

Together

MARCH 2021

'Seenagers'
are young
at heart

**A first
connection
for LDS
family**

**Aussie
grannies
for refugee
kids**

**LUTHERAN
CHURCH**
OF AUSTRALIA
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
NORTHERN TERRITORY

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

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Front cover: Gill Stevenson from Grace Lutheran Church in Bridgewater with children from BANB7 school (story: page 7). Photo: Darren Stevenson.

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Publication deadline

Editorial and advertising copy deadline for the next edition of Together is Friday, May 7th. The magazine will be distributed in June. 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

It seems only yesterday that I was writing to wish you a blessed Christmas, yet somehow we've moved on from honey biscuits to hot cross buns as we look forward to Easter. If the clichés are to be believed, time flies when you're having fun – and this edition of Together is proof of the joy available as we walk God's intended path for us.

For me, this issue of the magazine has been a delight to compile. Every day I learn more about the wonderfully diverse Lutheran community we are fortunate enough to be a part of and the impact our members are having as they extend God's love to those they encounter.

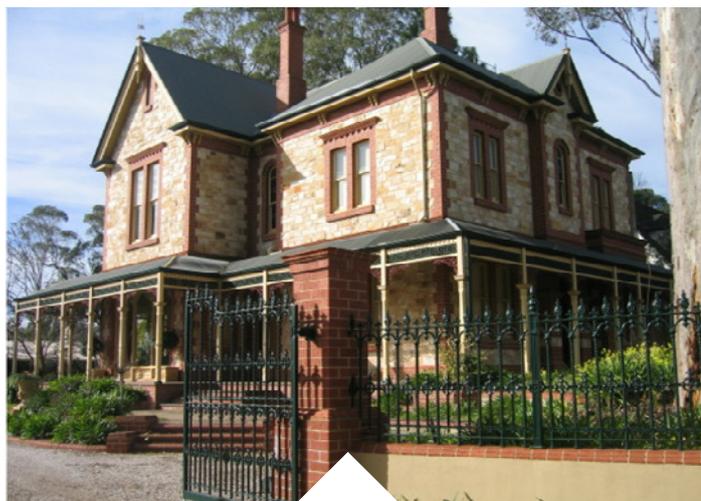
From the group of fun-loving 'Seenagers' at Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Aberfoyle Park (page 14), to the ladies from Grace Lutheran Church in Bridgewater who have formed meaningful and heartfelt connections with a group of refugee children from Afghanistan (page 7), I have been moved by the many accounts of our members making a difference in the lives of others.

'The Hope We Have' is the theme of our upcoming Convention of Synod in May and, as Bishop David reminds us in his column, hope in Christ is something we can count on – in this life and beyond. I pray that as you read this edition of Together you will feel something of that hope.

Jess

While the information contained in Together is correct at the time of going to print, we recognise that COVID-19 is an evolving concern and therefore some details published may have changed by the time this magazine reaches our readers.

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



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

“Imagine living every day looking forward not backward, in hope not fear, with the realisation that great things are just around the corner. Easter enables us – urges us – to do just that.”

A word from your Bishop...

What are you hoping for this year?

‘Hope’ is the theme of our upcoming Synodical Convention in May, carried over from last year’s planned event which could not take place face-to-face due to the pandemic.

At present many of us are hoping for a COVID vaccine that works. We’re hoping that enough people are willing to ‘get the jab’ in a timeframe that will allow more freedoms and less restrictions. We’re hoping for an end to the uncertainties we have been living with for over a year now.

We are always hoping for something - for ourselves, those we love, the Church and for the world. Some of our hopes are realised and some aren’t. Some hopes are dashed in this life, often causing us to live with ongoing grief. And it seems that everyone lives with unrealised hopes, in one way or another.

Our consciousness of mortality has grown in the past year. Even though Australia has fared comparatively well regarding virus deaths, the sheer

numbers overseas, as well as the limit on mourners allowed at funerals here last year, raised our consciousness of death a few notches. This time last year, as we faced the unknowns of COVID, we were preparing our hospital system for a potential influx of sick and dying people at an unprecedented scale – a fact that has made us all aware, and maybe fearful, of our mortality.

