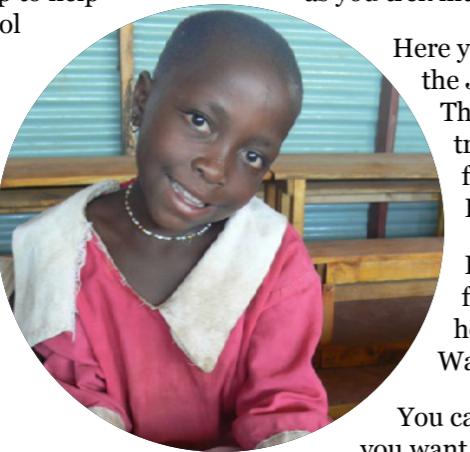
BAROSSA VALLEY - Saturday 2 May

Walk My Way is how our Lutheran family steps out in fun and friendship to help children in refugee camps go to school through ALWS.

We'll kick off with a Big Barossa Brekkie and Inspirational Opening at St Jakobi Lutheran School in Lyndoch. Across the vineyards is Hoffnungsthal, where German Lutheran refugees first settled the Barossa in the 1840s.

There are 150 wineries in the Barossa Valley, and almost as many Lutheran churches!

You'll **Walk My Way** past plenty of both – including your first drink/toilet break at Trinity in Rowland Flat, and your second at St Hallett's winery!



Enjoy amazing views, and rich Lutheran German heritage, as you trek into Tanunda.

Here you will meet with smiles (and more!) at the Junior campus of Faith Lutheran College. Then it's the flat final burst along the bike track into Nuri (beware the Chocolate factory!), and reach your reward at Redeemer Lutheran School.

Everyone is welcome – we've had every age from 18 months to 83 years! We're even hoping to plan a **Wheel My Way** for Walking Frames, Wheel-chairs and Prams!

You can even do your own **Walk My Way** when you want and where you want – just like the people of Perth and Darwin did this year.

Every step you take, every \$26 you raise, helps a child in a refugee camp in East Africa go to school. Let's walk!

REGISTER NOW: walkmyway.org.au *1300 763 407

Walking together to bring love to life!



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ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

By Angela Rogers, District Administrator

The District Office is always a busy place with people constantly coming and going. There's a continual stream of people popping in for meetings and to chat about happenings in their local area. Our team members are also often out visiting congregations, attending camps or seeing people in hospital and, at this time of the year, celebrating with schools as well.

As we approach the Christmas season when we celebrate the birth of Jesus and what this means for each of us, I pray that we will all have the opportunity to share the love of Jesus with others in our community – perhaps extend an invitation to a Christmas service or share a handmade gift with an attached Christmas blessing. I also pray that this will be a time for you to acknowledge the gift that has been given to us and that this will be a blessing to you and your family.

OFFICE REDEVELOPMENT

Currently the District Office is working on a number of projects, the biggest being our office redevelopment. The team is looking forward to a well-designed modern workplace in the new year that will provide us with new meeting spaces and areas for collaboration, as well as allowing private workspaces. This project will see the **District Office closed from Monday 9th December**

to Monday 20th January. During this time email will be the best method of contact as our phones will be diverted to message bank and we will respond to you as soon as soon as we are able. A number of staff will be taking annual leave during the renovation.

CONGREGATIONAL BOOKKEEPING GRANT

The LCA have provided the District with a grant for the introduction of a congregational bookkeeping service. The aim of this service is to provide bookkeeping services for congregations and parishes who are struggling with this task, for a cost effective price. If your congregation or parish is interested in learning more about this please contact me as soon as possible via email: angela.rogers@lca.org.au

NEW STANDARDS FOR SUPPORTING MISSION OVERSEAS

Does your congregation support mission overseas? If so, you need to be aware of the new External Conduct Standards that have been implemented by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), please refer to their website acnc.gov.au for details.

