



# **Section 4**

## **Reports to 2013 Synod**

LCAQD District Bishop, Rev Noel Noack

# **BISHOPS REPORT, REV NOEL NOACK LCAQD CONVENTION OF SYNOD 2-4 AUGUST, 2013**

**Convention Theme: *In His Steps***

**Jesus said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me”. Luke 9.23**

As Church we are a pilgrim people. We are on a journey through a challenging landscape, we are set on the fulfilment of the hope that lies before us. That journey is not determined by us. It is determined by Christ – he calls us to follow him. The theme *In His Steps* recognises the journey to which we have been called and we recognise that it’s Christ himself who leads us. He calls us and we follow ... In His Steps.

As we are called to embrace the journey by the Word of Christ, so we are sustained in our travel though the Word and the Sacraments. The bread and wine of Christ’s presence nurtures us, his voice encourages us. We are always alert to his leading and can walk with confidence where he has gone before. We can go forward in security and confidence. He is the pioneer of the path, there is no road too hard, no path too rocky, for he has gone before us. Christ calls, teaches, enlightens and gathers us. In worship we are renewed for the journey. We are not lone travellers. We support each other, one beggar showing another where to find bread. In our conversation with others we meet we speak of our destination and the hope that is within us.

*In His Steps* means to hear the voice of Christ and to respond in obedience to his call to follow him. It is the way of life and hope. It is also a way of death – for we die to sin, die to selfishness, die to following our own path, die to our own wishes and live for Him.

## **Vision**

It is my privilege to visit widely in the church and see the activities that Congregations and members undertake. I am so encouraged. The faithfulness, the creativity, the energy and the commitment of members of our Church is heartening. I applaud you for it.

I am so thankful that we have in the last three years strengthened our capacity to serve the congregations and agencies of the Church. We have increased staff at church office so that we can develop initiative and support for Congregations through the Office of the Bishop. We have employed full time PA for key leaders, an accountant and a newsletter editor (part time). Three years ago we had one part time PA. It has made a real difference.

And for those who say the church is dying, check the statistics in the appendix to my report. They tell a more complex and nuanced story. Over the past five years there has been an increase of attendance at worship of 5.1% and an increase in 18 + communing membership of nearly 9%. It should be much better. With the work of the Holy Spirit among us it can be much better. But we are not dying.

During this convention I hope that you will see a Church that is active in doing the work of the Lord. I pray that in these next twelve months that we can take on new initiatives in reaching out in our community. These involve evangelism in the environment of Lutheran Schools, outreach and spiritual support for 18 – 30 year olds and the missioning of Hillcrest (formerly West Logan). You will hear more of this on the floor of convention. You will also hear of exciting developments in our partnership with Schools and Church in North Sumatra and Aceh. We have a great deal for which we can thank and praise God.

There are areas of challenge. One significant area is the reduction in offerings of congregations to the wider work of the Church. In the period 2007 to 2011 overall offerings have increased by 26.6% in congregations of the LCAQD yet contributions to the LCAQD have decreased by 25%. Why? Further research and discussion is required.

### **175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Lutheranism in Queensland**

In 1838 the Gossner Missionaries heard the call of Christ and followed *In His Steps* to Brisbane and commenced their mission community. They had a Lutheran background but were ecumenical nature. We celebrated this significant anniversary and the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St Paul's Lutheran Church at Nundah on June 16 this year.

What does inspire us is the commitment of those who migrated in this first mission community. They were the first free settlers in what was to become Queensland. They did not really know where they were going, their hardships were immense, but they were motivated by Christ and wanted only to follow *In His Steps* ... even if those steps led to Moreton Bay.

We give thanks to God for those faithful who have gone before us in celebrating and sharing Christ in our State.

### **Mission**

LCAQD Constitution – Objects:

*(g) to establish , develop and support new congregations where it is not possible for individual congregations to do so;*

*(f) to encourage every congregation to carry out its mission to its local community;*

I am so thankful that we have had a very smooth transition to the new director for Mission and Ministry, Rev John O'Keefe. He has begun with energy and he continues to work strategically and relationally.

