

This week in your LCA



Story of the Week

Renewal takes courage and imagination – is the LCA ready?
by Tania Nelson

After a 50-year history, the Lutheran Church of Australia has plenty to celebrate and much to reflect on. Read more on your LCA website www.lca.org.au



'The choir takes hymns given to their ancestors by German missionaries back to Germany, now sung in their own Aboriginal languages.'

The movie of the world-renowned Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir is set for release in Australia and New Zealand. Learn more in this issue.

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Photo: Mike Ingham

EARTHQUAKE APPEAL

Papua New Guinea

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potentialfilms.com/contemporary-movies/the-song-keepers



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Messages of hope

THIS WEEK:

Aspergers

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RENEWAL
takes courage
and imagination

IS THE LCA READY?

by TANIA NELSON

In human terms, the LCA is middle-aged, proud of its past and looking forward to what God has in store as we continue to mature.

From the growth of Lutheran schooling in Australia to the establishment of lay ministries in aged-care and community services; from the birth of congregations among new housing estates to the varied ways we have served our nearby and distant neighbours, the LCA has many reasons to thank God.

As we look forward, are we longing to age graciously with grace-filled lives, or will we retreat to safe ways of living? Is the LCA on the brink of missional renewal or on a path to slow decay from a lack of imagination?

There are many signs that the LCA is on the brink of missional renewal.

Many congregations seek to be places where families and young people are nourished, and other congregations have embraced cultural diversity. The LCA also plans to plant 30 congregations in 10 years.

These signs tell us that the Spirit is active as we strive to develop a missional culture, as in the LCA Strategic Direction 2013–2018.

As Australians and New Zealanders increasingly describe themselves as 'spiritual but not religious', and as we encounter a post-Christian society, the need to speak into people's lives in fresh ways becomes essential.

To do this we require courage and a missional imagination led by the Spirit.

The LCA's New and Renewing Churches department speaks of forming missional communities (or Love. Life communities) that may become church plants. These communities are missional, contextual, formational and congregational in nature, but may not look like the sending church that birthed them.

Perhaps our training and formation energy needs to fully embrace leaders of church plants.

As we boldly step into this renewal, we will try courageous and imaginative ways of engaging with our communities. We are likely to have setbacks and failures. Thank God we have the support of our local congregation, fellow Christians and, in the case of church plants, the sending congregation. It's the solidarity of the 'great cloud of witnesses' in Hebrews 12:1–3 that will allow us to run the race and persevere.

Dr Tania Nelson is the LCA's Executive Officer – Local Mission.

The LCA's church planting plan is at www.lca.org.au/new-churches in the booklet **Church Planting: Plant Water Grow.**

For the full story, see the April edition of

The Lutheran

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