

48th District Convention of Synod Popular Report Tatachilla Lutheran College, McLaren Vale 4-6 May 2018



District Convention of Synod began with a barbecue hosted by students of Tatachilla Lutheran College who were raising funds for their mission trips to the Northern Territory and Cambodia. We began our convention with worship, where Bishop David Altus introduced us to the theme **“Hearts Burning”** based on **Luke 24:13-35**. During the opening ceremony student

Tobias Turner spoke in his native language to **welcome** everyone to the land of the Kaurna people. Principal of Tatachilla Lutheran College, Cain McDonald, welcomed everyone to the college and introduced student Jay Van Dam who got everyone’s hearts burning with her testimony and witness of her spiritual journey. What a blessing Jay was to us all. Tom Taylor spoke of the opportunities that Tatachilla College is providing to all its students.

To conclude the Friday night session delegates appointed **Kym Wallent** as the **convention chairperson** and ratified the minute takers and electoral committee. Pastors who have begun serving in our District during the past two years were introduced to the convention and the Bishop prayed for them. **District Office staff** introduced themselves to enable delegates to put a face to the voice and the email signature. Pastor Mark Worthing prayed for staff and the work that they do to support our congregations.

Bishop of the LCA John Henderson addressed delegates and spoke of the many issues facing the LCA. Some of these included the draft doctrinal statement on the ‘Ordination of Women and Men’ and ‘Why it need not be church divisive’ – both of these statements are available on the LCA website in preparation for the General Convention of Synod. Other issues that are being addressed include ‘Theology and domestic violence’ and ‘The seal of the Confessional’ and responses have been provided to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the proposed Commonwealth Redress Scheme. Bishop John also spoke of the review of the LCA Call System, Church worker training and Australian Lutheran College, Extension of the Continuing Education for Pastors program and Supervision for Church Workers. Bishop John outlined a number of public theology statements that have been released over the past synodical term, and it was noted that the issue of same-sex marriage has been addressed three times in statements. The Aboriginal Church is an area Bishop Henderson is passionate about and he raised a number of questions that need exploration. The LCA has a number of connections with other Lutheran organisations and ecumenical partners within Australia and the world. We have partnerships with churches in mission in PNG and SE Asia and we were

reminded of how we partner with these churches as they walk in their ministry. Bishop John advised that Assistant to the Bishop – International Mission, Glenice Hartwich, has recently announced her retirement and we thank God for her service.

Throughout the weekend delegates gained a deeper understanding of the Bible text **Luke 24:13-35** through the worship services, daily devotions, table discussion and study.

Business sessions were held where the following items were presented and discussed:

- The **2018 budget results** were presented and these showed a surplus of \$31,030. It was noted that contributions from congregations had fallen to below \$1.4 million for the first time, but that individual donations to the work of the District have been increasing and delegates were thanked for this. Finance Consultant Mark Schwarz also spoke of the District Holding Company which is primarily holding property in trust for congregations and other entities. It also receives the Emergency Services Levy which is then on-charged to property users. **Stephen Kroker** was introduced as the **incoming District Finance Consultant**.
- First Assistant Bishop Tim Klein and DCC Lay Member, Judy Jaensch introduced the proposal regarding the '**Revised Working Structure of the SA-NT District**' as per the Book of Reports. After much discussion this resolution was passed.
- Pastor Josh Muller presented the proposal to **reduce the number of pastors on District Church Council by two**, as per the Book of Reports. This proposal was approved by the delegates.
- Angela Rogers presented the proposed **constitution changes** relating to the development of the **Assistant Bishop for Mission position**, as per the Book of Reports. These changes were approved.
- Pastor Andrew Vanderwal and DCC lay member Mel Zerner presented the proposal regarding changes to use of **interest from the Zinnbauer Fund to sustain chaplaincy ministry**. After much discussion the proposal was approved by the delegates.
- A proposal from Adelaide Bethlehem Congregation, presented by Chairperson David Quast, recommending the District move to holding **annual one day synods** was debated and defeated.
- The **2019 budget** was presented to delegates and approved with a deficit of \$80,478. Since Synod approved application of interest from the Zinnbauer Fund to support chaplaincy ministry the projected deficit will be significantly reduced.