At Easter, we hear the words of St Paul:

“If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”

1 Corinthians 15:19-20

As people who are living and dying with hope in Christ, we don’t just have hope for this life. Our sights and our hope are much bigger than that. Because Jesus is risen and because he promises to raise us to life with him forever one day, we have hope that stretches into eternity.

Our hope is not just hope ‘post-COVID’, but hope ‘post-death’!



Paul describes death as falling asleep and waking to a new resurrected life, just as Jesus did. Because Jesus lives, our hope for our ‘forever life’ includes a resurrected body that won’t wear out.

What God has given us in Easter is a ‘bigger picture’, one that has always been helpful for me. It helps me to realise that the things that happen now in this life will not be the last word, or the end of all hope. In fact, because I have a rock-solid, risen-Christ guaranteed resurrection of my own to look forward to, I can get on with living life in the now, with no fear of the future, or regrets due to unfulfilled hopes. I can go through anything and put up with anything, knowing the best is yet to come.

Imagine living every day looking forward not backward, in hope not fear, with the realisation that great things are just around the corner. Easter enables us – urges us – to do just that. It is not wishful thinking. It is faith, based on the knowledge that Jesus has been raised from the dead, just as you too will be.

Enjoy your Easter and keep on living in the hope it offers.



From the Bishop's diary...

News

Second Assistant Bishop Eugene Minge has accepted a call to Pakenham, Victoria. We thank Eugene for his service of District in this oversight role. Eugene brought a passion for mission, a special heart for young people (as demonstrated by the "Growing Young" initiative) and led Pastors Conferences and retreats with pastoral warmth. His mission-minded questioning of everything will be missed at the DCC table, too. Thanks Eugene - go with our blessing and the Lord be with you and your family as you make a new home over the border.

Bereavements

We were saddened by the death of **Lynette Wiebusch**, wife of Pastor Bob Wiebusch. Lynette rendered wonderful service, especially as a pioneer of Parish Nursing in the LCA.

Financials

With government assistance the District recorded a surplus during 2020, for which we are grateful - it would have been a significant deficit without it. I think it is a good thing that the community has shown its appreciation of the service

of the church by supporting us during last year's turmoil, although I know not everyone shares this view. DCC wrote to the Prime Minister expressing our thanks. It is uncertain how this year will progress financially, but we will inform Synod in May. Thank you for your ongoing support of the ministries of the wider church.

Synod 2021

The synodical convention of the SA-NT District will take place in May, subject to health advice and government direction, once again. Please note that the convention will be face-to-face, but shorter and limited in delegate numbers. We will need to work through the agenda in a focussed way given time restraints, and ask that lay and pastor delegates prepare themselves well, in advance, and consult with your members for their views on any proposal.

Calls

There are currently 10 parishes and three schools actively calling a pastor, two are needed for FRM, and several parishes are considering whether they can continue with two pastors. An increasing number of parishes are

considering their financial viability to sustain a full-time pastor. We project up to 15 retirements in the next two years. 21 of our parishes are a "watch and act" for us in relation to financial viability issues, health concerns of the pastor, or other issues that need addressing. There are just under 90 parishes in the District.

Please pray for these parishes and their pastors and for us as we oversee and minister in these situations and please be patient as we seek to do that in a timely way.

Welcome new pastors

We welcome the following pastors and their families to the District, or to their new service:

- **Leon Rosenberg** at Ferryden Park
- **Stephen Noblett** (graduate) at Southern Flinders Parish
- **Matthew Bishop** at Blair Athol
- **Joseph Theodorsen** (graduate) in the Top End Parish
- **Nigel Rosenzweig** at Victor Harbor
- **Roland Adams** (graduate) at Renmark & Paringa
- **Philip Bentley** (graduate) at Greenock



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THE HOPE WE HAVE
1 PETER 3:15



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THE HOPE WE HAVE
1 PETER 3:15



The new graduates were ordained in December. L-R: Roland Adams, Philip Bentley, Christopher Johnson (QLD), LCA/ NZ Bishop John Henderson, James Luk (transitioned from Specific Ministry Pastor to General Ministry Pastor), Stephen Noblett, Joseph Theodorsen.

