



POPULAR REPORT

The 51st SA-NT District Convention of Synod gathered people from all around the District who joined together to worship, transact business, hear the story of how God is at work amongst us and have fellowship with each other.

Convention was held at the Adelaide Convention Centre. This was a first for this District which streamlined all aspects of organisation and enabled increased accessibility for all delegates. It enabled the District team to facilitate a very positive experience for delegates as they enjoyed great food, good facilities and the opportunity to catch up with friends, as well as make new connections. All of this was done for the same cost as if convention had been held in a school, as this incurs the expense of hiring equipment and requires extra staff and volunteer time, which brings financial costs and heavy expectations of an aging volunteer base.

Convention theme was 'Prepared to Go' and this was highlighted throughout convention as the following congregations, parishes or entities shared their mission and ministry stories:

- **Concordia College** – Pastor Dale Gosden spoke about a Year 8 student who was terminally ill, and how we witnessed to his faith in Christ during this time.
- **Grace Chinese** – This is the SA-NT District's newest congregation. Pastor Tim Chen spoke of the challenges and opportunities this brings. He focused on their recent congregational camp. The theme was 'Jesus is my superhero' where everyone was welcomed as family, not as guests. In 2024 eight people and one baby were baptised and welcomed into the congregation. Pastor Tim shared about the power of prayer in the recovery of a church member from severe illness. Pastor Tim reminded us that, 'We share good news and bad news, but we know our heart is in Christ Jesus.'
- **Mallee Lutheran Parish** – Local shows are a highlight of community life and parish volunteers have set up a stall at these events. They have given out over 1800 gift bags to children with goodies from Lutheran Media and other Christian activity sheets. They've served free tea and coffee to adults and had valuable conversations and connection with the local community. Pastor Peter Heintze encouraged those in metropolitan congregations to visit the rural areas and support country shows.



- **Immanuel Lutheran Church Kadina** – received an LCA Mission Grant in 2024. In collaboration with other local churches and the local Christian school, they hosted an NZ evangelist. As a follow up to this, they are offering the Alpha Course to people of the Copper Coast.
- **Faith Lutheran Church Warradale** – Christine Materne shared about two ministry initiatives- Mainly Music and Community Meals, and how the congregation utilises letter box drops to promote their activities. They also hold an informal evening event 'The Gathering,' where people can get to know Christians, ask questions and learn more about Christianity. Some of these people are becoming part of the church community. There is also an intentional focus on morning tea after worship services – it is a blessing to the congregation as well as people who may not have other connection points. Faith is blessed to welcome clients from Lutheran Disability Services. Congregations were encouraged to 'Start where you are' – just be real.'
- **The Ark Lutheran Church Salisbury** – 'Changing lanes, crossing cultures' has been a focus for this congregation. They are reaching out to people of different cultures through stalls at local events as well as partnering with the local Muslim community to host a Ramadan dinner.

The congregation is also partnering with their kindergarten to spend time with families after their worship services and through the 'Bubbles and Bounce' playgroup.

- **St Peter's Lutheran Church Loxton** – 'Kick off Ya Boots' is a musical production written by John Gladigau and produced by the St Peter's congregation. The story is based on a farming community and the challenges they face; relationships, financial, succession planning, wellbeing and more. Kick off Ya boots is now a movie, and it has been shown around the state. It is ideal for a dinner event with a mission focus. It meets the community where they are at and highlights critical issues impacting rural communities.



Valuable time was also spent hearing from delegates impacted by the ongoing drought and discussing how best to support congregations and members. Delegates were encouraged to visit rural regions and support the local shops as well as joining a congregation for worship. This conversation has sparked ideas for financial, spiritual and practical support. The District will be sharing further information about this in the coming weeks.

The music for worship was beautiful and lead by District Office team member, Dan Kitson and his wife Ebony, as well as being joined by Isobel and Josiah for the closing service. Opening worship was led by Bishop Andrew Brook and First Assistant Bishop Adrian Kitson preached on the passage from Revelation 21:1-6, with a theme of 'The Payoff'. God's vision was shared by John – everything is new, it is the present day. We hear the voice of God saying, 'I am making things new – now, with and in you'. Drink up today and the Lord will sustain you. Pastor Geoff Johnston led closing worship and Bishop Andrew preached on Acts 1:1-18, sharing 'Human beings like to decide who we like, and those we don't. God doesn't play games like that. God doesn't play favourites. His love is for all people.'

Pastor Adrian Kitson was re-elected unopposed as First Assistant Bishop with Pastor Dale Gosden elected unopposed as Second Assistant Bishop, filling the vacancy left by Pastor Joel Cramer's call to New Zealand. As Bishop Andrew Brook was elected in 2023 his initial term will conclude in 2027. Elections were also held for District Church Council and other committees and boards.

The District Church Council (DCC) recently commissioned a review of the DCC and the SA-NT District Office. Delegates were provided with key findings from the review and were given the opportunity to talk about it at their tables as well as providing written feedback. This will now be discussed further by the newly elected DCC before any recommendations are implemented.

LCANZ Bishop Paul Smith presented the Draft Doctrinal Statement for the Ordination of Women and Men, with our District being the first to formally receive this statement. Delegates were provided with an opportunity to comment on the statement, with questions being answered by Bishop Paul. Feedback from all over the LCANZ will be fed back to CTICR in preparation for the one-day online Convention of General Synod on 18 October 2025.



SA-NT departments and agencies reported to the convention with time for questions. Delegates also heard from LCANZ Bishop Paul Smith and LCA Churchwide Office. Many of the presenters' spoke of how their entity is providing mission in the name of the Church and how they are 'Prepared To Go' to the people in God's name and how they are bringing 'God's love to life'.

LLL Australia Mission Outreach Grants were presented to St Peter's Lutheran Church Elizabeth for redevelopment of their children's activity areas as they reach out to the multi-ethnic community and become a hub serving the wider Elizabeth area with the love of Jesus. Over 350 people use their facilities each week and they have developed relationships with Burmese and African groups with over 80 children hearing a Christian message. The congregation leadership team are looking forward to assisting with the facilitation of Safe Church training for these groups.

A further grant was awarded to St John's Lutheran Church Dutton to assist with the upgrade of their historic school building which will be used for children's activities on Sundays, a morning tea space after worship, as well as the meeting place for their growing community, the only such building in the town.

We are thankful to LLL Australia for their sponsorship of our 'Golden Hour' social event at the conclusion of business on Saturday. Delegates were able to network and connect with other delegates over an hour of finger food and drinks. There was much laughter and chatter by all who attended.

We give thanks to God for the success of this event, the attendance of delegates from all around the SA-NT District, and the opportunity to share mission stories and ideas that will help us all be 'Prepared to Go'.