

LUTHERAN MEN OF AUSTRALIA

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2024 — NOVEMBER 2024. Lutheran Men's Newsletter is the official publication of the Lutheran Men of Australia and is published four times a year. The next publication will be in December 2024. Articles and men's related news and stories are always welcome.

Check our Webpage: <https://www.lca.org.au/ministry-groups/mens-ministry/>

Editor, Keith Munchenberg. Regular Post most welcome, mail to, 18 Winn Circuit Loxton SA 5333. Phone: 0429 773 045. Email address: munchy41@bigpond.com



Joseph: The first Christian man guided by God's plan of salvation.



Who was the first man to serve our Lord Jesus Christ? I would suggest that it was Mary's husband, Joseph.

From the Scriptures, we know that Joseph travelled with Mary to Bethlehem for the birth. We also know that Joseph was still alive when the Lord Jesus stayed behind in the temple when Jesus was 12 years old. After that Joseph disappears from the gospel story-telling.

Joseph gives a wonderful testimony of faithful service to the Lord, as a Christian man. This is revealed to us most clearly with respect to his care for Mary. When Joseph received the news that his betrothed Mary was pregnant, the customs of

ancient Israel meant that Joseph was entitled to denounce her. The Scriptures tell us that he was 'a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.' (Matthew 1).

But then God intervenes into Joseph's thinking. An angel is sent to Joseph to reveal to him that God was at work in Mary's pregnancy to fulfill God's promises.

The story of this man, Joseph, teaches us two things about listening carefully to God's word, as we reflect on serving each other as Christians.

The first is that we need to constantly study and learn the promises of God, expecting that God is always at work in our world.

The second is to expect that God constantly catches people unawares, like he did with Joseph. Joseph thought that he was doing the right thing in his decision to dismiss Mary quietly, but the Lord ushered in a new way of thinking for Joseph.

This is the same way God worked with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. After the crucifixion, the disciples were hiding in fear behind closed doors, but the risen Lord appeared with his greeting 'Peace be with you!' He then sent them to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth.

In his well-loved hymn 'Thy Hand O God has guided', writer Edward Hayes Plumptre captures this faithfulness of Joseph and encourages to trust in the hand of God guiding us in our witness and service in the name of our Risen Lord Jesus Christ.

In This Issue

**Bishop Paul Smith's
Article**

**Nurturing Your
Faith
God in Worship**

**LMA President
Luke Nuske's
Article**

**Ross Roll's LMA
Financial report**

**Pastor Peter Noble's
LMV Report**

**Tania Nelson's
Lutheran Media
Report**

**LMSA
Convention**

**Should Christians
Support Israel?**

*And we, shall we be faithless?
Shall hearts fail, hands hand down?
Shall we evade the conflict,
And cast away our crown?
Not so; in God's deep counsels
Some better thing is stored;
We will maintain, unflinching,
'One Church, one faith, one Lord.'*

*Thy mercy will not fail us,
Nor leave Thy work undone;
With Thy right hand to help us,
The victory shall be won;
And then by men and angels
Thy name shall be adored,
And this shall be their anthem:
'One Church, one faith, one Lord.'*

(Lutheran Hymnal Supplement 194)

Bishop Paul Smith
Pentecost 14, 2024



NURTURING YOUR FAITH.



God in Worship.

Welcome to Nurturing Your Faith. This single-session study examines God's presence in worship in the Old and New Testament periods—and how we can be certain He is present among us today. God's people are a worshipping people. In our praise and devotion to the Creator, we declare His sovereignty over our lives and pledge to follow Him faithfully. Both Testaments speak to the worship of God and its significance in the lives of believers. Worship is a key part in our contemporary congregational life as well. And our fellowship, in whatever numbers, is blessed by the presence of Jesus Himself who tells us, "where two or three are gathered in My Name, there am I among them" (Matthew 18:20).

WORSHIP IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The presence of God in the Old Testament was often revealed—and concealed—in mysterious ways. It may have been in thunder and lightning, in a burning bush, in a pillar of cloud or one of fire, in smoke, in a fiery furnace, or even in a still, small voice. Regardless of its form, these occurrences let the people of Israel know that God was with them, protecting them, leading them in relationship.

Following the exodus from Egypt, the Ark of the Covenant held the Ten Commandments. The Ark was kept in the Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting. According to Exodus 25:22, it was the place where God would speak to Moses. "There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel" (Exodus 25:22).