New faces

The LCA SA-NT District extends a warm welcome to the four new graduate pastors assigned across our region. They shared their hopes for their new roles and their feelings about the Church today in a Q&A with Together.

Roland Adams

Assigned to St Johns Trinity Renmark & Holy Cross Paringa, SA

What excites you about the church today?

“One of the things that excites me about the church today is the opportunities we have to bring the love of God to the wider world, there is an opportunity for helping others to reach out with God’s love to those around them. There are many things that I am looking forward to in my new role. Bringing the love of Christ to people, both in the Church and community.”



Stephen Noblett

Assigned to Southern Flinders Parish, SA

What are you most looking forward to in your new role?

“Helping people to grow in their faith and trust of the Lord Jesus Christ so that in turn they can also help others to grow in their faith. We never stop learning and discovering more about the amazing love of God and the message of forgiveness for our sins that comes through Jesus’ death on the cross. This is something that we can never fully comprehend, but it is something that we need to be constantly reminded of. How can you not look forward to constantly reminding people of the amazing love that God has for each and every person?”



Philip Bentley

Assigned to Greenock Parish, SA

What excites you about the church today?

“The idea of change excites me. Every time there is a change in history, there’s potential to gain and potential to lose. I believe the potential to gain in the church is greater than the potential to lose. Why? As despairing or as cynical as some might be (sometimes understandably) over the church’s future, we must remind ourselves that the church was Jesus’ idea, not ours. It will not only survive our missteps and whatever cultural trends happen around us. It is true to say that the church does not always get things right, but Christ has an incredible history of pulling together Christians in every generation to share his love in a fallen and broken world.”



Joseph Theodorsen

Assigned to Top End Lutheran Parish, NT

What excites you about the church today?

“That God is not dead! He is alive and continually working in His Church to bring people to faith and give the assurance of salvation to those who believe. As we live in this world as the body of Christ, speaking his words into the lives of those around us, the Holy Spirit works through this, bringing the many to faith. And as we gather around his word and the body and blood of Christ, he continually strengthens us in faith toward him and in love toward others. What an incredible truth this is!”



Read the full Q&A with the graduate pastors on the news section of the District website.

Images: individual photos supplied, group photo Evalina Katarzynski



The 'grannies' meet the BANB7 students & principal. Back row, from L-R: Principal Darren Stevenson, Julie Clark, Betty Lores, Judi Bell, Gill Stevenson, Sheri Paschke.

Aussie grannies for refugee kids

While they may come from opposite sides of the world, a wonderful connection has developed between a group of Lutheran ladies from the Adelaide Hills and 25 refugee children from Blair Athol North Primary School, thanks to a remote-teaching project that has blossomed into meaningful friendships.

Darren Stevenson, Principal of Blair Athol North Birth to Year 7 Primary School (also known as BANB7), was inspired by a successful UK initiative known as 'The Granny Project', where children in India were virtually linked online with 'grannies' in England, to help boost their English language development.

With a large number of children in the Intensive English Centre at BANB7 – many being refugees from Afghanistan – Darren, a former Lutheran schools principal, sounded out the idea with his mother, Gill Stevenson, a retired primary school teacher. Gill immediately saw potential and had soon recruited four friends from Grace Lutheran Church in Bridgewater to form the volunteer group, affectionately coined 'the BANB7 grannies'. The grannies – who, along with Gill, are Betty Lores, Sheri Paschke, Julie Clark and Judi Bell - have a wealth of experience to share, with all members having a background in education and four of the five being retired primary school teachers.

Teaching began with 45-minute intensive language coaching sessions via Zoom, with each granny teaching one or two children at a time. As the children's English language skills began to increase, so too did their sharing with

the grannies, opening up their worlds to one another through talking about their lives – their families, culture, friends, pets and more. Unexpected bonds began to form between the generations, made all the more meaningful given many of the children had experienced trauma and tragedy in their families before fleeing war-torn Afghanistan, or had left extended family members behind.



Gill meets one of her students for the first time

"The granny sessions have meant the world to some of these children," Darren said. "They've been given a second chance here in Australia – they don't take anything for granted."

After some seven months of communicating solely online throughout the COVID pandemic, the grannies and children jumped at the opportunity to finally meet face-to-face as restrictions were eased, and a school visit was excitedly arranged.