Mission is a matter of priority for the Church. I recently read: *The Church's very existence in this world has to be understood in missionary terms... the Church is missionary by nature.* (p55 *The Evangelising Church* – Richard H Briese and Craig van Gelder 2005 Augsburg)

I would like Pastors and members of the Church reflect deeply on these words. Mission is not an option, it is not so much a priority but rather infusing our life as Church.

I pray that we can be a Church that has the will and resources to plant new Congregations. We are doing this at Springfield (Rev Matthew Wilksch), we plan to remission Hillcrest (formerly West Logan) in 2014 (Rev Jade Bauer). What a joy if we were able to plant a Church sooner rather than later at LORDS, Ormeau.

### **The Floods - Again**

2013 began with very significant flooding resulting from ex tropical cyclone Oswald. The worst flooding (from our Church point of view) was in Bundaberg and the Lockyer Valley. An appeal was been launched. There was been great devastation. Rev Greg Prieppenow, together with Rev Michael Jarick, directed flood response in the Bundaberg area. Funds from the Flood Appeal have supported the initiatives taken by the Congregation to support flood affected folk in the community. We financially support a great deal of his initiatives.

The Lockyer Valley was devastated again, the second time in two years. The flood appeal is supporting a concerted effort by the Parish to reach out to affected folk and provide them with support. The issues remain serious as folk attempt to reconstruct their lives after the floods. I am thankful that we have been given resources to help in the community and

are able to offer support in the name of Christ. Please continue to pray for these communities.

### **The Queensland Lutheran**

During this past year we have employed a journalist (part time), Serena Williams (member at St Andrews, Brisbane) to edit The Queensland Lutheran. She also supplies articles with a Queensland perspective to *The Lutheran*. She has been very active in sharing inspirational and encouraging stories. The newsletter is now produced every fortnight. I encourage Congregations to ensure that it is well distributed to members in either in hard or soft copy and placed on notice boards. It is an important means of bonding members of the District.

### **Students preparing for the Ordained Ministry**

One goal; stated in our Constitution is: *to provide pastors and teachers and other church workers for service in the Church and its congregations*. So how are we going?

#### 2013 New students from Qld preparing for the ordained ministry of the LCA

Darryl Shoesmith (56 yrs) - Good Shepherd, Toowoomba

Joseph Graham (19 yrs) St John's, Bundaberg.

Jake Zabel (18 yrs) Zion, Minden

We wish them God's blessing in their studies.

The District is active in encouraging young men to respond to the call of God in preparing themselves for the Office of the public ministry. Students from the LCAQD make up approximately 50% of the 32 students at ALC preparing for ordination as Pastors of the Church. This year the graduating class is proposed to consist of seven young men, four of whom are from Qld, three of whom are graduates of Lutheran Schools. We give thanks to God for these gifts to his Church.

The annual CLW leaders' Thank You Dinner, hosted by the District in conjunction with Departments, is a prime opportunity to challenge these young leaders to consider full time service in the Church.

### **Ambassadors of Reconciliation**

Rev Bruce Zagel has been supported by the LCA as its first Director of Reconciliation Ministry. It's exciting to see this ministry grow. We are to be, in Christ, a reconciling community. The training events held to date at Good Shepherd, Toowoomba and at St Mark's Dalby have been very well attended.

All Pastors are required to be trained in Christian reconciliation to coaching level. Congregation leaders, elders and pastoral care assistants and members are urged to use the opportunity to grow in living a reconciled and reconciling life.

All members can be equipped. The next Conflict Coaching Workshop will be held at Immanuel Buderim 23 -24 Aug, 2013.

### **Overseas Cooperation and Partnership**

Another goal of the District is: *(h) to support and cooperate with selected churches in other lands as they seek to carry out their mission*. How are we doing?

The Queensland District enjoys strong relationships with overseas partner Churches. In the past 12 months I have met with official visitors from Finland, Thailand, USA, Myanmar, Canada, Cambodia and Sabah.

An important moment in our District will be the visit of **Bishop Dr Munib Younan**, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Palestine and Jordan and President of the Lutheran World Federation who will be attending and presenting at ACLE (Australian Conference on Lutheran Education) to be held 30 Sept to 2 Oct 2013 at the Brisbane Convention Centre.