While God desired to dwell with His people as a nation of priests (see Exodus 19:5-6), their sin drove a wedge between them and God. God was present with His people but from a distance. Read 1 Kings 8:10-21. This passage takes place after Solomon builds the temple and brings the Ark into the temple.

REFLECT

Why were there so many rules about being in the presence of God?

Why do you think God chose to speak to the people of Israel in mysterious ways?

WORSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the birth of Jesus, God's presence enters fully into our world. Foretold for centuries as coming by the prophets, the Messiah—both God and Man—came to seek and to save the lost. In fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, the Christ Child was born to a virgin, born in a Bethlehem manger, born to bear our transgressions on a cross. The barrier between God's presence and sinful mankind has been eliminated with the advent of Jesus. As the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection guarantees salvation to all who believe on Him as their Lord and Savior.

God demonstrated the total access Jesus gives us to God's presence in the dramatic tearing of the temple curtain on Good Friday. "And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split" (Matthew 27:51). Now, because of Jesus, there is no separation: "we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh" (Hebrews 10:19b-20). The shedding of Jesus' blood for our sins makes it possible for each of us to experience the fullness of God's presence.

To celebrate God's saving grace, early Christians gathered together and partook the Lord's Supper, "the breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42b). In Holy Communion we are fed by God. We are nourished through the supreme sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf. This Sacrament was as central to nurturing the faith of the first churches as it is for us today. In it, the presence of Jesus is among us, mysteriously yet visibly, in the bread and the wine, His body and blood given for our sins. "Do this," Jesus tells us, "in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19b). Read Ephesians 2:11-22. Paul talks about how Jesus eliminates the separation from God the Father.

REFLECT

Why did it take Jesus' life, death, and resurrection to destroy the barrier of God's judgment against our sins?

How does being mindful of God's presence make a difference in your life?

WORSHIP FOR US TODAY

In church we worship in the presence of God as a community of believers. As the body of Christ on earth, God's Holy Spirit works mightily among us, strengthening our faith, drawing us closer to God through Jesus' presence in the Word and the Sacraments. No longer are outsiders unfit to be with God, He has graciously done all things possible to make us His own, to live with Him forever. This He has done in Jesus who told us, "In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:2-3).

REFLECT

How does the work of Jesus bring us, not only closer to God, but also closer to fellow believers?

What do you receive from church that you don't get anywhere else? What are some things you contribute when you go to church?

How does it encourage you to know that God's presence is with you among the fellowship of believers?

CONCLUSION

Jesus has made it possible for us to enter into God's presence, once and for all. Before His atoning work on Calvary and His Easter resurrection—all done on our behalf—the weight of our sins formed an impregnable wall between us and God. But now, the wall lay in ruins: the temple curtain has come down. What we could not do, God has done for us. He has given us the gift of eternity in His house. He has poured His Holy Spirit into our lives. He has given us a taste of His presence not just one day in the future, but right here and now.

And in our congregations He has given us the joy of fellowship with other believers. In this we are strengthened, knowing that God is with us when we are together and that He goes with us when we return to our day-to-day lives. He has promised to never fail nor forsake us; this is God saying we are always in His presence.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for tearing down the barriers that separated us from You. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen

LHM

Have We Lost The Way?



Dear Lutheran Men,

It seems we've lost our way. We, a church founded on the Holy Scriptures, and the Lutheran Confessions which are a faithful exposition of the scriptures, a Church that possesses the clear distinction of Law and Gospel and the understanding to apply both where necessary. But the real question is, have we lost The Way?

We are approaching another convention of synod this October to face a question that we have faced in different forms five times now. Call it the way forward, or call it women's ordination. Spin it as one church with two different practices of ordination. Sell it as unity, or justice or equality. We hear authority talking out both sides of their mouths speaking twistedly like politicians not straight and clear like the men of God found in scripture. **"Therefore,**

having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God."