Gill said the visit cemented the relationships that had already been formed in the virtual world.

"It was a delightful, heart-warming experience for us, as the children discovered we were not just talking heads!" she said. "It has been such a privilege to work with and share the love of God with these dear children."

Darren said that seeing the children and grannies together was a joyful and emotional experience.

"I've been in education for 23 years and it was up there as one of the highlights of my career," he said. "It was just a beautiful moment – the children treated the grannies like royalty!"

Darren thanked Grace Lutheran Church for their support in the way of prayers and donations to the children and their families in need, and acknowledged how much the grannies had given to the community.

"There have been a couple of relationships that have become really special, life-changing ones for these children," he said. "The intergenerational learning and the mutual benefit to the children and the grannies has made a powerful difference to both."

BANB7 plans to expand the project throughout the school, with hopes for a one-on-one granny for every child.

"We see unlimited potential for intergenerational connection via technology," said Darren. "What was initially just a concept has been turned into a wonderful reality by this incredibly gifted and generous group of ladies."



District update

By Angela Rogers
District Administrator

“God gives many gifts to the Church for the mission of the gospel and one of those is the gift of administration or leadership.” Romans 12:8

Our Church is blessed with many people who have taken on leadership roles within our congregations and parishes and for this we give thanks.

New leaders

For those who are new to a leadership role within your congregation or parish please ensure that you arrange a coffee or a chat with the person who was in the role before you, so that you can hear first-hand about the current items before the council. They could also be a good mentor or sounding board if you need them.

The District Office is currently planning a Church Chat Day for leaders on July 31st. More details on this will be available soon. The Church Chat booklet is a useful resource for Church leaders and can be found on the District website. I would recommend that all council members read this booklet.

Office administrators/secretaries

Many congregations and parishes are well served by an office administrator or secretary who assists pastors, individuals, congregations and parishes

in many ways. Their role is operational and can cover many areas of ministry within our Church. Please encourage your office administrator to download a copy of the Secretaries Day booklet from our website, which they will find very helpful.

Annual general meetings

Many congregations and parishes will soon be holding their AGM. This is not just another boring meeting, but an opportunity to celebrate the year that has been - while 2020 was not the year that we all anticipated there are still many things to give thanks for. The AGM is also a chance to launch into the coming year and enthuse your congregation or parish about the events that are being planned and other mission opportunities. This is also the time to thank volunteers and paid staff for all that they do, as it is often behind the scenes and unknown to many.

After the AGM please remember to update all office holders in LAMP2, advise of General and District synod delegates and complete the Annual

Information Statement on the ACNC website.

Synod

Our District Convention of Synod will be held in May and delegate invoices have been issued to congregations for this. Please note that the delegates will be charged a registration fee when they register to attend, to cover their meals and the Book of Reports, if they wish to purchase a printed copy.

Pastors conference

District Pastors Conference is also planned for May. Please encourage and support your pastor in attending this important event.

Thank you to every person who holds a position within our congregations and parishes. You are part of the wheel that supports the mission of Christ. We are all an important part of the wheel and we all need each other to make it go round. We give thanks to God for the wheels in our Church.

Blessings
Angela



Farewell

The District Office recently farewelled our Communications Officer, Amelia Dawkins, as she headed off on maternity leave.

We wish Amelia and her husband, Jeremy, every blessing as they begin the exciting journey of parenthood and welcome their twin girls into the world.

Jess Smith will be acting in Amelia's role in her absence.

Walk for a cause

South Aussie Lutherans are invited to come together again to support refugee children, taking God's love out into the Barossa Valley through Australian Lutheran World Service's (ALWS) annual *Walk My Way* initiative. After the disappointment of having to cancel last year's *Walk My Way* due to COVID-19, it is hoped that the 2021 event will be bigger and better than ever.

On Saturday May 21st, walkers will follow a 26km route from Redeemer Lutheran School in Nuriootpa to St Jakobi Lutheran School in Lyndoch, with a stop-off at St Hallett winery for lunch (glass of red and cheese platter optional!). To support them in their trek walkers ask family and friends to sponsor them, with funds raised helping East African refugee children to go to school.

