

To the Congregations of the LCA WA District

Grace and peace to you all through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

With these key words “grace” and “peace” Paul begins many of his New Testament letters. They are like the chorus in his song of the gospel, repeated over and over again to God’s people and reminding them of Christ’s precious gift – grace leading to peace.

Receive this gift today by faith – GRACE and PEACE to YOU!

As has probably been reported to you by your Synod delegates I was elected to the role of WA District Bishop (half-time) at the meeting in Katanning on March 4-5. This is a position of great trust and I am humbled by the fact that our District pastors and delegates at Synod have been led in this way. As I expressed at Synod it is a position which I can only accept and undertake “with the help of God” and I hope you will pray for me and my wife Narelle as we serve you in the coming two year term.

This is a letter of introduction. Having served in WA from January 2007- February 2014 at the Rockingham Mandurah Lutheran Church and also for the past twelve months at St Luke’s in Parkwood, I realise that I am known to some of you. However I am also aware that many of you will know little about the person you will now be working alongside. I thought it would therefore be valuable to send this greeting and include in it some information about myself.

Firstly some background. I am originally a South Australian, growing up in the country areas of the State before heading to Adelaide in 1978 to study law at Adelaide University. In 1981 I entered pastoral ministry studies at Luther Seminary (now ALC) and was ordained as a pastor of the LCA in 1987. I have served as a parish pastor in Croydon (Victoria – Open Door Lutheran Fellowship 1988-1993), Tuggeranong (ACT – Church of the Good Shepherd 1993-2006) and Rockingham/Mandurah (WA – Rockingham Mandurah Lutheran Church 2007-2014) before spending the past three years in the role of an Interim Pastor for the LCA. This last role has involved spending a year at a time with congregations serving them as they work through transition. This work has also included a specialisation in Reconciliation Ministry and I have undertaken extensive training in how to apply biblical peacemaking principles to the conflicts that we face in our lives.

Through this journey I have gathered some insight into the role of a Bishop having served both the NSW District and the WA District of the church as a Vice-President and Assistant Bishop. I was also part of the Presidential Team (along with Pastors Adrian Kitson and Julian Bayha) which served WA in the interim period between the retirement of Geoff Burger and the beginning of Pastor Greg Pfeiffer’s time as our District President/Bishop. I trust that this experience will be of value as I take up the office of bishop but I also am very aware of my limitations in the face of what is a daunting role.

I have been encouraged in recent days by the following verse from Corinthians –

God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. – 2 Corinthians 9:8

These are powerful words not just for a bishop-elect but for the whole church as we struggle with the challenges of being God’s people in a secular age. He **IS** able to bless us abundantly with what we truly **NEED**.

In addition to the above I can share that when time and opportunity allow I am a keen fisherman, an amateur photographer, a woodworker and, very excitingly, a soon-to-be "Grandpa". Narelle is a ceramic artist (she says she just "loves playing with clay"), a teacher, is learning to paint with water colours and can't wait for the experience of being "Grandma". Our grandchildren will be born in WA in April and June.

What next?

The DCC has the responsibility of managing the process of my transition into the role of bishop and I will meet with them in coming days to begin this work. Currently I have responsibilities to complete in my current call at St. Luke's Parkwood and some holidays owing which will affect the timing of a start date.

It is also the responsibility of the DCC to identify a suitable host congregation/parish for the other 50% of my work role. Synod has voted to create a "locum" role for the bishop who will serve one of the congregations of the District as its half time pastor. Whilst the name "locum" suggests to some that this will be a roving commission it is anticipated that the role will be sited at one place for the full two year term. More information on the process will be forthcoming as the DCC makes progress on its planning.

Concluding Words

Along with many other churches we are currently navigating our way through tricky waters. Our society is moving away from its Christian heritage, we have lost some community trust in the wake of the recent Royal Commission and many of our church families are shrinking.

In the face of these challenges we can seek Christ TOGETHER, we can face the future TOGETHER, and we can be the body of Christ TOGETHER.

This is a rich partnership in the gospel which I look forward to sharing with you in coming months.

Yours in Christ and his service,

Pastor Mike Fulwood
Bishop-Elect WA District.



Pastor Mike Fulwood **LCA Interim Pastor (Reconciliation)**

*"God reconciled us to himself through Christ
and gave us the ministry of reconciliation!"
2 Corinthians 5:18*

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