CHURCH CHAT DAY

Recently the District hosted Church CHAT Day for Church Council members. We thank everyone who attended this event and appreciate the positive

feedback received. We are now in the planning stages of a day especially for our Office Administrators and admin support staff. Please look out for information about this early in the new year and encourage and support your staff or volunteers who do this important role in our church to come along for learning, networking and support.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

The health and safety focus for this issue is the safe lifting and storing of heavy items. Always remember to bend your knees and keep your back straight to lift items and ask for assistance if required. Please do not store heavy items above shoulder height. Boxes should all be labelled and dated and, if applicable, have a destruction date on them. If you have questions about what should be kept and for how long please contact Lutheran Archives for advice.

STAFF NEWS

In the next few weeks our Communications Officer Amelia will be marrying fiancé Jeremy. Please pray for God's blessing over their wedding and marriage as we celebrate with them.

Recently we welcomed Jess Smith to our team as new Together Editor and Communications Officer. We are looking forward to seeing her journalism and design creativity in our magazine.

Save the Date

WHAT'S THE BUZZ SECRETARIES DAY

Wednesday 4 March 2020
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
28 Muller Road, Greenacres SA

A one-day workshop event for congregation and parish office secretaries and administrators to be encouraged, informed and supported. More information will soon be available on our website.

Queries to
administration.sa-nt@lca.org.au
or 08 8267 5211



Save the Date

LCANZ PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DEPARTMENT'S SP3 COORDINATOR NETWORK DAY

This event is open to all SP3 coordinators as well as to all Pastors, chair people and anyone interested in the SP3 Coordinator role.

WHEN:
Saturday 21 March 2020

WHERE:
Attend online or in person at LLL, 175 Archer Street North Adelaide

Please visit www.sant.lca.org.au for more information



Realignments

By Pastor Stephen Schultz, Assistant Bishop for Mission, SA-NT District and Angela Rogers, District Administrator

'Necessity is the mother of invention'. The diminishing numbers in certain areas and parishes has created the necessity for some congregations/parishes to invent new partnerships and ways of doing things.

When this happens there can be fears about what individual congregations might 'lose'. But instead what we are discovering is a new enthusiasm and energy for the opportunities this 'necessity' is providing. Resources and ideas and challenges are being

shared as we are working more collaboratively as a church. Please don't fear this process as the District Office has the skills and knowledge to assist you and walk the journey with you.

Here are some examples of what is happening. This is a new era for our church. There will be issues and challenges - but there is also the potential for joy and growth and for something new to emerge.



Members of the new congregation with Pastors Darrin Kohrt and Dean Mills. Photo: Rod Bradtke.

BERRI BARMERA

'One congregation, worshipping in two places' is the precept for the newly formed congregation of Berri Barmera Lutheran Church, an amalgamation of Zion Berri and St Paul's Barmera churches.

Prior to their merger the two churches shared a long history as part of the Berri Barmera Lutheran Parish, formed in 1960, and later in the same decade a realignment of the Riverland Lutheran churches resulted in the St Paul's Barmera congregations joining with Moorook and New Residence, while Berri joined with Lyrup.

The members of Berri and Barmera have maintained a close relationship and following the retirement of

Pastor David Buck from the Barmera New Residence parish in early 2019 it was decided that after 53 years apart the two congregations would again join as one. The merger became official in June, following an Annual General Meeting and amalgamation service led by Bishop David Altus.

Pastor Dean Mills, who had previously served the Berri Parish since 2016, was called to serve the newly formed congregation and was installed in September at a service led by Pastor Darrin Kohrt, a day of celebration attended by members and the wider community.

"The members of the newly formed congregation feel that God has certainly blessed us in the short time we have been together," says Sue Dobbin, Chairperson of the Berri Barmera congregation. "We're looking forward to working together to share God's love with the people of Berri and Barmera."



Pastor Geoff Kuchel. Photo supplied.

LIGHT

One congregation with five doors – this is what the combined parishes in the Kapunda and Freeling district became when the churches officially amalgamated earlier in 2019.