Stephen Schultz, SA-NT District Assistant Bishop for Mission (pictured), says he is excited to join this year's Barossa *Walk My Way* after his quickly-aborted attempt to walk 8km (or 160 laps) around his own backyard in 2020 lockdown, when the official event couldn't go ahead and was instead reimagined as '*Walk My Way*'.

"I want to celebrate that I have the freedom to be out and about," said Stephen. "I also want to walk in solidarity and support for my refugee brothers and sisters. We are connected as a human race – we are in this together."



Like school children in Australia, many young refugees missed out on schooling because of COVID-19 shut-downs. Jonathan Krause, ALWS Community Action Manager, says *Walk My Way* walkers and their sponsors help ensure no refugee child is forgotten, with special consideration given to children with disabilities, orphans and older students who have been left behind.

"No one can ever take away the gift of education you give to a child," he says. "Together let's show the South Australian community what it means to be a church where love comes to life."

Walk My Way is an initiative of Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS), working together with Lutheran Education Australia, the LLL, and the LCA. For more information or to register for the walk, go to walkmyway.org.au or call **1300 763 407**.

Images: ALWS



Need a lift?

After 2020 and COVID-19, do you need a fresh burst of excitement and joy?

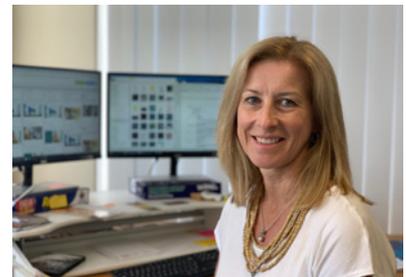
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You'll see your Gifts of Grace bringing love to life in some of the toughest places on earth. You'll meet refugee children going to school because you Walk My Way. You'll be inspired as people the world too often forgets share what you do in their lives.

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TLH wins excellence award

Tanunda Lutheran Home (TLH) has been recognised for its outstanding focus on staff, taking out the Prime Super Employer Excellence in Aged Care Award at the recent South Australian Community Achievement Awards.

The Aged Care Award recognises and acknowledges businesses, organisations and not for profits who have a strong focus on staff engagement, safety and wellbeing, training and providing staff with higher education learning opportunities and development.

Lee Martin, Tanunda Lutheran Home CEO, says that he and the team were 'excited, even elated' to discover they had won their category.

"The award was announced live on Facebook, I had arranged a get together with some senior staff and had a great time celebrating after the announcement."

Lee said the award was a much needed encouragement after a long year.

"After a difficult year dealing with change and the COVID-19 pandemic, this award has lifted our staff's spirits and commitment to the team. Everyone is proud to repeat that Tanunda Lutheran Home is a great place to work as the organisation supports each person and team."



TLH Executive Team L to R: Cherie Cheyne (Chief Financial Officer), Lee Martin (Chief Executive Officer), and Kim Hahn (People, Culture, and Customer Service Manager)

Images: supplied



The team celebrates. L to R: Emma-Rose Strudwick, Rachel Strudwick, Cherie Pickworth, Ian Lutze, Joan Wilkinson, Lee Martin, Sharon Martin, Sharon Berridge, Linda Nicholson and Sharryn Hueppauff.

...retirement living

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A first connection for LDS family

“Yes”. It was a simple word, spoken by a daughter to her father, which was full of huge significance and emotion for the Obst family. For the first time in her 23-year life, daughter Chelsea was able to directly answer a question that her father, Mark Obst asked her – thanks to the assistive technology of an eye-gaze device.

Chelsea, a resident of Lutheran Disability Services (LDS) accommodation in the Barossa, has Rett Syndrome and is non-verbal. Until now she has been unable to communicate through anything but basic actions.

“Chelsea will let me know if she doesn’t want to do something or doesn’t want to eat a certain food through her actions, but the eye-gaze device allowed her to communicate in a real way for the first time,” says Mark.

Mark was visiting Chelsea when the LDS team and a speech therapist were testing the eye-gaze device with her. Eye-gaze technology helps people with significant physical disabilities to operate a computer using just their eyes. A special camera tracks eye movements, in turn moving a mouse on the computer screen, enabling the user to communicate, play games, undertake learning or operate other devices connected to the computer.

