



Section 4

2014 Convention of Synod

District Bishop's Report

Bishop's Report

Rev Noel H Noack,

LCAQD Convention of Synod, Gatton, 30 May – 1 June 2014

Convention Theme: *Lord, Teach us to Pray.*

“One of his disciples said to Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray.” Luke 9:23

Christian prayer is counter cultural. It does not appeal to a secular world which gives priority to human activity, its processes and organisation. The idea of quietly retreating and “taking it to the Lord in prayer” just does not seem to cut it in the secular world. It is vital in our life in Christ.

Christian prayer is always a response to what God has done for us, most especially in Christ. It is a response to his Word. It expresses a desire to draw close and seek to strengthen the relationship that we have as his children. It is children seeking the good gifts of the Heavenly Father. In it we commit ourselves and our work into his hands. It expresses our desire to respond to his call to join with him in his work in this world.

The Convention theme calls us back to our Lord. The request of the disciple – “Lord teach us to pray” reflect the desire to live empowered by and in the image of Christ himself.

It is to prayer that our Lord calls us. The work of the Church is the work of God. It is done by his command according to his will and for his purposes. It begins with listening. Trusting in him we undertake the work to which we have been called. We earnestly seek to be led and strengthened by him to do his work. We do this in prayer.

While we see the problems that lie before us – he will enable us to see the needs of people, the hope that we can offer in him, and the new life that we give in Christ. Life in the Church is not a work founded on human success. He gives blessing according to his will, in prayer, humbly relying on him, we give praise and thanks.

Pray for New Life

Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. Revelations 3:2

In my role as Bishop I have the privilege of visiting Congregations and Agencies of the Church. I am impressed by the faithfulness and commitment of those who serve the Church in so many ways.

But I have noted that so many Congregations are struggling with declining Church membership, attendance, and financial sustainability. Last year I reported that 12 Congregations (out of 114) were unable to support the District with a financial offering. It means that those congregations are supported by the District and wider Church – for there are many services offered to congregations which are necessary for their continuing ministry e.g. training of Pastors. I will work with the Mission and Ministry Director to ensure their future discussed and, I pray, enhanced in their mission.

We pray for a rich measure of the Spirit which will revitalise and breathe new life into a Church under strain.

Pray for our Community and Connect with it.

I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.

1 Corinthians 9:22

We gather in worship each week to be refreshed through Word and Sacrament. How good that our Lord serves us so that we may serve others in his name. Too easily, however, we can leave our faith behind at the church door and go into the world unmindful of Christ's call to live as his servants and ambassadors.

Christ all calls us as his servants to go into all the world, to make disciples, to serve in the name of Christ, to lift the fallen, to find the lost, to bring healing to the sick, to help to the hurting, to bring friendship to the lonely, to comfort the grieving and to give hope to the broken hearted. It is big call. It is done in prayer, in partnership with Christ and with his presence within us.

We are called to bring life and hope to a dying world.

But how can we bring that life if we do not connect with the community? I fear that we are tempted to live our Christian lives in safe isolation, separated from the community. This is not what Christ has called us to do. In praying for our community and its needs, followed with kind and godly conversations, in neighbourliness, in friendships, in hospitality and Christian service we are able to connect with those around us and allow our Lord to use us as his witnesses and ambassadors. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead us and open our eyes to the opportunities he provides for bring Christ's love and hope to lost and broken lives.

During and after the floods of 2011 and 2013 so many provided support and reached out in practical ways to assist those who were flood affected. It was a wonderful demonstration of connecting with, and supporting the community. It's a shame that it requires a disaster to call us to action. I pray that we can continue to develop an attitude by which, as a matter of habit, we will reach out in loving service to those in need in our community. It all begins with prayer, it continues in action.

In November 2013 the District held a Disaster Preparation Training Event (thank you Michael Turner and Rev John O'Keefe for the organisation) in which participants reflected on the lessons of the 2011 and 2013 floods, saw how the Church responded at those times and received training in preparation for future disasters. It is our hope that those lessons are applied not only in disaster situations but also encourages continuing and servant-hearted connections with the community. A relationship of trust and respect with those around us is a great vehicle for conveying the hope of Christ.

Pray for The Sanctity of Marriage

'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife... So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Mark 10:7f

The Church's teaching on marriage is based on Scripture. This teaching is expressed in our marriage rite. We believe that marriage is established by God; it is foundational to a healthy society and is restricted to a man and a woman who commit themselves to each other in the covenant of marriage for life. Where it is honoured it has brought blessing to individuals and society.

