

# Alberton Lutheran Parish

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## The Messenger

September, 2009 – December, 2009, Issue 3.

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### From Pastor's Pen

You've seen the way some people, as they greet you, touch their hand to forehead, mouth and heart. This was one way people reminded themselves and assured others that they had clean (honourable) thoughts, words and hearts.

Other ancient societies believed that the body was in a sense comprised of three "boxes," not head lips and heart; but mind, heart and bowels. The mind (thinking) was intended to be the box which controlled the heart (positive emotions) and the bowels (negative emotions); but it was noted that this didn't seem to happen.

In fact, it was suggested that most people, rather than being controlled by clinical or logical thinking, were in fact, controlled by their negative or baser emotions.

Desire for revenge, for example, was considered one of the base emotions that could nullify the higher emotions and rule/overrule the noblest 'box' of the mind. These days, we commonly hear that people gave in to their passions and were temporarily not in their right mind and are therefore: not accountable for their actions. This didn't 'wash' in the ancient world and humanbeings were held accountable for poor choices.

John 7: 1 – 44 relates the beginnings of the running public debate Jesus had with the Jewish Temple officials and teachers of the law. Jesus speaks to the Pharisees and the crowds of Israelites at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. At one stage in the discussions Jesus has with the Jews, He states that they will search for him but not find him. (He is referring cryptically to the time of His death and resurrection.) The Pharisees speculate that He may be going to run away and live amongst the Greeks. At the time Jesus responds with more obtuse references, to the philosophies of the Greeks and Romans and this concept of the three boxes. It almost seems Jesus is happy to misdirect the Pharisees, to encourage them to reinforce this

thinking in their minds by making reference to this pagan understanding of the psychology of humanity.

**"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."**

The King James version translates Jesus' words as "streams of living water will flow from his bowels..."

It is more likely that it is a reference to the use of cisterns (huge stores of water kept in carved-out stone reservoirs). Often enough in the Mediterranean climate this water supply would become stagnant.) Jesus suggests that the application of the faith under the Pharisees has become like stagnant water and Jesus has come like freshening rain. Others suggest this reference to the third box, the bowels. Jesus makes His point about the truly life changing nature of the gift of faith and trust in Jesus. It is the suggestion that being in relation with Jesus affects what we cannot. Instead of vile corruption and pollution coming from this base seat of the emotions, Jesus' Spirit produces goodness from the place in the human body/nature where no one could expect to find it.

Jesus is the one who helps us to control the sinful passions and baser emotions we would otherwise be ill equipped to deal with ourselves. In this way as Christ renews us in head and heart and bowels, we are enabled to live in Christ's strength and not produce stagnant dead religion; but a faith which is alive and healthy with the potential to support life other than our own as we come into contact with others and share the life giving waters of the Spirit we have received in Jesus our Lord.

*Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Greg.*  
Pastor Greg Vangness.

## National Church and District Matters

# No Bull!

*“Forgiven  
and  
Forgiving”*

*was the theme for the  
42<sup>nd</sup> District Synodical Convention held  
at Rockhampton on the 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> of June  
(Report by Delegates Ian and Kaye Rossmann)*

The weekend began with a Wine & Cheese Informal get together on the Friday evening where we were able to meet up with old friends and make new ones as well as having a view to the various displays and Redeemer book shop.

Saturday evening we experienced a wonderful Aussie steak BBQ whilst being entertained by a rodeo with the highlight of one of our pastors riding a bull to raise funds for Christian Life Week participants. Sunday was an inspirational worship service.