Bishop David Altus was re-elected as **Bishop** of the LCA, SA-NT District Inc for a further two year term. **Pastor Tim Klein** was re-elected as **First Assistant Bishop** and **Pastor Eugene Minge** was elected as **Second Assistant Bishop**. Elections were also held for District Church Council, General Church Council representative, District Finance Consultant, Standing Committees and for the Boards of Immanuel College, Concordia College, Tanunda Lutheran Home and Riverview Rest Home at Loxton.



Bishop David led the delegates through a time of reflection as we gave thanks for the lives of pastors, their wives' and others who have passed away since our last convention.

Assistant Bishop for Mission Stephen Schultz led delegates through the **ALITE report** and what this means for the wider church, and information about what action is being taken on the many recommendations.

Bishop David Altus presented his report and highlighted a number of areas of concern within our church, including the ageing of our pastors, looming retirements and the need to equip laity to do some pastoral work, the wonderful opportunities we have to reach others through our schools and aged care facilities and the governance reviews being conducted, the financial challenges we face, the mental health issues faced by many in our congregations and to consider the God-given unity of the church in light of the issues we are facing. Bishop David gave thanks to the many people with whom he works who support and care for him. Dr Erich Renner's 74 years of service were also acknowledged and thanks were given to God for him as he concludes his preaching to German speaking people at the age of 96.



District Convention of Synod acknowledged and gave **thanks to God** for the many years of dedicated service to Lutheran Community Care by the Director, **Helen Lockwood**. Helen has given 25 years of service, 9 as Director, and has led LCC on a journey of growth for it to now be recognised as a quality provider of services in the community. Helen retires in August 2018.

District Convention also thanked **Mel Zerner** for his 20 years on District Church Council in various roles. Mel will be continuing as the GCC representative. **Mark Schwarz** was thanked for this 10 years of service as District Finance Consultant. **Pastor Andrew Ruddell** was thanked for his service to the District as Second Assistant Bishop.

Saturday evening was an informal dinner and drinks event with music and dance entertainment provided by the students and staff of Tatachilla Lutheran College. This was an opportunity for delegates to mingle and relax with friends.



Worship on Sunday morning was live streamed on the internet and approximately 20 'viewers' joined our worship service. The service can continue to be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1kExVCy5L0&t=4278s> Pastor Stephen took everyone on a journey and compared it to the journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus, as well as challenging us about our journey with Christ and the church. We celebrated Holy Communion, with the offering of \$8,000 going to the **Alice Springs Playgroup Appeal** being run by Lutheran Community Care.

Each department of the District presented to the convention with some of the highlights being:

- **Chaplaincy** – Pastor Peter Miller is passionate about visiting the sick in hospitals and prisons, reminding them they are not alone, and for those people in our prisons that God loves them. If you know of someone in hospital please let Pastor Peter know and he will arrange a visit for them. Making connections with young adults continues to be a challenge, whether they be in high schools, tertiary facilities or boarders at ALC.
- **Lutheran Community Care** – Helen Lockwood spoke of the work of LCC throughout SA and Central Australia. Dolly and Leanne from the Alice Springs Playgroup spoke of their experiences at the playgroup and what it has done for their families. Unfortunately government funding has been withdrawn and nine indigenous workers have lost their jobs. An appeal is being run in an effort to continue the playgroup in some way in the future.
- **AbMinSA** – Ivan Christian spoke of the various Aboriginal communities that we are supporting and the work that is being done in them. Pastor Rob Schubert is at Port Lincoln where he has established links with the community. Evangelist Lindsay Thomas and Pastor Russell Bryant are working in the Yalata Community. Ivan spoke of the loss of our community worker at Yalata and the impact this is having on the

community. Pastors Malcolm Pech and Tom Pietsch are serving the Ferrymen Park community.