2 Corinthians 4:1-3

No matter what we say its as simple as this: despite the two clear passages that say No in scripture, and none in the affirmative, despite the five times we've prayed for the Holy Spirit's leading and then voted on Women's Ordination, five times the vote has returned a No. We are again asking ourselves the question, did a spirit led vote get it wrong the five times it upheld the scriptures when it was brought to synod? If indeed we believe God speaks through His Word, then are we being an impetuous child continuing to ask our Father for something He has refused us in His word and confirmed five times in our synodical vote? Or have we submitted ourselves to a worldly view of democracy where a simple majority rules and think it's unjust to submit to the wisdom of our fathers who gave us the two thirds majority rule? If Women's Ordination passes in the vote of Synod in October 2024 the 6th time we vote, we will have a legitimate question to answer. Is God giving us over to our sinfulness and judging us for refusing to submit to His Word? **So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32**

And so I will ask the question again, have we lost The Way? For over two decades our church has debated, questioned, fought, families and churches have been divided. Meanwhile because of the continued push for Women's Ordination, we have had to spend far too much time, energy and money on this instead of other places where it is truly needed.

There are people who are broken by sin (including us). Our society is heading headlong into, indeed is swimming in evil. All sorts of sexual deviancy are publicly promoted, mutilating boys and girls into transsexuals even before they're adults, domestic violence committed by both men and women, divorce at all-time highs and marriage at all-time lows, having fewer children yet being wealthier than ever, children being raised more by media through devices than by parents, a rise in mental illness, the rise of paganism, be it Eastern paganism, European paganism or our own homegrown indigenous forms of paganism even within the church, all of this pointing to that fact that this world is contrary to Christ and that our world is broken. **"And if you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God." Deuteronomy 8:19-20**

This is to be expected, however because the world is full of sinners like me and I'll hazard a guess like you, but we aren't even offering them The Way out. We're not showing each other our sin, in the church or out, in order to restore a brother to repentance and faith in Christ or save a person lost in their sin for fear of offending them or being punished by law or public opinion. No longer are we showing the destructiveness of sin and the way out that is provided in Christ.

People are hurting, they're being deceived, tormented by their flesh, the world and the devil and we're sitting back here dealing with a fight that has been decided clearly in the scriptures and five votes at synod. All of this is not to say that many have not been fighting the good fight for the sake of the Gospel, they are. Many have borne the pain of the sword of God's Word in their life and lost family and friends for their stand on God's Word. **"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother,**

and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."

Matt 10:34-39 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Matt 19:29-30

Nevertheless we still must all repent. Martin Luther said in the first of his 95 thesis of which my Pastor regularly reminds me, "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said "Repent," he intended that the entire life of believers should be repentance" We must seek forgiveness. We must again find The Way, or indeed more accurately be found by The Way, The Truth and The Life. Then may we find the joy we have in Christ who found us lost and condemned sinners and saved us and may we then, like Phillip brought Nathaniel, bring others to Him for Forgiveness and Life. So the destruction wrought on them and us by our own flesh, the world and the devil may be healed, that the wounds wrought by sin and the infection thereof which are covered in the fig leaves of self-righteousness may be uncovered by God's Holy Law and they along with us be healed in the wonderful forgiving Blood of Christ. May we clearly and plainly speak God's Word into this broken and dying world, into this broken and divided church not using our own worldly wisdom but falling back onto the clear and Life giving Word of God. Pray that God will have mercy on us all through His Son Jesus Christ.

Let us together return to our Baptism and "Repent and believe the Gospel".

Yours In Christ,

Luke Nuske

President LMA & LMV



LMA FINANCIAL REPORT



It was decided at the triennium meeting in March that we only have one account so that is now the case. We are still with LLL and have done the transition to a RCDF Account which was not that easy but we have successfully finished. It was also decided at the meeting that Lutheran men Australia support our four men studying to become faithful Pastors \$1000.00 each; three of whom will travel to USA to study later this year. This still has to be paid. The new account details are:

BSB 704942, Account Number: 100090052

Our Annual Payments to date:

Cambodia Children Ministry \$1000.00

Lutheran Media \$1000.00

We also received an amount of \$1069.00 from the Magill men's fellowship who disbanded their group and we thank them for their donation.

So our finances as of: Wednesday 14 August

Working Account \$ 9179.42

Term Investment Account \$ 26000.00

Your Treasurer Ross Roll

LMV Report/Reflection

Pastor Peter Noble

Fri. 9th Aug—Sun. 11th Aug. 2024

Men of God,



Grace and peace to you in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I write to you my reflections and gleanings from the Lutheran Men of Victoria (and Tasmania) camp held recently at Tandara, Halls Gap in August, 2024. I flew in from Hobart, Tasmania with second year Seminarian, Tasman Bourne (Burnie, TAS), to meet up with five Queenslanders, who also flew in to carpool from Melbourne to Halls Gap. Talk about a military operation with provisional timings!

