

This week in your LCA



Story of the Week

Biggest challenge our greatest joy

Parenting a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can push people to breaking point. But Kirra and her husband Rowan have experienced wonder and delight in having 11-year-old Asher in their family. Read more on your LCA website www.lca.org.au

'So we must get busy with the most important part of the message, and not allow ourselves to become distracted.'

In this issue LCA Bishop John Henderson shares that it's important to focus on the core of our faith – the gospel message – as the one thing that really matters.

The Lutheran. Full colour, 32 pages. 11 editions/year. Only \$44 (Aust), \$46 (NZ). Gift subscriptions available. To subscribe: online www.thelutheran.com.au email lutheran.subs@lca.org.au phone 08 8360 7270



A new way to serve

The LCA/NZ is seeking nominations of people to serve on its boards and committees.

Nominations for General Convention of Synod elections must be received by 15 May.

Visit www.lca.org.au/nominations



LCA CAMPAIGN FOR THE PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Resources available at www.preventDFV.lca.org.au

Messages of hope

THIS WEEK:

Is Jesus real?

Visit www.messagesofhope.org.au to listen or to read transcripts.

MORE INFORMATION at www.lca.org.au, or from your pastor or lay leaders, or LCA Communications lca.comms@lca.org.au 08 8267 7300

SUBSCRIBE TO LCA eNews for fortnightly email updates: www.lca.org.au/enews

BIGGEST CHALLENGE *our greatest joy*

by KIRRA LEWIS



We suspected early on that Asher's development was progressing differently to that of his brother and peers. After months of questioning our parenting, we sought a diagnosis. It was confirmed to be autism when Asher was three years old.

As limiting and destructive as labels can be, this label provided much-needed answers. What we find easy, even fun, for Asher can be torturous and exhausting. While parenting can be a hard slog and I'm not always the 'Pinterest mum', there is so much to learn and gain through the process.

Today I am astounded by Asher's maturity, creativity, and his capacity to cope and understand the world. Asher is a writer and has a trilogy of books written in his head. He wants to be a movie producer like his hero Peter Jackson. And given all the challenges he has already risen to, what's stopping him? He looks at us 'neurotypicals' and thinks we're weird in the way we think – and maybe he's right!

To those starting this journey of parenting amidst autism, I would say that it's okay to cry. It's okay to ask for help. It's okay to seek professional support – in fact, it's important. Some days I have literally fallen to my knees, saying, 'God, how can I get through this day?'

The whole experience has shaped my faith for the better. There is such beauty in autism. It reminds you that there is more than one way to approach things. I no longer consider Asher's autism to be a fallen or broken part of God's creation. Instead I see it as an expression of diversity. We need the genius, colour and flare autism can bring, and our humanity is enriched as we learn to live together.

Yes, we have put in a lot of hard work, but where would we be if we didn't see our circumstance in terms of God's grand design, or if we shut ourselves off from his promises to sustain us, or been isolated from his church's support?

I'm quite certain our present circumstance is nothing more or less than unwarranted grace. And because of this grace we are now able to look back on it reflectively with thankful eyes and give all glory to God.

Kirra Lewis is Community Education Officer for Australian Lutheran World Service.

For the full story, see the April edition of

The Lutheran

Full colour, 32 pages. 11 editions/year.

Only \$44 (Aust), \$46 (NZ). Gift subscriptions available.

To subscribe: online www.thelutheran.com.au

email lutheran.subs@lca.org.au phone 08 8360 7270