There are determined groups in our country who wish to change the definition of marriage to cover same sex relationships. The United Kingdom recently introduced such a change; Canada has done this since 2005.

I would emphasise that the change in the definition has a number of implications. The most public face of such a proposed change is associated with gay marriage, but a definition change raises a variety of possibilities (e.g. polygamy which is allowed in many other countries) that has implications for the very fabric of our society. In one way or another relationships are diminished and child bearing and rearing is compromised

Certainly the institution of marriage is under pressure with many choosing to cohabit in preference to the commitment made in marriage. We will do well to witness to the blessing of God in Christian marriage and demonstrate these blessings to society.

Pray for Refugees and Newcomers

Do to others as you would have them do to you. Luke 6:31

The debate about asylum seekers, especially boat people, has dominated the current political agenda. It is of concern to us that those who come under the care of our Government are treated with dignity and respect deserving of all human beings. I am also concerned for a 'silent' group of refugees; those who in refugee camps around the world day with zero financial means to re-locate to another place. Again we applaud ALWS who work in these camps in places like Kenya and Nepal.

We cannot ignore the needs of those who have come to our own country. I applaud the efforts of those who work to ensure that refugees and new comers to our country are welcomed and supported. I recognise that such support is not easy and has its own challenges that arise from cultural differences, misunderstanding and the adjustment to a new life in a new country. We will be Christ to the foreigner and stranger in our communities and seek their welfare. I applaud the efforts of Our Saviour's (Toowoomba) and St Luke's (Woodridge), St Mark's Mt Gravatt, Our Saviour's (Rochedale), Trinity (Southport) and many other Congregations who have been enabled to reach out to, and support, refugees and newcomers.

We serve others in Christ's name, the ultimate result will be his doing, it is our task to ensure that the presence of Christ is made real to those in need.

Pray for Church Planting:

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church (which had been planted) and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. Acts 14:23

I am thankful we have the means to plant new Churches. We are doing this at Springfield (Rev Matthew Wilksch) and at Hillcrest (Rev Jade Bauer). The financial support is provided, in part by the LLL through the Church planting funds, and through the District Budget. In the case of Springfield great support comes from St Peters Lutheran College, Springfield campus, where Pastor Matthew serves as half time school chaplain. Continuing support will be required from the District budget. I urge Congregations to continue to support the budget and the Lenten Mission Offering which is vital in the establishment stage. We pray for God's blessing upon this work.

I hope that sooner rather than later we have the means to support a Church plant at LORDS, Ormeau. Under Principal Jodie Hoff the school has grown to over 300 students in its third year. Monthly worship (not in school holidays) has been held at the school (thankyou Rev Greg Vangsness) with attendances of an average of 40 persons. A full time Pastor serving in this area would give great impetus toward establishing a Congregation.

Pray for the LYQ Youth Adult Ministry Coordinator

I write to you, young people, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, 1 John 2:14

Tom Schmidt was installed in this position in March at Nazareth, Woolloongabba. This position is fully funded from the LCAQD Budget. It is a bold step forward in addressing ministry to Young Adults in the District. Through the use of social media and the internet Tom will be serving throughout Qld. His work will focus on connecting with As, assisting Pastors and Congregations in ministry to YAs, supporting small ministry to YAs and organising retreats and related events for YAs. This will have a focus on University students but goes well beyond that group. It is a ministry addressing the needs of Young Adults at a time of significant transition and change in their lives.

LYQ engaged Matthew Bishop to carry out research into YAs in the LCAQD. The results are impressive. Congratulations to LYQ (Aaron Glover) for commissioning the research (paid for from LCAQD Budget).

It is imperative that Congregations and Pastors are diligent in encouraging Young Adults to connect with Tom or to pass on to him their names and contact details.

Pray for the LCA 2015 National Convention:

The apostles and elders met to consider this question. Acts 15:6

The District has invited the LCA to hold its convention in 2015 at Redeemer Lutheran College, Rochedale (30 Sept – 4 Oct 2015). This is expected to be confirmed by the time of District Convention. Congregations will need to have elected delegates by no later than the end of January 2015. There are very important issues that will be discussed and decided.

Pray for the Ordination Discussion.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. 2 Timothy 3:16f

A significant matter that faces our Church is the discussion regarding the ordination of both men and women. This has been a matter under discussion for many years and voted on twice. It is intended to present the matter again to the LCA Convention in 2015. At its last Convention the LCAQD asked the General Church to put aside one day in Convention for discussion and debate on the issue. This has been accepted..

I would ask that Congregations use the resources and information on the LCA Website "*Ordination: We're Listening*" page and take the opportunity for respectful discussion on the matter.