**Pastor Tim Jaensch** opened with Ephesians 4:31-32 on how we are called to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us and also learning an interesting lesson on not sitting on green ant's nests; as you are sure to get stung. The theme continued throughout the worship service. Bearers of reconciliation was reinforced in the readings (2 Cor 5:15-21 and Matt 18:15-20). A contemporary reading from Philip Yancey's "Rumours of Another World" reflected the theme of our Convention. A hospitable welcome by Diane Krenske, the chair of Rockhampton welcomed us to the Beef capital of Australia and the 'City of Bulls' by Calvary and Living Waters congregations. Rockhampton Mayor Brad Carter, Rev Janne Whitehead of the Anglican Church and Rev Bruce Johnson, Moderator of the Uniting Church all offered a greeting.

Minutes of the 2008 Convention were adopted.

**LCAQD Presidential Election:** Pastor Noel Noack was elected and Pastor John O'Keefe will now be First Vice President.

Pastor Tim gave thanks for his 9 years of service. Tim reminded us that retired Pastors should not be taken for granted. If you invite a retired Pastor, they give you a wonderful gift and we in return, give one to them. Tim expressed how he had been unmeasurably enriched and stretched by the experiences. Heartfelt thanks were given to Pr Tim for his service to the Church, and for his final President's Report.

**Address from our LCA President,** Rev Dr Mike Semmler

Dr Mike thanked Pastor Tim for all his hard work and moved onto speak about short term gain for long term pain versus short term pain for long term gain. What do we want in our Church? The church

worked in Finke River for 13 years before there was even 1 baptism. We have tough times ahead but our future will be built on substance, and not by taking shortcuts. Let's use our gifts for all people. Colossians 3:13

**LAMP** is the data base of the Lutheran Church of Australia where all updated information on congregations is held.

### **Lutheran Community Care Presentation**

Report was given by Peter Richards and Jacqui Kelly promoting "We have come a long way."

The LCC strategy is stabilization while at the same time, engaging in a new vision of a truly happy client. They have the same options for the future, but are looking outside of the box to do work not being catered for/done elsewhere, at the same time being faithful as a Lutheran and seen to be scripturally sound. There are 1100 employees working in 9 age care facilities and 19 family and disability services.

### **LEQ/QLECS Presentation**

We thank God for the blessings he brings to our communities through our schools and pray for continued guidance as we carry out the ministry of the church. A Strategic plan has been developed to strengthen the Lutheran identity of our schools, support leadership and improve student learning, support the early childhood and education services and protect our sustainability and efficiencies in resource development. Although there has been economic decline our enrolments in Lutheran education has still experienced growth

### **Lutheran World Service**

Presented by Peter Shirmer. In 2008 over \$3.9 million was distributed in life saving ministry. Your wonderful generosity means you helped over 200,000 people throughout the year in Cambodia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, Sudan and Burundi. The focus is on empowering these people to work their way out of poverty and be able to become self sufficient. Work has also been supported in PNG and Indonesia and established a centre for learning at Nommensen University. Relief has also been given for victims of disaster in China, Myanmar, Sudan, Congo and flood in Nepal.

### **Lutheran Media Ministry**

Presented by Richard Mau. – reaches out to more than 1 million people per week. 'Face to Face' program runs 15 minute programs and there are 1 minute spots on radio across Victoria. These were especially effective during the bush fire crises.

### **Lutheran Laypeople's League Presentation**

Marie Pawsey talked on the upcoming projects that the LLL are working on including ATMs. Over \$11,000,000 was donated to our Church last year and for this, they thank you and thank God. The LLL has current deposits of over \$430 million which enables loans for Lutheran projects to be

effective. Over \$400000 was given in legacies and donations and added to the permanent funds to provide benefits in perpetuity. Regular electronic giving by congregational members has increased with over 2038 participants taking up this easy mode of regular giving to their own congregation. The Tract Mission continues to grow with over 630000 distributed last year.