At first it seemed Chelsea wasn’t particularly interested – “she wasn’t focussing and the team thought that maybe the device wasn’t right for her,” Mark recalls. But when Mark began asking her questions something clicked, and Chelsea started to use the gaze device to talk to him.



Chelsea Obst and her dad, Mark.

“I asked Chelsea if she’d like to come home with me for the weekend and suddenly she moved her eyes and the machine responded with a ‘yes,’” says Mark. “You can’t imagine how I felt, to have my adult daughter respond to me for the very first time.”

The LDS team and speech therapist watched amazed as Chelsea was able to maintain her first ever conversation with her dad, who was understandably ‘blown away’ by the experience.

To conclude the session the team went through some eye-gaze trial questions, with Chelsea easily able to point out her favourite foods (Cheezels and chocolate) and answer a range of other questions using the device.

Chelsea’s success with the device prompted the LDS team to secure a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan review for her, allowing Chelsea to rent her own eye-gaze unit.

The device will give Chelsea, who found her happy home at LDS in January 2019, even more opportunities to connect with her family, friends, housemates and support workers in the future.



Chelsea (centre) and her LDS friends.

Blueprint

Children, Family, Youth
& Young Adult Ministries
of LCA SA-NT



By Alyssa Griffin
SPIN Camp Director

In January of 2021, Blueprint was fortunate and blessed to be able to run its primary school focussed camp SPIN at Camp Kedron in Barmera. We had young people in years 4-6 from all across the state attend.

Our theme for camp was “Cape-able”, where we explored the ideas of being reluctant, gifted, tested and sent as God’s heroes and to use our gifts and talents to glorify God in our everyday lives. Our teaching time included memorising Bible verses with actions and gaining more knowledge about God through Pastor Fin’s messages and small group discussions. One of the key Bible verses from camp was John 15:16 which says, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit-fruit that will last-and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.”

Although there were times of teaching, learning, and serving, there were also many



games and activities throughout camp that had campers grinning from ear to ear. The water games and swimming along with rotation games that allowed campers to gain and use their ‘super powers’ were all big hits.

We have been very blessed to be able to run this camp in light of the current COVID situation. SPIN was an amazing opportunity to teach the young people about how much God loves them and encourage them to share that love with others in their lives. We pray that these young people continue to grow in their faith and engage in their church communities. We can’t wait to run SPIN again in 2022!

Guild visit

Blueprint Ministries staff had the privilege of speaking at the Bethlehem Guild’s recent meeting, to answer the question ‘What is Blueprint?’ Head to the news section on the District website to read the full story.



Images: SPIN/Alyssa Griffin, all others supplied

By Ian Crambrook
Camping and Event Ministries Coordinator,
CFYYAM

The Blueprint Ministries team held its annual RENEW Young Adults camp in early February on the idyllic banks of the River Murray at Walker Flat. In attendance were over 60 young people gathered from all over South Australia to reset and refresh after a challenging year, and in preparation for the year ahead. While the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions limited the number of people we were able to cater for on camp, it was such a blessing to be able to gather as a community when so many people around the world are still without that freedom.

This year our camp focussed on the theme Awaken, where we looked at Christ awakening us from spiritual slumber through His word and sacraments to live as His people. Thank you to Pastor Shaun Manning from Naracoorte for guiding us through our studies during the weekend.

With many of our young people gearing up for tertiary studies due to commence soon, RENEW is a great way to rest in God's presence and be refreshed for the year ahead. As such, much time was spent in quality fellowship as our young people shared their time and met some new people over a scrumptious meal, a riveting board game, or a relaxing paddle in a kayak.

This year we were blessed to be able to join the Forster Lutheran Church for



worship on the Sunday morning of camp and share in fellowship with them. Thank you for welcoming us into your community!

We were once again blessed to be able to offer a 50% discount for 2020 Year 12 school leavers to attend their first Young Adults camp. This is a fantastic way for young people making the transition from school to tertiary studies, work or job-hunting to meet and network with other young Lutherans and gather as God's people.

Thank must also go to our fantastic camp directors Renee Hein and Thomas Krahling who answered God's call to serve their peers in this ministry.