### **North Sumatra HKBP Partnership.**

In past years I have reported on the partnership that the LCAQD has with the Tanah Alas (Region of Aceh) District of the HKBP Church. The partnership is gaining momentum. Grace Lutheran College and Living Faith Lutheran Church (Murrumba Downs) also have a partnership with a HKBP School in Sidikalang (Nth Sumatra).

We are now excited to see the Sidikalang school and Tanah Schools working together. We are working with them to support one another. The initiative and effort is being provided by Grace Lutheran College, Living Faith Congregation and St John's Lutheran Primary School, Kingaroy ,Dr Meg Noack and myself, together with a team of other supporters and other interested Congregations.

In so many ways God has richly blessed this partnership.

### **The Royal Commission into Child Abuse**

This is very challenging issue for all Churches. I am thankful that DCC has proposed the "Prevention from Harm of Known Sex Offenders" policy and am thankful for the time and effort our Professional Standards Unit has made in alerting and assisting the Church to deal with these matters.

We have a responsibility to protect children and our community. I would urge members to be alert and active to ensure that our churches and agencies are safe places. We will always work to ensure that the care and protection of children is a primary concern.

### **Some Statistical Trends in the Church**

For many years we have recorded statistics on LAMP – the LCA on line data base. In recent years the DEO (Michael Turner) has been diligent in ensuring that Pastors enter statistics in a timely manner. This has been a challenging task. Theo Helbig has been asked to analyse these statistics. What he has reported to date is most interesting.

Government Census data - number who record themselves as Lutherans in Qld 79,179 (highest of any State)

LCAQD 2012

Baptised Membership	15,645
18+ communing	9,892
Avg Weekly Attendance	7823

Total giving to LCAQD from 111 congregations:	\$788,845.07
38 34.2% congregations* collectively gave	\$632,448 (or 80% of the total)
16 14.4% congregations provide 50% of support (above includes SW Qld Luth Parish as a unit)	\$395,165 (14% or 1/7 of LCAQD congs)
12 10.8% congregations gave	\$0
2013 Lenten Mission Appeal offerings totalled members)	\$9045 (less then \$1 per 18+ HC

In the LCAQD total membership, offerings and attendance have all increased over the five year period, Overall offerings have increased by 26.6% in the LCAQD yet contributions to the LCAQD have decreased by 25% over the period 2007 to 2011.

Careful study of these figures gives cause for deep reflection. I am particularly concerned about the falling off of support for the District and General Church. Our policy is that 50% of what the District receives in offerings from Congregations is forwarded to the National Church.

Offerings from congregations that are retained in the LCAQD are insufficient to carry out the tasks required by the Constitution, legislative compliance and good business practise and undertake mission projects. To balance our budget we depend on rent and governance fees received from LEQ and LCC.

### **Thanks**

I am blessed to have a supportive team around me in the Office of Bishop who serve with me in supporting the Church in its multitude of activities.

I am thankful for the DEO Michael Turner, who is ever watchful for the interests of the Church and always has an eye out for introducing new efficiencies. His commitment to working in a digital environment has increased office efficiency greatly. My PA Neil Kube is diligent in bring order to my work life. His efforts are greatly appreciated.

Our Department heads (Rev John O'Keefe – Mission and Ministry, Aaron Glover – LYQ, Sue Kloeden – LEQ and Jacqueline Kelly – LCC are a joy to work with.

My wife, Dr Meg, ensures I keep my feet on the ground and my mind focussed. She is a wonderful support.

Above all I give thanks to God. He has given me good health, a supportive community, and renews me through his gracious Word of life. I am truly blessed.

Respectfully submitted,

**Rev Noel H Noack**

**Bishop, Lutheran Church of Australia, Queensland District**

**Appendix to the Bishops report  
Employment of Lay People in the LCAQD**

Pastors are important in the Church. But increasingly lay people are assisting with spiritual and pastoral care in the LCAQD. The following tables give a picture of how lay folk serve the Church in a variety such positions.

