

Adelaide. John Gardner, a former student, who was baptised through contact with LSF, shared his perspective on the importance of the tertiary ministry.

Finances: Even though we had a slight increase in our giving to the budget last year, we continue to draw on approximately \$100,000 of legacy money each year to balance the finances. But these funds are limited. An extensive campaign to encourage people to remember the District in their wills is being undertaken in the coming years. After many years of faithful service Mel Zerner stepped down from his position as Finance Consultant and into his shoes steps Mark Schwarz.

The President of the LCA, Mike Semmler, introduced the many departments of the national church and showed how much was being done with the \$835,000 that the District will give to the national LCA over this synodical year. This is almost half of the District's annual expenditure.

President Robert concluded the synod with the assurance that many times we have touched other people's lives and made a difference, often without realising it. God wants to use each one of us and we only need to say "I am available".

David Altus was re-elected as 2nd Vice President and the two new members on District Church Council are Allan Wain and Mel Zerner, with thanks to the outgoing members Terry Natt and Barrie Phillips.

Many thanks go to our synod chaplain Stuart Traeger who not only got us through Sunday worship in record time but provided us with ongoing worship and prayers whenever needed. The musicians also greatly added to the times of worship. Pastor Bill Ney from the Lutheran Church in Canada (on exchange with Bethlehem congregation) also conveyed greetings to the synod from his home congregation and the President of his church.

The synod was invited by Mt Gambier to reconvene there next August. Once again I am sure it will be as tempting as sitting in front of a warm fire.

Reporter Mike Pietsch
August 2008



Popular report of the 42nd Regular

Synodical Convention 2008

*Lutheran Church of Australia
South Australia and Northern
Territory District Inc.*

Theme: Sharing the Faith



On a predictably wintry weekend in August, when the only two good things worth doing are curling up in front of a fire or going to synod, about 400 pastors and laypeople decided that the latter was the best option and headed to Cornerstone College, Mt Barker where the heating was excellent and the mood was warm and very positive. Just prior to the opening service, the clever and detailed logo (created by students from the college) was explained to the delegates by several Cornerstone students. During the opening worship President Robert encouraged us to think about what Hugh McKay calls the greatest technological invention: the mobile phone. Is it a monster or a gift? People need to be connected and communicate. How much of our communication includes communicating our

Christian faith and the reasons why it is so valuable to us?

The synod was welcomed by the principal of Cornerstone College, John Proeve, who not only acknowledged the ground on which the conference was to be held as Aboriginal, but also God, the Creator of the land and Australia. The Mayor, Ann Ferguson, also welcomed us and encouraged us to live out our Christian calling throughout the synod and in the life of the church.

Our guest speaker from the USA was Ted Kober who challenged us to live the unusual lifestyle of forgiveness in very genuine ways. Rather than believing in ourselves, we need to be honest and confess our limitations, trusting that God will care for us when we vulnerably admit our wrongs to each other. He cited many examples whereby the Gospel was not only heard, but seen in action, when people in their business and personal lives genuinely forgave each other and did not merely solve the problem with superficial conflict resolution (either through the law courts or a compromised attitude of: "I'll just live with this"). Genuine, heartfelt confession of sins and forgiveness which leads to a renewed relationship heals deeply and witnesses greatly to many people around us.

Despite his illness President Robert Voigt presented his report with a summary of the personnel and departments of the District. He highlighted their important work and the great team they comprise, representing the church in the wider world. Both Dennis Obst and Peter Eckermann were sadly farewelled and their lengthy and outstanding contributions to the District were deeply acknowledged. He invited members of the church to call in to the District Office to see the premises and get an idea of the extent of our shared ministry.

Throughout the synod many presentations about life in the District were given by the various departments including the following:

Barry Kahl and Neville Grieger related how Lutheran Schools have recently employed Neville as the spiritual development facilitator to assist the school staff in nurturing their own faith, which will in turn impact on the students and the tone of the whole school. Also mentioned was the opening of a new school at Port Lincoln with more than 150 students already enrolled for 2009. All Lutheran schools are encouraged to re-invent themselves continuously as they seek to

reflect the life of Jesus in their community.

The new head of Lutheran Community Care (Yvonne Bentham) encouraged us to think about why we have a specifically caring organisation of the church working in so many wonderful ways with professionals and over 500 volunteers. Jesus' compassion is not just a way to get people into the Kingdom of God, but is the Kingdom. The heart of God wills us to save and care for people, these being the 'two hands of God'. LCC also launched their Building Appeal to upgrade the very busy facilities at Blair Athol (\$250,000 being needed).

Ruth Pedler spoke of the extensive love and care that the Lutheran church offers in providing Aged Care across the state in Residential facilities and Retirement Villages, along with three other special facilities. She also presented the Aged Care Media Award for which students in Lutheran Schools entered brief video clips. This year it went to Claire Mickan for "Peter and Una".

Peter Eckermann, who is stepping from Child, Youth and Family ministry into 'Faith Inkubaters', spoke of this new resource which parents and families can use to nurture the faith within the family unit which is how it was originally

intended to be. Using a wide range of learning skills this could revolutionise Lutheran family life. The decision to sell Tatachilla and use the proceeds to fund camping ministry was ratified after much debate.

Steen Olsen presented the Mission report encouraging congregations to have a go at various types of evangelism, being prepared to possibly fail and then learn from many attempts. House churches were discussed as other options. It is all about relationships with people, not just programmes, and we need to be engaging with the community out there, including our Lutheran Schools. In the sermon on Sunday morning Steen encouraged us to see that God does mighty things through 'ordinary' people, especially when we share the message of the Kingdom with those around us. St Stephen's congregation, Adelaide, brought along many members from two new congregations (Sudanese and Chinese) that are part of their ministry, including two young people recently baptised in the Chinese congregation. The Sudanese community representing about 70 people presented a song in their language and the Chinese community representing about 45 people featured a dance and a joint song in Chinese, sung by all

members of the St Stephens congregations.

Colleen Bradtke opened our eyes to the extensive ministry with Indigenous people in country and urban South Australia, from Yalata in the west to Murray Bridge in the East. Russell Bryant continues his studies as a trainee pastor working and learning amongst his people. The synod was thanked by the delegate for Ferryden Park, Hanna Schulz, for the monetary and practical assistance given to reconstructing their hay-bale hall.

Caroline Kiss also reminded pastors and congregations to be diligent in appointing a facilitator in their congregation or parish to be responsible for Safe Place personnel, training and issues. Dave Boldy also outlined the cross-denominational system of Child Safe which is different to Safe Place and focuses on the more practical issues of safety in congregational life.

Mike Pietsch related how the ministry to tertiary students on the eleven campuses is making contact with many students and staff and Lutheran Students and Friends, as enumerated by Marie Klein. Two new chaplaincies included ministry to International students and a chaplain to the Carnegie Mellon campus in