- **CFYYAM** – Fiona Weckert showed a video which challenged us in our thinking of our young people in church. <https://youtu.be/NUeZSJES5-M> Fiona spoke of the various events and camps that are run by the department and the large number of children they are reaching through the camps. These remain an important way of connecting with children and teaching them of Jesus's love for them. She also spoke of the need for young people to be encouraged and supported to step up in our churches.
- **Lutheran Aged Care** – Delton Schiller spoke of the number of facilities we have in our District and the very good reputation the Lutheran brand has. Governance has been a major focus for the industry over the past two years as they have all participated in the LCA Aged Care and Community Services Governance Review. Mr Tim Gray's recent retirement was acknowledged following his many years as CEO of LHI.
- **Mission** – Assistant Bishop for Mission Stephen Schultz reminded us that mission work is not rocket science, it is about meeting the needs of others and developing relationships. Stephen thanked Rev Dr Steen Olsen for the legacy he has left and all that he had contributed to the District. Stephen is traveling extensively throughout the District meeting people, assisting with realignments and the refocus of mission plans. He is also spending time with school chaplains through LESNW.
- **LESNW** – John Proeve spoke of the challenges of Lutheran education to spread the good news of Jesus to the many students and staff who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus. LESNW (Lutheran Education SA, NT and WA) have reviewed their governance structure resulting in a board that is now skills based.
- **Lutheran Disability Services** – CEO Janine Lenigas explained the challenges being faced in the industry by the introduction of the NDIS. They have achieved a growth of 18% in the past year and expect this to continue. Customer satisfaction is over 90%. LDS have recently expanded into the Barossa Valley. They are currently looking for more accommodation services for clients.
- **Professional Standards** – Dave Biar thanked Holly for all her assistance with the arranging of the workshops and webinars and the maintenance of SP3. Professional Standards have undergone major



changes in the past two years and delegates were encouraged to undertake the workshops as a way of building up the church to ensure that everyone feels safe in our church.

The Mission Stimulus Grants for 2018 were presented by Andrew Waldhuter from the LLL, who sponsor these grants. \$10,000 was awarded to the Aboriginal Women's Choir to assist with their tour to America and \$15,000 to St John's Lutheran Church Tea Tree Gully to assist with strategies to engage young people.

Delegates heard more about the work of the **Lutheran Church of Australia** through representatives from the National Office:

- **Local Mission** encompassing the work of cross cultural ministry, Grow Ministries, Lutheran Media, ministry with the ageing and New and Renewing Churches.
- **Ministry Support** – LCA Governance Review, Lutheran Education review and the Aged Care and Community Services Review, Church Worker Support, Communications, Finance and Administration, Archives and Professional Standards.
- **ALWS** – Thank you to SA-NT District for generous donations. Julie spoke of their education programs and how the donations are contributing to the work of ALWS.
- **ALC** – Principal Pastor James Winderlich reminded delegates that we do not have enough graduates to fill the vacancies and encouraged us all to encourage people who might be interested in training at ALC.

Throughout the weekend there were discussions around tables and at the microphones. **Table groups** also stopped for times of prayer to pray together and to listen to what God was telling them



from his word. People who were first time delegates were made to feel welcomed. During the meal breaks there was much chatter and catching up with friends, old and new, young and not so young, so much noise in meal marquee. There were expo sites to be visited where delegates could gather further information about the work of the various areas of our church.



The **48th District Convention of Synod** was closed with worship which included the **installation** of Pastor Eugene Minge as Second Assistant Bishop and the installation of District Church Council members. First Assistant Bishop Tim Klein encouraged us through his message to 'head for home with burning hearts'.