Young Adult happenings

Young Adults will be a focus area for our Blueprint Ministries team in 2021 as we seek to explore new ways to build connections with young people and involve them in the life of the Church. Following on from RENEW, our team will be hosting our annual Welcome Event on 13th March for young people moving to the city or transitioning out of school life to meet and gather with other young Lutherans in Adelaide. We also plan to hold further young adult social gatherings with free

food and fellowship to continue building our young Lutheran community in the city.

We are in the planning stage for an exciting new young adult retreat weekend which will delve deeper into scripture and topics such as living as God's people and be a place for our young people to extend and deepen their understanding of God and the Lutheran church. This promises to be a very exciting addition to our annual event schedule. Stay tuned for more information to follow!

WELCOME! YOUNG ADULTS WELCOME DINNER

WHEN:
Saturday, March 13th
6.30pm

WHERE:
North Adelaide,
venue TBC

Calling all young adults! Join other young Lutherans in the community at this Blueprint-hosted welcome dinner. Whether you have moved to the city for work or study, are transitioning from school, or want to meet new friends, we'd love to see you there. Your first drink is free!

For more information visit the event link on the Blueprint Young Adult Network Facebook page, or call the District Office on 08 8267 5211.



‘Seenagers’ are young at heart

A group known as the ‘Seenagers’ from Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Aberfoyle Park is proving that it’s not just the young that know how to have fun.

The group was formed more than a decade ago when the church recognised the need to balance their focus on children and youth ministry with a program tailored to the large number of over-fifty-fives in the congregation.

“The name says it all!” says coordinator Peter Schubert. “Our purpose is youthful seniors enjoying fellowship, supporting the lonely, going on outings and finding intellectual stimulation, under God’s grace.”

The group gathers twice a month and the program consists of regular morning tea meetings interspersed with outings and activities – everything from listening to guest speakers, hymn singing or playing indoor games, to touring wineries, exhibitions and museums, or talking a walking tour.

The group often serves as a conduit to the church by helping

people get to know members in a less-intimidating small group, and Peter says God’s love is very evident within the Seenager community and beyond.

“A recent migrant whose wife died shortly after arriving was very lonely, and someone knew about our group and brought him along. When he went to a nursing home, he told me he could give up other activities but not Seenagers,” he says.

“Another man found great comfort in the group after his daughter suggested he attend when his wife went into full-time care. He just needed acceptance, love and some fun.”

Peter has been told by many that the Seenagers are ‘the happiest group they have ever been involved with.’

“Do they recognise what God is doing in their lives? I don’t know. But we are called to walk with them and show them what makes this group so special. God is working through the group and inviting us to join him in sharing his love and grace.”



The Seenagers group enjoys a variety of activities throughout the year.



Professional Standards Department updates

By Dave Biar and Holly Koning
Professional Standards Officer &
Professional Standards Assistant

The Professional Standards team is already back into the swing of it for 2021, presenting the first two **face-to-face workshops** of the year in early February – a full workshop with Grace congregation in Tanunda and then a refresher workshop with the Eudunda-Robertstown parish.

This year we have two trainers who can present face-to-face versions of the full-length Level 1 Safe Church workshop and the Level 1 Refresher – Professional Standards Officer, Dave Biar and Professional Standards Trainer, Anastasia Ferguson. Please remember that while a face-to-face presentation is the preferred method of delivery, these **sessions are also available online** as self-paced modules for those who are unable to make it to a physical workshop.

If your congregation is due to update or refresh their training, or your congregation missed out on holding a workshop last year, please contact us to arrange a suitable date to hold a session. The 2021 training calendar is filling up quickly, so we encourage congregations to contact us early to confirm their preferred dates.

Level 2 training is receiving an update. We anticipate that by the time you read this, the training will have been launched and will be available for registrations. This training is completed as a single online module through ALC iLearn, and registrations are essential. For more details, please see the LCA Professional Standards Training page.

A **Safe Church Webinar** is being planned for Saturday afternoon 27 March, commencing at 1pm (Adelaide time). Mary-Ann Carver will speak about the proposed LCA Child Safety Standards – developed specifically for LCA congregations and their communities as a mechanism for implementing the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*. The LCA is not beginning its child safe journey, but rather it is seeking to further the very good progress that has already been made. This optional event is for Safe Church Coordinators (formerly SP3 Coordinators), congregational chairpersons or representatives of their council/board and pastors.