Needless to say, I had a fantastic time. The fellowship, the teaching and worship filled my heart and soul in ways only our Lord Jesus Christ can. I must confess however, straight off the bat, even before I booked anything, I contacted President of LMV Luke Nuske and said in a text something to the effect of, "I want to come to this LMV camp. But I have two questions that will determine whether I'll be there or not".

Luke says to me "ask away".

I replied, "Can we drink alcohol and smoke cigars at this camp? Are there any restrictions!?"

While I wasn't there to see his face when I wrote that text, I'm sure he found it amusing.

He said something to the effect of, "yes, of course, just do so responsibly". BOOM!

I was in. And who wouldn't with a legend of an LMV President like Luke at the helm.

Flights booked. Transport covered. Accommodation sorted. Fee paid. Oh, by the way, did I mentioned there was also terrific teaching and fellowship on this camp starting tomorrow?

Welcome to LMV camp, Halls Gap!

Friday Night

Friday night we all got settled in. Fires blazing, BBQs raging, drinks and fellowship flowing freely as men of the church discuss our business (or lack of it!) as only we can do. A few cigars were passed around. I was encouraged to see so many faithful Lutheran men in one place (I think we had 60 altogether and about 8-10 extras on the Saturday), many whom I knew from around the Lutheran Victorian state and I have had great admiration for. In addition, I met many that I had not known previously. I had the pleasure to meet Paul Schutz (sixth generation cropping and sheep farmer in Point Pass and his father Arthur). I met Tim Nuske (Radio professional extraordinaire from Horsham.) We discussed the potentiality of a new Lutheran Radio show "The Noble 'n' Nuske Lutheran hour" "Confessional, CATHOLIC, concise", I'd listen to it. It's got a good ring to it, don't you think? Another was the previous LMV president, Trevor Geer, and some guy called Kieran from Pinnaroo, who fortunately (or unfortunately, depending how you look at it) missed my preaching as a visiting pastor to that parish on two occasions. He was gentlemen and a scholar to say the least.

Saturday

Pastor Heath Pukallus

Saturday Morning. First up was Pastor Heath Pukallus who delivered several papers on the camp theme "The inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions". His papers covered topics such as the priesthood of all believers in contrast with the Office of the Ministry. I found it theologically rich, practically accessible and applicable as we regularly paused and linked each area to practical Christian daily living. One example was prayer. When I was listening, Heath said (and I am paraphrasing) "we must pray for those around us and for the day ahead. When we do this, it consecrates our day's tasks ahead of us and makes the work we do—holy—because God's Word makes it holy." I was greatly encouraged.

Pastor Matt Kerr

Second up we had Pastor Matt Kerr, who gave a lecture on the same theme but more about how the Lutheran Confessions affirm the *authority* of God's Word. We unpacked how all Scripture points to Christ and his promises beginning with the OT and how the NT Christian faith was lived out in the early church. One thing that stood out for me was Matt's gift to publicly communicate. He gave the illustration when building a house, the builder lays a plumb line to lay the bricks/foundation. Once the line is set, it cannot be moved. It is the standard. If moved, everything becomes crooked. So it is with the church if we give up God's Word as authoritative. When we shift its authority or subvert ourselves over it, we make *ourselves* the judge and not God. Such a practice leads to disaster! He also touched on living a "confessional life", by making a life of living and breathing Luther's small and large catechisms. These documents are the "plumb line" or "yardstick" for our daily living and faith. Amongst this Matt peppered his session with his witty humour, innuendos and sharing his joy of becoming a new grandfather amongst his current vocations.

President (Elect) Matt Anker, LM—A

After lunch we listened to a presentation from President (elect) of a new Lutheran body, Lutheran Mission—Australia, Pastor Matt Anker. This was met with, I believe—much intrigue, anticipation, and solemn reflection. Matt presented on what LMA is, why it came to be, how it is developing, its relationship with the LCA and what Lutherans in the wider communion can expect from it over the next two years and beyond. I think I see LMA as what GAFCON is to the Anglican Church of Australia. It is in my observation, at the minute, a complimentary model to all Lutheran bodies, but more like a metaphorical "break here in case of emergency!" for the Lutheran Communion. To be sure, in my observation there is certainly a crisis at the highest level across the Lutheran church. The matter is concerning whether we as a synodical body are going to confess and vote on synodical matters and guide our churches and our teaching in accordance with the Word of God as our final authority. As Matt Anker stated "[in the LCA] women's ordination is only a symptom of a deeper issue...that issue is the authority of the Word". Matt addressed concerns that LMA has been 'too pre-emptive' before the LCA synod of 2024. He replied, as per LMA's public statement says, there are two reasons:

1. "Lutherans have traditionally acknowledged that the orthodoxy of a church body is to be found not only in what it confesses officially, but also what is preached and taught through its pastors and is permitted by its leaders".¹ I personally have observed that such teaching and practice in the LCA has been a cause of strain and distress at times between the leadership and the local pastorate/parishes. Matt gave a second reason for why LMA has been established:

2. "I have to confess however, that as I have studied God's Word and read our Theses of Agreement [from the LCA], it seems to me that the opposite is actually demanded of us [i.e. to remain in fellowship beyond what is spiritually reasonable] (Theses of Agreement 1.4.a.; Rom 16:17; 2 Cor 6:14-18; Titus 3:10-11; etc.). After duly warning those who are promoting error and division, we are to separate from them. While this may be offensive to our sense of justice, it encourages dependence on the Lord's providence and ensures that the Word of Life remains our greatest priority. So while we are not encouraging everyone to leave the LCA pre-emptively, we do believe that it is high time that LM-A was established."²

In summary. I found Matt's presentation very informative, encouraging to my faith, real and genuine in the Spirit of Christ. Spiritually and practically, there is a lot to think about here for every LCA congregation, every LCA individual as members of the Church and is an opportunity to discern God's Spirit by asking ourselves, 'What is God doing here? And what does he want from us?—what does this mean?' In closing we (and when I say 'we' I mean 'I') were able to pray publicly for LMA and LCA to work together cordially for the glory of God at this time of crisis across the wider Lutheran communion.

Tasman Bourne (Seminary Student)

Last, but certainly not the least, we heard from our very own seminarian from Tasmania (the centre of the universe!) Mr. Tasman Bourne. Tas currently lives in Burnie and is a member of Martin Luther—Lutheran

¹ Anker, M, LM—A, *An Introduction*, Fri. July 12th 2024, p. 1

² Anker, M, LM—A, *An Introduction*, Fri. July 12th 2024, p. 2

Church in the Northern Tasmanian Parish. He shared his story about being raised in a small Pentecostal break away church and had come to the Lutheran Confessions later in life, loving the simple teachings it conveys. He is married to Lex and they have five beautiful girls. One of the things Tas enjoys is catechizing his children through the basics of Luther's Small catechism. His hobbies include traditional Japanese Jujitsu (where he met his now wife) and growing a beard so intense, it would make the most masculine Canadian lumberjack shed a tear of envy. He enjoys studying theology while at the same time laments some difficult challenges he has endured during his studies. Alas, he has full confidence in Christ and the full support of the wider Lutheran communion behind him. In closing, we were able to thank him and pray for his every success, asking a blessing on him, his family and his journey toward the Office of Ministry.

Sunday Morning

Sunday morning we closed with the Divine Service. I was asked to lead a chanted page 1, Black Hymnal Service. And who am I as the church's servant to deny the faithful? It was a delight! Tasman Bourne assisted as acolyte, Enoch Fandrich accompanied the liturgy on piano (remember what I said Enoch—"don't quench the Spirit!" Just kidding bro, you were superb) and we heard from John 6:24-35, where Christ says;

v. 27 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.

We were reminded that Jesus' flesh and blood is the food we need the most to preserve us unto eternal life. For me, I think what moved me the most (besides receiving HC) was two or three gentlemen who came up to me after the service, thanking me with eyes, welling up, saying something to the effect of "thank you pastor for leading worship today. I didn't think there were many young men who cared so much about the liturgy, but I am so grateful and encouraged by your service today." What a joy!

Summary

In closing, LMV this year has been sensational. It has been a treat to get alongside other men in the church. Whether to shoot the breeze or dive deep into theological conversations around the fire. The opportunity to be that listening ear to our fellow Lutheran brothers, the privilege to proclaim absolution (whether lay or ordained) to those around us who confess their sin and in return, we proclaim to despairing hearts those sweet dear precious words of Christ's mercy and forgiveness. The worship has been a delight, to kneel alongside brothers who hold such reverence for the Divine Service, the real presence of Christ in Holy Communion and to sing the hymnody of the church from ages past with such gusto and vigour has been a gift to be received.