The concept of a merger had been discussed for a few years by the worshippers from Rosedale, Freeling, Kapunda, Bethel and Allen's Creek, upon the realisation that their pastors at the time, Les Pfeiffer and Peter Ziersch, both intended to retire at the end of 2018, along with a recognised need to streamline administrative processes.

After undertaking extensive background research and having many conversations with other parishes

that had recently travelled the same path, the amalgamation process was initiated, with a new constitution – based on one that Kapunda had recently established – accepted and adopted by the combined parishes in late 2018.

The churches were incorporated under a new body, Light Lutheran Church, a name that Vice Chairperson Adrian Laubsch says was chosen for both its locational and biblical connotations.

"Light has two aspects to it - the churches are all located in the district council of Light and then of course there are the biblical connotations, with Christ being the light."

The style of amalgamation adopted is also a little different to many before it with the parishes not just re-aligning, but amalgamating into one body and one congregation, with each worship centre answering to one committee.

"We are not a parish, we are a congregation," Mr Laubsch says. "At the end of the day we don't want to change the culture of each individual worship centre, the idea is to make things more efficient so that the actual ministry can benefit."

Inaugural chairperson of Light Lutheran Church, Gavin Schuster, says the success of the amalgamation in such a short amount of time is attributed to a group of dedicated people who wanted to make it work.

"Importantly we found that the two parishes get on very well with each other and are a really good fit, which has aided in the success of the venture," says Mr Schuster.

As a new congregation, Light Lutheran Church began the call process and welcomed Pastor Geoff Kuchel in August 2019.

Pastor Geoff says his move south has been a blessed one, despite the colder climate in the Light region being in stark contrast to his previous Darwin residence, and that he has been impressed by the passionate desire that each of the 'five doors' share to become a strong united body of believers in their community.

"The willingness to become a strong single body is reflected in the flexibility demonstrated when it comes to organising worship and in participating in each other's traditional activities," he says. "I have been stunned at the strength of the teamwork and the passion and desire to work together has already resulted in many blessings."

GRACE

Grace Lutheran Church Tanunda has officially become a new congregation, following a successful vote to merge two Tanunda-based churches, St John's and St Paul's. The history of both congregations dates back well over a century, with St John's originally formed in 1860 and St Paul's in 1904.

"For more than ten years both congregations have been involved in discussions to work more closely together, not only with each other but involving the other Tanunda congregations as well," says Grace Chairperson, David Saegenschnitter.

It was in 2016 that St Paul's responded to an invitation from St John's to join with them in the formation of a new congregation and since the beginning of 2017 the group has been worshipping together under the spiritual guidance of Pastor Guntars Baikovs.

"During the past two and half years the congregations have formed a close relationship with pastoral assistants working together and a leadership group established to guide each congregation toward the amalgamation," says Mr Saegenschnitter.



L-R Vice Chairperson Michael Heinrich, Bishop David Altus, Chairperson David Saegenschnitter. Photo supplied.

August saw the culmination of the years of planning with a series of special general meetings, including the inaugural general meeting of Grace, where Pastor Guntars Baikovs was called to serve as the pastor of the new congregation.

Grace will continue on an arrangement of shared ministry with Bethlehem Schoenborn congregation, located on the outskirts of Tanunda, offering Divine Services and pastoral assistance to its members.

LIGHT UP THE NIGHT

By Ian Crambrook,
Riverland CLW Camp Director

Young people from the Riverland and beyond gathered on the banks of Lake Bonney at Camp Kedron for Riverland Christian Life Week (CLW) during the last school holidays. Camp was a fantastic experience for all involved.

This year explored the theme "Light Up the Night" based on a theme verse from Matthew 5:14-16 - *"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."*

In the lead up to camp, a dedicated team of our leaders visited three of the schools in the Riverland area to run some activities with their students, and promote camp as an opportunity for faith growth to the young people. We were excited to have four new campers attend from amongst these students, and are hoping to grow this connection into the future.

One of the highlights of camp was our Wednesday Night Worship.



CLW campers make the most of their time together. Photos supplied.

GOIN' FREE!