### **Lutheran Youth of Queensland**

This was LYQ's first year at Synod as a new department of LCAQD. The Qld Listening Forum outcome was delivered in 6 points:

1. Young people live stressful, busy lives and feel pressured to succeed at school and in life generally
2. Divorce has a significant emotional influence but young people still aspire to marriage
3. Youth rarely discuss their faith with non Christian
4. Youth view spirituality as different to their Christian faith
5. Youth want 'to do' something at church rather than just attend
6. Youth think it is important that their church is welcoming and feels like a big family

Questions asked were, "How can the Church help parents to be the primary faith influences of their children?" and "How can LYQ help our congregation?" LYQ is committed to seeing youth alive in Christ and passionate in service. Let's promote the Faith Five: Share your highs and lows: Read your bible : Talk : Pray : Bless one another

Luther Heights Youth Camp has : 9% lutheran schools, 18% other Christian schools, 18% state schools, 5% lutheran non school groups, 33% other Christian non school groups, 17% others. Chapel Hill is being reconfigured into 2 sites of approx 70 people each.

### **Lutheran Women of Queensland**

There are 7 zones for ladies and each has its rally and fellowship day each year. A highlight is always the state retreat that this year was hosted by Brisbane South and Gold Coast and was full of fun and laughter. We continue to raise funds on local, state and national level with about \$45000 raised this year. Cheryl Brauer thanked all ladies for their love, support and service for the Lord.

### **Ministry and Mission Presentation**

A changing and challenging past year. Neil Bergmann praised God for Pastor Greg Graham's acceptance of his call to Hope Vale. A key project for the Faith and Life Institute in 2009 is their youth

mentoring project. We are all called to share our faith with non Christian friends. How much do you know about our Far north missions: Hope Vale, Wujal Wujal and Coen? There is always work available for Volunteers in Mission if you would like to spend a few weeks at one of these places. Toowoomba, Springfield and Fraser Coast Universities have developed on-campus ministry; Inari Thiele continues work at UQ St.Lucia and local pastors continue to work with students from their congregations. Pastor Brian Shek continues in his role as Asian Ministry Co-ordinator.

**Finance Report:** Actual expenses were within 1% of the budget. The budget for 2010 was adopted. \$400,000 is given to the Lutheran Church of Australia which is about half of the funds provided by Qld congregations. The total spending by the Qld district in 2008-09 was \$2,438,143

### **Key Note Speaker**

This year we welcomed to the LCAQD Convention of Synod, Mr Ted Kober from the USA who spoke on reconciliation. Sometimes we forget that God is present even in our conflicts. Forgiveness is a gift that we do not deserve. We are sent by God to bring the message of reconciliation to all of those around us. When we live our lives during the week, is it different than Sundays? No, we are His ambassadors all of the time. What we need for healing is forgiveness, not retaliation. Sometime we don't feel our faith is strong enough to deal with the issues we face. We cannot forgive on our own strength. When we see ourselves becoming bitter, we need to seek forgiveness. Rejection can cause bitterness, and this bitterness can consume us making us feel betrayed. God heals and forgives, and that's why we can forgive others. As much as we may want to forgive, we cannot do it on our own. Ask God to help us forgive as He forgives and helps us.

### **Next Synod – Raceview 2010**

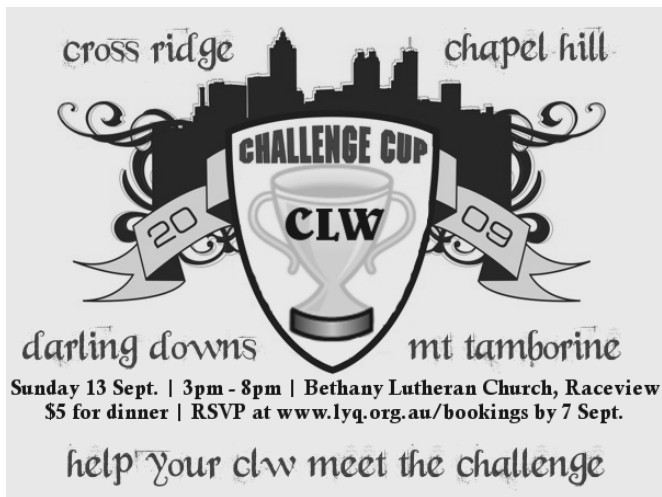
*The gathering 'celebrated' the No Bull Synod at Rockhampton in a hearty manner.*