Lastly, the beginning of the year is a good time for team leaders and coordinators to **review programs for the upcoming year**. We encourage congregations to begin this process if they have not already. With the challenges posed by changing COVID-19 restrictions, we understand these programs are under constant review, but it is important to ensure these updates are well documented during such times.

In Brief

70 years for Pastor Arnold

Pastor Arnold Schmidt recently celebrated the 70th anniversary of his ordination. Pastor Arnold (pictured here, right, with Pastor Rodney Witmitz) is a valued presence at Hallett Cove Lutheran Church, where his contribution is much appreciated.



Thanks a Million, Brenda

Brenda Hutchinson, hospitality manager at St Pauls Lutheran Homes Hahndorf, was recently recognised for her efforts to protect residents from COVID-19 during the height of the pandemic.

Brenda was nominated in the NewsCorp Thanks a Million campaign by her colleague Jennifer Neal.

“Brenda went above and beyond to ensure the whole facility was spotless and COVID-ready in case of an outbreak,” Jennifer told The Advertiser newspaper. “She really did make a remarkable difference by making sure all the residents and staff were clean, happy and safe in a really difficult time.”



Australia Day awards

Pastor Dan and Helen Rooney from Mallee Lutheran Parish were recognised for their coordination of the Pinnaroo Great Easter Egg Hunt, receiving an Event of the Year Award. The event brought the community together during a time of uncertainty during COVID, with around 150 people participating (while maintaining social distance!).

Muriel Knutsen, a member of the Bethlehem Pinnaroo Congregation, received a Citizen of the Year award for her years of community contribution.

Kelly Johnston, a member of St John's Lutheran Church in Woodside, was honoured with a Civic Award for her role in coordinating meal delivery for bushfire affected families after the Cudlee Creek bushfires.

BlazeAid catering volunteers from churches including Birdwood Lutheran Church, St John's Lutheran Church Unley, St Michael's Lutheran Church, Springhead Lutheran Church and Woodside Lutheran Church were also recognised.



Helen Rooney as the Easter Bunny.



Cherry Hale (centre) accepts Muriel Knutsen's award.



Kelly Johnston (right) with Jill Pfitzner, who nominated her for the award.

WHS Calendar

The District Office has compiled a handy Work Health and Safety (WHS) calendar, accessible online via our website. The calendar breaks down your church's yearly WHS requirements into easy-to-complete monthly jobs. Reminders will also be sent out via the District eNews. Follow along and tick off your tasks!



Fundraiser with sole

Members of Grace Lutheran Church in Bridgewater looked a bit mismatched on a recent Sunday morning, taking part in an 'odd shoe' fundraiser for Leprosy Mission. Donations were made to buy shoes for people who don't have any – a fundraising event with true heart and sole!





Walk for the children!

WHERE WILL YOU WALK?

GOOD NEWS! After COVID-19 cancelled ALWS Walk My Way last year, it's time to step out in 2021 to help refugee children get back to school!

Join the main **Walk My Way** in the Barossa Valley on Saturday 1 May, enjoying vineyards, Lutheran churches and Barossa hospitality ...

... or do your own **Walk your Way** wherever you are, whenever you like.

Can't manage 26 km? Do it in stages beforehand. **Woof your Way** or **Wheel your Way**. Each step you take, each \$26 you raise, supports a refugee child in school for one year.



\$26 helps get a refugee child back to school for one year!

Photo: ALWS/Helene Wikstrom

WHY YOUR WALK MATTERS

Your walk will help refugee children get back to school and to catch up on what they missed because of COVID-19 close-downs.

Our **Walk My Way** aim is to support 10,000 children plus show our Australian community what it means to be a church where love comes to life.

Through ALWS you help make sure no child is forgotten – giving special care to children with disabilities, orphans and older students who have been left behind.

Best of all, no-one can ever take away the education you give a child – you are a blessing ALWayS!



When: Saturday 1 May
Where: Barossa Valley SA

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

Walking together to bring love to life!

