

# 50<sup>th</sup> Regular Convention of LCA WA District Synod

Held at Concordia Duncraig

**Jesus Christ our Living Hope**

1 Peter 1:3:

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living **hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*



This 2023 Convention of the WA District Synod – the 50<sup>th</sup> Regular Convention – started with a relaxed and inspiring Friday night with wine and nibbles. Concordia hosted us with good music (thanks Ben Velebir!), and a reminder of how the church is called to respond to all kinds of pain and suffering with the same love and grace Christ offers freely to of us as sinners.

Saturday morning kicked off with worship, including the song that inspired the convention theme, *Living Hope* (by Phil Wickham). WA Bishop Mike Fulwood reminded us of the journey with Christ in Luke 24, that on the road to Emmaus He is still with us through Word and Sacrament even when we do not recognise Him – a reflection of the ongoing Living Hope in the glorious joy of salvation through our faith in Him.

The Synod Convention officially began and as a District we were blessed to be joined by LCA representatives, including: Paul Smith (LCANZ Bishop), Brett Hausler (LCA Executive Officer) Emma Graetz (Australian Lutheran College), Pastor Matt Anker (International Mission, also accompanied by Pastor Dedi Pardosi from Indonesia), Craig Heidenreich (Local Mission) and Julie Krause (Australian Lutheran World Service). LLL Australia was also well represented with Graeme Huf (Chair of the Board), Ross Smith (CEO) and Michael Schulze sharing time with us. The LLL generously sponsored a coffee van to provide our much-needed caffeine on the Saturday.

The Bishop's report acknowledged a church of congregations in decline yet with seeds of hope. Bishop Mike acknowledged the essential support of the District Church Council, particularly Lester Dreckow, in running the district, and his enormous gratitude to Narelle Fulwood. Members present thanked Mike for the honesty and humbleness which shone in his report.

The Financial report acknowledged that of congregation contributions to the District, about half of this is our contribution to LCA Churchwide. Thanks were extended to Olive Farm Wines for their ongoing support through the 'Bishops Reserve' initiative. A reminder to congregations that LLL grants are available through the District for Mission Resource and Ministry – see the WA District website for details. The proposed budget is one of continued deficit, intentionally drawing down on reserves. With our proportional funding model, membership changes can significantly impact congregation contributions, and therefore, congregation increases have been capped at a maximum of 5%. It was acknowledged that DCC are committed to reviewing the District's ongoing sustainability.

Saturday night's dinner was held at Hillary's Yacht Club, with a presentation by Concordia and Yacht Club member Drury Heath of his time participating in the Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race.

Drury's engaging presentation encouraged us to remember God's ever present help, sometimes before we realise we need it, but also when we remember to ask Him.

Sunday's service was lead again with uplifting worship lead by Concordia's skilled music team. LCANZ Bishop Paul encouraged us from Psalm 121, with the Living Hope that the LORD will watch over your life; now and forevermore, and as a church corporately and individually to hold fast to this hope in Jesus.

There was a robust discussion of proposals around the District's future, with a motion from St John's Perth before the Synod being voted in favour of the next term of Bishop funding reducing to 0.3 FTE, with 0.2 FTE admin support.

Pastor Peter Hage, current pastor of St Johns Perth, was elected as WA Bishop, with Pastor Kim Kuchel elected as Assistant Bishop.

The Nominations and Constitutions committees were appointed without election, and the District Church Council elected for the 2023-2025 term are:

- District Secretary: Karen Kuchel
- District Treasurer: Lester Dreckow
- LEASNW representative: Francois Pienaar
- Extra member: Jon Offszanka
- Extra member: Stephen Price
- Extra member: Maya Kraj-Krajewski
- Extra member: Chris Antonini

Our thanks to those willing to serve the District in these roles, and our prayers of God's wisdom, grace, and joy, and that Christ strengthen, preserve, and unite them for His glory.

We received very positive and hope filled presentations from ALC, ALWS, LLL, and Local Mission, that despite deficits and declines our church and district is strong in faith and engaging in many mission and ministries, both in local congregations and through the churchwide movements.

WA reporting included presentations by Françoise Pienaar (Living Water's Lutheran College), Maya Kraj-Krajewski (Lutheran Youth of WA), - Debbie Dreckow - Lutheran Women of WA, Michael Graebner (Faith for the Future project), Mark Altus (Lutheran Homes WA), and a video from our church planters, Matt and Bec Schubert of EverHope Church.

Bishop Emeritus Mike Fulwood has served the District for 6 years as WA Bishop. As a District we express our deep gratitude and appreciation for the unreserved grace, good humour, and wise leadership Mike has provided us.

The synod offering raised \$760 to be donated to the Mandurah Refugee Welcome and Support Group as part of the CRISP (Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot) program.

We thank each and every person who helped make this Synod Convention possible, including all those on the District Church Council, all those at Concordia Dun Craig, and importantly all of you delegates and representatives who attended – YOU are the Synod.

Recordings of the Sunday Worship Service, including LCANZ Bishop Paul Smith's sermon and a recollection on 50 Synods from Marj Welke – who has attended **50** synods(!), are available at Concordia's Facebook and YouTube pages.