*D. Spanagel (District Secretary)*

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### **RETIREMENT OF GORDON SAMUEL**

The Church has celebrated the work of Gordon Samuel with a number of farewell dinners recognising his service to his Saviour in the various positions he has held in the National Office since 1968. He retires as the Finance Secretary for Missions. His work for our Church in serving Lutheran Overseas Partner Churches, particularly in Papua New Guinea, and his service to the Finke River Mission has also been a significant service to Australia as a nation. Perhaps we don't always recognise this but the well being of Aboriginal people in the Centre of Australia as well this nation's contribution to our nearest neighbour PNG have been enhanced by his remarkable contribution.



**The Lutheran Youth of Queensland  
2009 CLW Challenge Cup**  
is coming and your CLW camp needs you!

The CLW Challenge Cup is a great afternoon of games and challenges, through which each of the June/July CLW camps compete against each other to win the Challenge Cup. This event will be a great opportunity to reconnect with friends from camp, to remember the great times shared and to experience that special Christian community again.

Make sure you and your friends from camp are there to help your CLW achieve victory! - *there will be points for the camp with the best attendance.*

RSVP by 7 September at [www.lyq.org.au/bookings](http://www.lyq.org.au/bookings) so that we know you're coming and organise enough food!

[RSVP on-line now.](#)

We look forward to seeing which camp will be victorious in 2009!

## Parish Matters

**Parish Play Group:** Continues to meet on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at 9.30 for fun for bubs and carers.. Come and try out our new tables and chairs which have been purchased especially for our use by the St. Peter's Ladies Fellowship.

**New Confirmation Class:** It's the time of year when we get ready for a new round of Confirmation Classes in our parish. The usual format for these classes varies slightly from year to year; but we usually encourage the students who are presently in Year 8 at high school to join in and work to a greater understanding of the faith Jesus has given, and called us to live each day.

We hope to be starting up this year's class in the month of September with an orientation night on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> of September at the St. Peter's Hall, Alberton. We meet at 7:30 p.m. one parent and the Confirmees should plan to attend. The evening runs for 45 minutes to an hour and outlines the course content and gives parents and Confirmees to ask any questions and talk about

the best times to meet. Please contact Pastor Greg if you are hoping to be along on the night.

## News From St. Peter's, Alberton

### St. Peter's Men's Fellowship

Our Annual Dinner was once again a success with 112 men attending on the night. A special thankyou to the 13 ladies who cooked and served our banquet meal. Our guest speakers Kellie and Aaron Hardke gave an inspirational talk and video on their trip to Nepal and the work of LWS. Proceeds from the evening \$3948 was donated to the work of Lutheran World Service.

**St. Peter's Ladies Guild Annual Brunch** this year celebrates 150 years of Queensland and will be held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October commencing at 9.45 a.m. You are invited to come along and bring your friends for an inspirational and fun day travelling down memory lane and celebrating the wonderful blessings our God has bestowed on us.

**St. Peter's Explorers Club:** For all children of the community on Friday afternoons 4.15 -5.30. Currently we are having a journey through Asian mission grounds with the Bible Society. A dinner will be held on Friday evening 4<sup>th</sup> September at 6.p.m. We will be eating Asian food and you are welcome to bring along a main course and dessert to share (recipes are available if you need one)

## What's Happening At Bethlehem, Woongoolba?

**Young Adults is on the boil!** Want to meet for great meals and fun, an opportunity to meet with people your own age? Want to share God's love and knowledge with people who relate to issues that are real and relevant. The parish Young Adults Group might just be what you're looking for! Contact Josh Keith on 0417 633 819 for details of weekly get-togethers. What have you got to gain?

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### Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Woongoolba

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