I plan to hold local or regional discussion opportunities so that members can be well informed. Above all members should understand that ours is a Church informed in its theology and practise, by the Word of God. Members are called to faithfully study the Scriptures and seek the guidance and wisdom of our Lord for his Church in this and all other matters.

Pray for our Partnership in the Gospel

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now Philippians 1:4f

The Office of Bishop (which includes the Bishop, the DEO and all the supporting staff) is one part of District Church office. This new term has been introduced to make clear that all the Departments are part of the District. The Church Office building in Milton houses the secretariats for all the District departments and their agencies.

District Church Council has the policy that all District departments be housed together in the one building. It is intended to enhance effective relationships in serving together in the various facets of the work of the Church. The tag line, which describes the role of DCC in providing governance and leadership in working with the District departments, is "To lead and partner in the mission of the Gospel". We want every facet and every aspect of our work to reflect what is held as central, the Gospel, so that all may receive hope and new life through this message of God's grace in Christ.

Give thanks for Aust. Conference of Lutheran Educators, Brisbane, 30 Sept – 2 Oct, 2013

I wish to commend Lutheran Education Queensland, under the leadership of Sue Kloeden who organised an outstanding ACLE Conference last year. There were 950 registered delegates. A highlight was the visit and presentation of Bishop Younan – President of the Lutheran World Federation and Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

Pray for the Pastor's Wives Retreat – Sept 2014 – Santa Teresa, Wellington Pt

Kimberly Pfeiffer (wife of Rev Joshua Pfeiffer) is heading a team planning a Pastors' wives retreat. She is assisted by Lois Hage, Dr Meg Noack and Kristen Thiele. It is most important to gather Pastors' wives for encouragement and support. The District is hopeful of receiving LLL grant funds to reduce costs and support travel costs. .

Pray for the Royal Commission and those who have suffered abuse.

The stories and accounts of sexual abuse within the church and other institutions are heart breaking. Since the Lutheran Church is not involved in the first round of Commission hearings it may be thought that we are exempt from such untoward activities. This is not the case. There are cases in which young people in our care have been abused. We confess our sins and seek to support the victims.

Members must understand that the public will not readily distinguish between denominations and their behaviour. The image of all is tarnished in this process. It is in this context that we work to share and make real the good news of Jesus. The Church needs to listen anew to the voice of Christ and determine that in every way its life and its witness conform to the image of Christ.

In prayer and repentance we will, with the new life that Christ gives, be committed to live each day as children of the light. I commend our 'Guidelines for Ethical Standards of Behaviour' policy and associated policies to you.

Pray for Students preparing for the Ordained Ministry

2014 One new student from Qld preparing for the ordained ministry of the LCA:
Ben Lyons (21 yrs) from St John's Lutheran Church, Corinda.

Pray for our District Partnership with Tanah Alas and Sidikalang

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 supported by Grace Lutheran College, Living Faith Lutheran Church (Murrumba Downs), St John's Lutheran School, Kingaroy and the Lutheran Women of Qld. The HKBP School in Sidikalang (North Sumatra) is also part of this partnership.

A highlight in 2013 was the graduation of three students (fully supported by the partnership) from Nommensen University in Medan. They are Tutiyana and Purnama Sari (from Tanah Alas) and Jumi (from Sidikalang) in 2013. They are now serving their respective communities.

The support provided has brought great blessing to the schools and the individuals.

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 ensure that the annual statistics are completed 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.

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

LCAQD Stats	(as per LAMP data 9/4/2014)	Last year
Baptised Membership	15,323	15,645
18+ communing	9,840	9,892

Avg Weekly Attendance	7,859	7,823
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Total giving to LCAQD from congregations*:\$777,307
36 congregations collectively gave \$625,471 (or 80% of the total)
15 congregations provide 50% of \$ support \$393,378 (13.5% or 1 in 7 congregations)
14 congregations gave no \$ support \$0 (12.6% or 1 in 8 congregations)
* includes SW Qld Luth Parish as one unit

Pray for those who Serve in Leadership

Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people. Ephesians 6:7

How blessed the District is to have people who give hours of volunteer time to serve the Church on various committees and Councils. They do this with diligence, commitment and passion for the work of our Lord and the Church. I am thankful for their servant hearts. In particular I would like to thank the chairs of the four departments that make up our District governance structure. They are Ian Grieshaber (LYQ), Prof Dr Neil Bergmann (M & M), Dr Claire Seligmann (LCC) and Anthony Muller (LEQ) and their respective Directors: Aaron Glover (LYQ), Rev John O'Keefe (M & M), Jacqueline Kelly (LCC) and Sue Kloeden (LEQ). We have a committed team who provide governance and leadership to the Church and its agencies.

