

POPULAR REPORT

From the 49th LCA SA-NT District Regular Convention of Synod
held at Redeemer Lutheran School, Nuriootpa



Living water

John 4:13-14

Students from Redeemer Lutheran School, together with Principal Andrew Kelly, welcomed delegates to convention and presented an Acknowledgment of Country.

Worship

The 2022 District Convention of Synod began with an opening devotion presented by Bishop David Altus. He acknowledged that life has been sapped out of us in one way or another during the past few years and we wonder what energy we have for the season ahead. ***"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life" - John 4:13-14.*** Jesus spoke these refreshing words to a woman who came to a well with an empty bucket. She was thirsty. "I wonder how you would describe the bucket that you come to draw with from God's well on Sunday morning right now?"

Our Bishop asked us to imagine, an endlessly renewable source of pure life, eternal life even. Life that does not depend on the wind blowing at your back and the sun shining on your life. That's what Jesus offers and promises the woman at the well. It's what he offers and promises, and in fact has given us in baptism. Jesus is our ultimate hope for the life we long for inside. We carry around in us a life that has already been given to us and that nothing can rob us of. We carry around a life that enables us to get through anything. It's the life that we live now and face the future with. The life that God wants to overflow from us into the lives of others.

Closing worship was led by First Assistant Bishop, Pastor Andrew Brook. He also reflected on the concept of Living Water, encouraging delegates to remember that we can turn to God for provision of renewal and refreshment. We are thankful to the Barossa CLW band who provided music for the closing service.

Quorum

A quorum to transact business was present, with a total of 202 delegates in attendance. Unfortunately, a 2/3 quorum was not present which means, had it been required, no constitutional changes could be considered.

Reports and Presentations

Bishop David presented his report, challenging us about what legacy of faith and life God might want us to leave behind for the church that follows us one day. He called us to think and work collaboratively with the gifts and resources and people God has given us, across boundaries. He also identified areas of pastoral need. He noted the upcoming General Convention of Synod and asked that we prepare for that. There will be opportunity for wider District engagement in three issues: Ordination of women and men, LCA Constitutional Review and the Ecclesiastical Discipline Review. Bishop David thanked the synod for their commitment to child protection. Lastly, he thanked Michelle Storie (Executive Assistant) and John Proeve (LESNW) as they move on from their respective roles within the District.

Assistant Bishop for Mission Stephen Schultz reported the current issues with vacancy and pastoral supply to the synod. He advised that there was a rapidly changing landscape in this area:

Year	General Ministry Pastors Available	Vacancies calling
2017	101	9
2021	86	18
2022	74	24
2026	65 (predicted)	30 (predicted)

Pastor Stephen also noted that while there has been an overall decrease in pastoral supply since 1990, this was largely felt in rural areas, followed by regional areas. Metro areas had experienced the lowest rate of decline. However, since 2018 there has been a large increase in individuals licenced to distribute the sacraments, particularly in rural and regional areas. Pastor Stephen advised a discussion of zone realignment will likely be raised in the near future with other entities within the District, to better cater for the current layout of ministry within the District.

Bishop David then introduced LCANZ Bishop, Paul Smith, and Executive Officer of the Church, Brett Hausler. Both provided a short report each outlining their roles and areas of importance for the LCANZ. Bishop Paul's report, is attached.

Bishop David also introduced a new District Office staff member, Heidi Smith, as the Chaplaincy Coordinator. Heidi gave a short introduction for current projects and some information regarding current hospital visiting restrictions.

Pastor Andrew Brook introduced Dr Natasha Moore from the Centre for Public Christianity. Dr Natasha presented on 'Gardening in Wartime', introducing thought-provoking ideas regarding faith in a post-Christian society. The District hopes to provide additional information regarding the material referenced in her presentation in the near future.

Lastly, District Church Council representatives Pastor Stephen Schultz and Ben Schubert facilitated a discussion on strategic direction for the SA-NT District. The current strategic analysis has identified 5 key areas:

- Pastors – supply, training, distribution, etc
- Equipping lay people
- Relationship between District entities and efficient use of District resources
- Aboriginal ministry
- Communication and connection across the District

Delegates provided DCC with ideas and feedback which will be reviewed and discussed at the next DCC meeting.

Business

Finance Consultant, Stephen Kroker, presented the 2021 audited financial results for the SA-NT District and the SA-NT Holding Limited. There were some questions about properties moving in and out of the holding company. Delegates were advised that the holding company only holds properties in trust and the owning entities are welcome to add or move properties as they see fit. Properties which are not in the holding company are still subject to LCA governance, policies and procedures. Stephen also presented the 2022 budget for approval. This budget does not currently include any strategic measures, as these require further discussion and consideration by District Church Council. Delegates approved the adoption of the 2021 audited financial statements and 2022 budget.

Thanks

All staff and volunteers were thanked for their assistance with the organisation of this District Convention of Synod.

District Convention of Synod will be held on 19-21 May 2023. A venue will be confirmed.