And with that, the five Queenslanders and two Tasmanians hopped in the van and departed for Melbourne Airport with great haste, so that some might make their flights in time.

I look forward to the next one!

—Your Servant
Pastor Peter Noble
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost 2024





Lutheran Media and its *Messages of hope* are continuing to produce new content for the radio, for Spotify and for Apple Podcasts. One of the recent tasks we're undertaking is to review our websites and resources. You are probably aware that Lutheran Media offers over 60 booklets, free of charge to the public, on a variety of topics. With titles such as ***Stressed but Connected, Your Place in God's Plan, Grief: Where Sadness and Hope Meet*** and ***There's More to Anger Than Getting Mad*** our booklets are available as print copies and as downloads. Many of our resources come to us thanks to our partnership with the US-based Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM). We now have access to the LHM booklet files and are starting to work through our collection to Australianise the text. That means, in practice, that we're changing the spelling of words such as 'mom' to 'mum' and changing some terms such as 'trash' to 'rubbish.' It's a slow process but a worthwhile one as much of our audience looks for Australian resources.

I mentioned that we offer our resources free to charge. We do this so that there is no barrier that prevents people from hearing the good news of Jesus Christ. We can offer these resources at no cost thanks to the support of Lutheran Men of Australia and other groups and individual who donate to us. For your information:

- ✓ \$5 is the cost to produce and distribute one booklet
- ✓ \$12 is the cost to produce and distribute one Scripture-filled and inspirational calendar
- ✓ Between \$73 and \$3100 is the cost to place *Messages of hope* podcasts and spots on specific radio stations for a 4-week period.
- ✓ \$410 is the cost to place content on social media for one week
- ✓ \$1000 is the cost to record and edit one 15-min podcast and accompanying 30-sec and 60-sec spots.

Thank you for your ongoing and faithful support. You are a messenger of good news.

How can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!" Romans 10:14-15

In Christ's mission,
Tania Nelson
Manager, Lutheran Media

LMSA Convention held at Woodside on Saturday 7th July 2024.



Rev. Adrian Kitson opening Convention



Rev. Adrian Kitson presenting his testimony



Rev Adrian Kitson being presented with a gift by President Kym Gladigau



Visiting Indonesian Pastor Janrio and Pastor Trainee Mesak



Rev. Dr. Tim Stringer presenting his testimony



Lutheran Care representative Carla delivering a presentation at Convention



LMSA Executive 2024. L-R Secretary Danny Schmidt, Extra member John Cramer, Treasurer David Pfeiffer, Vice-President Colin Schutz and President Kym Gladigau.



LMA President Luke Nuske addressing Convention

Should Christians support Israel?



SINCE early in the 20th Century, God has been fulfilling promises today that were made to the Jewish people thousands of years ago. These promises rest on a series of legal agreements called covenants. The covenants were made between God and the Jewish people, and centre on the land of Israel.

The cornerstone covenant – the Abrahamic Covenant – grants the title deed to the land of Israel to the descendants of the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This unconditional, irrevocable, and everlasting promise was literally sealed in blood (Genesis 12:1-7; 13:14-18; 17:7; 1 Chronicles 16:17-18;

Psalms 105:8-11; Romans 9:4).

God's Land Covenant promises that Israel will one day become the prime nation of the world, that is, as long as the Jewish people remain obedient to God (Deuteronomy 28:1,13).

The Davidic Covenant promises an eternal King who will descend from the line of King David. One day this Messiah will rule over the entire world from Jerusalem (2 Samuel 7:10-16).

These covenants are why for hundreds of years, Christians have believed, just because God said so, that we should naturally support the nation of Israel.

Well, "Not so!" says a particular group of Christians, Christians who meet at conferences with names like "Christ at the Checkpoint." They question the legitimacy of these covenants and whether Christians should support Israel at all.

MYTHS BUSTED

Let's debunk seven of these naysayers' most popular myths for why Christians should not support the nation of Israel.

Myth 1: "The Jews killed Jesus!"

Those who accuse the Jews of killing Jesus seem to have purposefully forgotten that the Bible says, "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel (Acts 4:27&28)."

So, not only did both Jews and Gentiles participate in murdering Jesus, but in truth, we are all sinners, and therefore all of us are responsible for Jesus dying on the cross. But, reality check, Jesus Himself clearly stated that He alone laid down His life and that no one took it from Him (John 10:15-18).

