



Section 14

2014 Convention of Synod

Mission Stimulus Grant

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH, NOOSA MISSION STIMULUS GRANT

The aim of Good Shepherd, Noosa, in beginning their Playgroup Outreach Project, was to provide a community service that would meet some real needs identified in the region. In the process their hope was to build links of trust and connection with families not currently connected to the life of the church so that the good news of Jesus Christ could be shared. In essence - a mission outreach project to the local community.

While only 8 months have passed since the Mission Stimulus Grant was awarded, they are seeing real progress in moving toward a wider ministry approach by the congregation.

A key part of their plan was to develop a team approach to ministry that was sustainable long term and congregationally owned. The funding model they are working with reflects this, having chosen to spend their award over a three year period on a sliding scale. Their prayerful hope is of growing congregational support and ownership during that time.

Consequently, a coordinator with a sense of vision was appointed, not just a willing worker, but one who would engage and encourage others to join the team rather than doing it all alone. And furthermore, to encourage those parents attending to be part of the support solutions for each other. As a result, the coordinator's role in their bi-weekly Playgroup programme includes the following:

- recruiting and training of congregational volunteers
- helping Playgroup families build supporting networks with each other
- linking Playgroup families with resources and opportunities that may assist them
- finding ways of connecting Playgroup families with congregational members and with opportunities for spiritual growth

The congregation believes that the best way of linking families with the body of Christ is through getting to know church members and simply seeing Christ at work in their lives. Two small teams (of three or four congregational members each) have already been developed, one for Tuesday sessions and one for Thursday. Other congregational members have begun making regular contributions of morning tea items for the parents or assisting with set up and clean up. Team members mix in conversation, help run activities and provide the ever present coffee and treats, giving a wonderful witness of Christian service and love to many families, a large number of which have recently moved to the region and are seeking support and connection.

Promotion of the Playgroup through word of mouth, Facebook and the church web page has worked very well and brought over 60 families (approximately 140 adults and children) to the two groups so far this calendar year. The congregation has already seen some spiritual fruit as there has been a small number of families engaging with the worship life of the congregation and some seeking baptism.

The congregation sees real opportunity for further expansion of this ministry in the years ahead. They give thanks to God for the stimulus this money from the LLL has provided, both financially and in local mission direction.