By Abby Beames and Kynan Mann,
Lower Murray/South East
CLW Camp Directors

The Lower Murray South East Zone held their annual Christian Life Week (CLW) camp in the first week of the September/October School Holidays, this year at Ankara Youth Camp in Walker Flat. Campers had incredible opportunities to hear from leaders and Pastor Lee Kroehn about what it looks like to live in the freedom of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and in particular what it looks like to operate out of freedom in our everyday lives and

how to cultivate an attitude of freedom and draw others into it.

Each day consisted of personal and reflective opportunities, small group discussions and worship, with the camp favourites being 'Echo' by Elevation Worship and 'Jailbreak' by Vertical Worship. There were also many opportunities for faith and community building, through serving each other and particular electives such as jam sessions, art, baking and walking. The games were also a huge hit, particularly the 'Prison Break' themed night games, messy games and also raft building.

A sincere thank you goes to the wonderful leadership and prayer team that were a part of camp this year, your

servant hearts and genuine investment are truly appreciated. Thank you also to those throughout our LMSE CLW community for your prayers, baked goods and donations, and for spreading the word about camp to the youth! We also had some fantastic parents help us with buses and car pools – thank you! Thank you also to the parents for your prayers, trust and support, and of course to the campers for being willing to seek God and grow in your faith!

Stay in touch with LMSE CLW on social media for ongoing highlights from camp and for more information about upcoming events.

CLW makes a difference

Attending Christian Life Week (CLW) can have a big impact! A camp attendee recently shared these words at his confirmation:

"To be honest, when I was asked to join the confirmation group I wasn't sure I wanted to be a part of it. Around the same time the opportunity arose to attend CLW with my brother. Not really sure what to expect I went along feeling a little nervous. This week at camp brought about a renewed enthusiasm for me in relation to my relationship with Jesus. Being around a group of fun, young Christians who all connected really well with each other and were openly able to share their faith, was instrumental in my excitement in returning to continue my faith journey. I know that there will be many changes in my life, but one thing that will not change is God who guides us through."

(Hudson Stephens, age 14, Holy Cross congregation, Murray Bridge)

WHERE'S GOD?

By Emily Doering, Port Hughes CLW Camp Director

We had another great week at Port Hughes Christian Life Week (CLW) this year, with perfect weather, lots of fun, and plenty of opportunity to learn about God. Despite numbers being down on previous years, this did not stop the campers and leaders alike from having a fantastic time and making many life-long memories and friends.

Our theme for the week was 'Where's God?', giving campers and leaders an opportunity to explore where we can find God in our busy lives today and the many ways that we can connect with him on a daily basis.

For the first time this year, we trialled doing a 'hot seat' as a devotion in the evening, which involved a "host" asking questions of the person in the hot seat. The message we received from these was perhaps not what we imagined, but the concept was great, and with some adjustments, I believe next year we could make it into a fantastic opportunity to share some really meaningful, God-related stories with campers.

Activities ran smoothly this year and were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone, with a couple of the highlights being our afternoon at the beach, messy games, and the night games. On the Tuesday night we played 'Romans and Christians' which highlighted just how difficult it was living as a Christian in the Roman Empire, and on the Thursday night we played a game called 'Where's Wally?' which tied in with the theme for the week.

It was fantastic to have both Pastor Joshua Muller and Pastor Phil Joppich on camp, as well as visiting pastors, Pastor Robin Zadow and Pastor Geoff Kuchel. The time they gave up was greatly appreciated and their input into camp was fantastic. Overall, it was a great week had by everyone!



Cutting the ribbon: Freeling Community Recreation Park Management Committee President Mr Ian Carmichael, Federal Member for Barker Mr Tony Pasin MP, and Light Regional Council Mayor Bill O'Brien. Right: The FARM Centre. Photos supplied.

FARM Centre donations well received

A long-awaited community facility recently had its official opening in the South Australian town of Freeling, thanks in part to generous donations from LCA members through the LCA Disaster and Welfare Fund.