Myth 2: "The Jews have been disinherited because of their unbelief."

The Jews may have been evicted from their land – twice – due to their rebellion against God. But, as Psalm 105 explains, God guaranteed in His Abrahamic Covenant that the land of Israel unconditionally and forever belongs to the children of Jacob.

And, as the Apostle Paul argued in Romans 9-11, "Has God rejected His people? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite... God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew." And so, no, God has neither disinherited the Jewish people nor revoked His land covenants.

Myth 3: "The Church has replaced Israel and now receives her inheritance."

Not according to the Apostle Paul! He tells the story of an olive tree whose branches were pruned off due to unbelief, and wild vines grafted on (Romans 11). But, when the natural branches began believing again, they would be grafted back on the tree. Salvation may have come to the wild olive vines – the Church – but God still has salvation planned for the natural branches – a believing Israel who will call Jesus Saviour.

Myth 4: "The Jews regathering back to the land of Israel cannot be from God because they haven't repented and accepted Jesus as their Messiah."

The Jews returning to Israel in unbelief is precisely what God foretold would happen. Isaiah prophesied the Jews would be regathered a second time from the nations of the world, and Ezekiel made it

clear that the Jews would regather in unbelief for God Himself to give them a new heart for Him (Isaiah 11:10-12; Ezekiel 36:22-28).

It's no accident of history that a people dispossessed from their country for 1900 years could ever have kept their ethnic identity and rebirthed their nation two millennia later. Such a thing has never happened! And this is the nation of the Bible we're talking about. Therefore, the regathering of the Jews can only be a miracle from God.

Myth 5: "To support Israel is to support every action of the Israeli government."

Nobody supports every action of any government, even their own. Supporting Israel is to support God's redemptive work in bringing a remnant of the Jewish people to salvation in Christ and ultimately into the fulfilment of His covenants.

Myth 6: "The Jews stole the Palestinians' land and live there illegally."

First off, the Abrahamic Covenant grants the Jewish people the eternal deed to the land of Israel.

Second, when the Jews began returning in the early 20th Century, there was no such thing as a Palestinian. The handful of Arabs living in that wasteland sold the land back to the Jews at exorbitant prices.

Third, Israel was created legally in response to a United Nations declaration passed in November, 1947 which authorised the establishment of a Jewish state in the land the Romans had renamed Palestine. You can't steal land that's already legally yours.

Myth 7: "To support Israel is to hate the Palestinian people."

Contrary to Arab propaganda, those who call themselves Palestinians enjoy more freedoms and rights in Israel than if they lived in any Muslim nation. It's not the Jews who hate and abuse the Palestinians, but their own terrorist leaders who steal billions of their foreign aid and deny refugees access back to their home countries of Syria and Jordan. The Palestinians have been afforded several opportunities since 1948 to create another Palestinian state besides Jordan, but each time they have rejected those offers and instead responded with violence. Why? Because their ultimate goal is the annihilation of Israel.

So, who exactly hates who here? Should Christians Support Israel? With those myths busted, let's look at some of the reasons why Christians should support Israel.

1. Democracy.

The nation of Israel is the only Western-style democracy in a sea of Islamic tyranny. Supporting Israel is to support the only nation in the Middle East that offers religious freedom and human rights to women.

2. Defence.

Israel protects the West and Christianity by standing as the first line of defence against violent, radical Islam.

3. Economics.

Israel contributes to the world a mind boggling amount of food, medicines, and cutting-edge technologies that raise the standard of living around the world.

4. Blessing.

When it comes to supporting the nation of Israel, God promised in Genesis 12, "I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse." Supporting Israel incurs God's blessing.

5. Biblical.

It should go without saying that it is biblically correct for Christians to support God. Since God loves the Jewish people and wants them to return to Him, shouldn't Christians want this as well? Loving Israel expresses our love for God.

6. Prophetic.

And finally, whether you love or hate the nation of Israel, or even the Jewish people, regardless of what we mere mortals think – Bible prophecy will be fulfilled. God's will shall be done, and there's just no stopping it. After all, who could ever stand against the Living God and expect to win (Psalm 76:7; Hebrews 10:31)? So, in conclusion, it's not "Should Christians support Israel?" but rather, "Christians *must* support Israel!"
Supplied