I am thankful for the team in the Office of Bishop who provide me with advice, support and encouragement.

I wish to acknowledge my wife, Dr Meg, who prays for me, is a wonderful support and encourages me.

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 and his living presence in the Sacrament. 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 taking 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 of such positions.

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

Layworkers in the LCAQD (this does not include lay persons employed in Schools or Aged Care) Includes Congregations and Youth Camp.		
	Lay Men	Lay Women
FullTime / Part Time approx. 50/50	9	21

Lay Chaplains employed by LEQ Schools: 18 – including 3 females with theological degrees

Staff employed under the Federal Government's National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program (NSCSWP): 19 – 2 male and 17 females

Ordained Pastors called to schools, excluding congregational pastors some of whom have part of their time dedicated to a school with payment for that time:
16 pastors listed
4 vacancies and 1 on leave

LCAQD Pastor Statistics As at April 7, 2014				
Category	2014	2013	2012	2011
Total LCAQD Congregations	111	114	115	
Total LCAQD Parishes	73	73	73	
Pastors in full time Parish/Congregational Ministry	66 Incl SMPs	68 Incl SMPs	72 Incl SMPs	75 incl SMPs
Pastors in Part time Parish/ Congregational Ministry (FTE)	(2 pastors) 1.0 FTE			
Full time SMP Pastors – Chinese	3	3	5	5
Full time SMP Pastors – Other	1	1	2	2
Part time SMP Pastors – Other	(2 pastors) 1.0 FTE	(2 pastors) 1.0 FTE		
Full time School Chaplains	9	10	10	9
F/T Other Chaplaincy	2	2	3	3
Mixed role – Congregational/School chaplain	2	2		
Administration	4	4	4	3
ALC Lecturer	1	1	1	1
Total, full time, active	84	86	92	93
Total, part time, active	(4 pastors) 2.0 FTE	2 x 0.5		
Average age of active pastors	53.3	52.3	52.1 years	
Median age of active pastors	54.3	53.1	52.7 years	
Pastors eligible to retire in the next 3 years	20	16	10	10
Leave of Absence	4	4	7	8
Without call	1	1		
Part Time - no salary	1	1	1	0
Retired Pastors	48	52	46	51
Pastoral Vacancies in LCAQD / LCA (not including the two “permanently vacant” parishes)	5 +1 pending ~20 total LCA	4 ~24 total LCA	4 32 total LCA	14 26 total LCA
ALC graduates for ordination (Estimated)	2014 – 5 '15 – 3 to 4 '16 – 6 to 8	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 2 Aug 2013

Rev Frank Rasenberger, Zion Lutheran Church Gympie to Melbourne - North West Regional Ministry Multipoint Parish. Last service at Gympie 25 Dec 2013

Rev Peter Bowmer, St Peters Lutheran College & Congregation to St Paul's Lutheran Church, Toledo, Ohio, USA. Last service at Indooroopilly Dec 2013.

Pastors coming into the LCAQD since 2 Aug 2013

Rev Ray Morris, Finke River Mission NT to St Marks, Caloundra
Installed 25 Jan 2014, by Bishop, Rev Noel Noack at Caloundra.

Pastors who have moved within the District since 2 Aug 2012

Rev Jim Strelan, Living Faith, Murrumba Downs to Grace Lutheran College, Rothwell
Installed 31 Jan 2014, by Bishop, Rev Noel Noack at Grace Lutheran College, Rothwell

Rev Don Wicklman, LCAQD Pastor-at-large to Good Shepherd, Toowoomba
Installed 9 Feb 2014, by Bishop, Rev Noel Noack at Good Shepherd, Toowoomba

Pastors who have retired/resigned since 2 Aug 2013

Rev Geoff Hartwig Retired 19/5/2013

Rev Peter Thamm Retired 9/1/2014

Pastors who have died since 2 Aug 2013

Rev Cecil Logan – died 17 Feb 2014

Congregations that have closed in the LCAQD since 2 Aug 2013

St Luke's Lutheran Church, Mission Beach – closed 1 Dec 2013

Faith Lutheran Church, Redland Bay – closed Sunday 27 April, 2013

Congregation Anniversaries

140th Anniversary, St Paul's Caboolture – Sun 3 November 2013

150th Anniversary – arrival of first settlers in the Bethania/Logan area.
Sun 23 Feb 2014 at Bethania Lutheran Church.

60th Anniversary – St Andrews Kulpi - Sun 13 April 2014.