The Fund sought to support communities after the tragic Pinery bushfires of 2015 that affected South Australia's lower Mid-North and west Barossa Valley regions, with locals identifying a need for a multi-use space for gatherings and activities of all kinds.

Yalata Celebrates Pastor's Milestone



Mima Smart congratulates Pastor Russell. Photo supplied.

A lot can change in a decade, but although it has been ten years since Pastor Russell Bryant's ordination he's managed to maintain a young-at-heart lifestyle, whether wielding his trusty ukulele for a musical interlude or kicking goals on the football field.

As a Pastor in the small Aboriginal community of Yalata, located 200km west of Ceduna in South Australia, Pastor Russell feels that God has blessed him with the energy of someone younger than his 49 years, enabling him unique opportunities to be an ambassador of the Gospel both on and off the sporting field.

AbMinSA Chairperson Ivan Christian and Council Member David Kuss travelled to Yalata

in October to celebrate the milestone occasion with the congregation.

"We quickly realised that Pastor Russell is an evangelist with a strong desire to share the Gospel with his community, as well as with people in diverse areas of SA and WA when he visits family and other contacts," says Ivan.

"David and I were extremely impressed by Russell's active, living faith, his deep understanding of theology and the Scriptures, and his passion for God's people."

Ivan describes the celebratory Sunday church service as 'a highlight', with around 80 people attending and many coming forward for communion. Pastor Russell was presented with a handmade cross, specially made to recognise the occasion, and the service was followed by a much enjoyed BBQ, funded by the Birdwood congregation.

LCC's Gala Ball Raises \$67k

Lutheran Community Care's 50th Anniversary Gala Ball has been hailed a great success with 300 people attending and more than \$67,000 raised.

Held in November in Adelaide's CBD, people from the Church, government, community services sector and corporations all came together to support the important work LCC does with vulnerable people in SA and NT.

Guest speaker and LCC foster carer Amanda Blair captivated the audience and had them in stitches throughout the night, while many also enjoyed getting involved with the auctions and on the dance floor.

LCC Marketing and Communications Manager Amelia Dawkins said the generosity and kindness shown by people on the night was a huge blessing.

"As part of our live auction, guests had the opportunity to donate to specific LCC programs, including Emergency Relief and our Kwatja Etatha playgroup in Alice Springs," Amelia said.

"We were blown away by the generosity. The proceeds will enable LCC to continue to change lives in our local communities and share the unconditional love of Jesus to those in need."

Above: Vicki and Kym Habermann from Zion Lutheran Church, Angaston. Photo supplied.



SA-NT Bishop David Altus, Carolyn Altus, Jules Feegrade and LCC Chief Executive Officer Rohan Feegrade. Photo supplied.



LLL Australia was the major sponsor for LCC's 50th gala ball. Pictured is Andrew and Rhianan Strangways, Michael and Gaynor Gower, Janet and Anthony Schoell, Kathy and Graeme Tscharke, Lyndall Walter and Andrew Waldhuter. Photo supplied.

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Photo: ALWS

Thank you!

Bhan Simon Paul, age 24, is one of the refugee teachers you support at Kakuma Refugee camp, teaching children you help through ALWS GRACE Project ...

"When war broke out in South Sudan, I was with my mother, father and siblings.

One night the soldiers came and attacked us. There were mass killings. Everyone ran. My older brother and I ran into the night. We don't know what happened to the rest of our family.

"The next morning we had nothing left, just the tears in our eyes."

We travelled by foot to the border and then the UN brought us to Kakuma. Luckily there was a school here. I worked hard and finished secondary school with high grades.

Then I became a teacher. Most of those I teach have lost loved ones, but can now have hope because they know that people in Australia sacrifice to teach them. We are trying hard to give them the knowledge we have ... coming to school means it is not the end of everything for them, but they can have a future.

I appreciate the support you give. Please continue supporting us so we can continue supporting them. Thank you!"

GRACE Project Update

38,055 children supported
for school – 1,945 to go!

**CHRISTMAS ACTION: You can support a refugee child
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