<b>Lutheran Community Care - Chaplaincies</b>			
	<b>Ordained</b>	<b>Lay - Men</b>	<b>Lay Women</b>
<b>Aged Care</b>	3 + 2 P/time	0	1 F/time 4 P/time
<b>Hospital all P/time volunteers</b>		2	13
<b>Community</b>	1 P/time	0	1 P/time

Lay Chaplains employed by LEQ Schools	Full time	Part time
Male	1	3
Female	2	4
<b>Staff employed under the Federal Government's <i>National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program</i> (NSCSWP)</b>		
	Full time	Part time
Male	-	3
Female	3	10
<b>Ordained Pastors called to schools, <i>excluding</i> congregational pastors some of whom have part of their time dedicated to a school with payment for that time</b>		
	Full time	Part time
Male	10	3

<b>Layworkers in the LCAQD</b>		
Total is 40 (this does not include lay persons employed in Schools) Includes Congregations and Youth Camp.		
	<b>Lay - Men</b>	<b>Lay Women</b>
<b>FullTime / Part Time approx. 50/50</b>	12	34

<b>LCAQD Pastor Statistics As at June 20, 2013</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Total LCAQD Congregations	114	11	
		5	
Total LCAQD Parishes	73	73	
Pastors in full time Parish/Congregational Ministry	68 Incl SMPs	72 Incl SMPs	75 Incl SMPs
Full time SMP Pastors – Chinese	3	5	5
Full time SMP Pastors – Other	1	2	2
Part time SMP Pastors – Other	2 x 0.5		
Full time School Chaplains	10	10	9
F/T Other Chaplaincy	2	3	3
Mixed role – Congregational/School chaplain	2		
Administration	4	4	3
ALC Lecturer	1	1	1
Total, full time, active	86	92	<b>93</b>
Total, part time, active	2 x 0.5		
Average age of active pastors	52.3	52.1 years	
Median age of active pastors	53.1	52.7 years	
Pastors eligible to retire in the next 3 years	16	10	10
Leave of Absence	4	7	8
Part Time - no salary	1	1	0
Retired Pastors	52	46	51
Pastoral Vacancies in LCAQD	4 -24 total LCA	4 32 total LCA	14 26 total LCA
ALC graduates for ordination (Estimated)	2013 – 7 2014 – 7 2015 – 4	2012 - 7 2013 - 6 2014 - 6	2010 - 9 2011 - 4 2012 - 7

## **Pastoral Transfers and Events**

### **Pastors leaving the LCAQD since 31 May 2012;**

**Rev Graham Harms** Director of Ministry & Mission LCAQD, Retired 26/10/2012

### **Pastors coming into the LCAQD since 31 May 2012;**

**Rev Jade Bauer**, Whyalla Parish, SA to Beau-Logan Parish,  
12 Aug 2012, by Pres Rev N Noack at Woodridge

**Rev Peter Hage**, Mount Barker, SA to Mount Gravatt St Marks Congregation,  
20 Jan 2013, by Pres Rev N Noack at Mount Gravatt

**Rev Luke Spilsbury**, Sutherland Good Shepherd Congregation, NSW to Gladstone  
St Martins Congregation, 1 Feb 2013, by Pres Rev N Noack at Mount Gravatt

**Rev Ben Hentschke** Birdwood, SA to Ipswich Parish, to be installed 21 July 2013

### **Pastors who have moved within the District since 31 May 2012;**

**Rev Michael Jarick** Grace Lutheran College, Rothwell to North Bundaberg

**Rev Russell Briese** to Beaudesert

**Rev John O'Keefe** Ipswich Parish to Director of Ministry & Mission LCAQD

### **Pastors who have retired/resigned since 31 May 2012**

**Rev Graham Harms** Director of Ministry & Mission LCAQD, Retired 26/10/2012

**Rev Chris Bartholomaeus** Grace Redcliffe, Retired 28/4/2013

**Rev Rick Zweck** Caloundra, Resigned for health reasons 28/4/2013

**Rev Athol Pukallus** Middle Park, Retired 19/5/2013

### **Congregations that have closed in the LCAQD since 31 May 2012**

**St John's Imbil** – closed Sunday 26 August 2012 Pres Rev N Noack

### **Congregation Anniversaries**

90th Anniversary of Immanuel - Ropeley, 3 Feb 2013

Centenary - St John's Lutheran Church, Kulpi, 9 July 2013