

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CONGREGATION MILDURA

A. CHURCH PROFILE

1. BACKGROUND TO THE PROFILE

The Church Council, in 2015-17, saw the need to develop a plan that directed the activity of the congregation in a strategic way. The purpose was to focus the decisions and work of the congregation in the medium to long term. The previous strategic plan was developed in 2005 and our mission and vision statements are sourced from that plan.

To this end, Pr Brett Kennett, the District Pastor for Congregational Support, conducted two weekend sessions in 2015 (15/16 August, 7/8 November) with congregational members. The final report was tabled in May 2016. In 2016, Bp Greg Pietsch, our then Victorian District Bishop, also conducted a personal visitation with the congregation that involved ultimately a session with church council and other invitees. This session examined joys and challenges; past and present directions; and gifts and callings.

To complement these sessions, the congregation participated in the 2016 National Church Life Survey. The outcomes were reported in early 2017. The Church Council has considered all this data and this profile is prepared in the light of the data gleaned.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (hereafter HTLC) recognises that the Lord of the Church, Jesus, gives the Church its mandate. This involves the great commission to make disciples by baptizing and teaching and celebrating the Lord's Supper of which Jesus said "do this in remembrance of me". Therefore we make our plans humbly seeking our Lord's blessing on the human and material resources he has provided. Any fruition of our plans we attribute to the gracious action of our Lord, not the wisdom of our plans.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

Holy Trinity Lutheran Congregation exists to make and nurture Christ's disciples by faithfully using God's word and sacraments according to the Lutheran Confession.

3. VISION

That all people will grow in their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. PHILOSOPHY

As a confessing Lutheran congregation, it is our sincere endeavour to conform our plans and activity to the doctrinal basis of the church.

The Congregation declares:

4.1 It accepts without reservation the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as a whole and in all their parts, as the divinely inspired, written and inerrant Word of God and as the only infallible source and norm for all matters of faith, doctrine and life.

4.2 It acknowledges and accepts as true expositions of the Word of God and its own Confession, all the Symbolic Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord 1580,

namely, the three Ecumenical Creeds: the Apostle's Creed; the Nicene Creed; the Athanasian Creed; the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; the Apology of the Augsburg Confession; the Smalcald Articles; the Small Catechism of Luther; the Large Catechism of Luther; and the Formula of Concord.

5. HISTORY

Lutherans have been gathering in the Sunraysia region of northwest Victoria since the early 1920's. In those early years, they met in private homes and hired halls. For many years, the resident pastor was at Meringur.

At the formation of the LCA in 1966, the ELCA and the UELCA synods were both represented in Mildura. The new LCA congregation, Holy Trinity, was formed in 1966 and located at the former St Paul's ELCA church plant on the corner of Olive Avenue and Ninth Street, Mildura.

Over the next 40 years the congregation would consistently demonstrate that its Church plant and other property would serve the congregation's ministry and not take on a life of their own. The congregation has maintained, modified, beautified and improved its plant. At the same time, it has acquired and disposed of other property for the sake of its ministry and mission objectives.

The congregation extended and refurbished its hall to better serve its children's ministry (1968). It purchased a house next to the Church to safeguard future expansion (1969). Later, the house was removed and the vacant land was integrated into the Church precinct as a garden and outdoor space (1996).

The congregation remodelled the sanctuary (1995), including installing two specially designed stained-glass windows (1999 and 2002). The congregation seeks to optimise the environment and conduct of worship, just as it maintains its proper form and correct content according to the Lutheran teaching of the Gospel.

The congregation does not own a manse (since 1999). Congregational policy includes the arrangements in which the Pastor may purchase his own home or be provided with a suitable rental property. The rented manse, which would comply fully with LCA manse standards, would be administered through a real estate agent who deals directly with the Pastor, and the congregation pays the rent. If the Pastor elects to purchase his own house, he would receive the LCA salary package including the housing allowance. While there is an office at the Church plant, Pastor's main office is currently at Trinity Lutheran College.

The congregation has demonstrated its faithfulness and maturity by successfully confronting significant challenges to its identity and purpose as a congregation of the LCA and its mission and ministry to the wider community of Mildura.

The establishment of the congregation's Prep to year 6 school (1982) and its expansion into a secondary college to year 10 (2000) has meant that the congregation has had to maintain a balance between the nurture of its members (edification) as well as its responsibilities to the wider community, particularly the world of the school (outreach).

For many years the congregation provided a steady stream of committed and skilled people who oversaw the development and conduct of the school/college with respect to governance, management and facility expansion.

The congregation experienced fundamental conflict within its membership that called into question its reason for being and its ability to continue in 1993. The question that confronted it was: would the congregation continue to be Lutheran in its confession and practice, or would it become pseudo-pentecostal? Ultimately, the congregation's lay-worker, almost all of its elders and around 50 of its members broke fellowship and left to follow a different understanding of being Church (1993).

At this time, the congregation re-examined and re-affirmed its Lutheran foundations and has continued to re-dedicate itself to living out its mission and ministry as a congregation of the LCA. New leaders have emerged. Some lapsed members have returned. New people have come to share the congregation's fellowship. As time has gone by, some of those who had left have returned.

Since the formation of Holy Trinity congregation (1966), it has had five pastors, giving an average length of tenure of around 10 years each. The congregation has welcomed two vicars (1998 and 1999) as a natural extension of its well-developed synodical identity. This positive view of synod saw the congregation host a Victorian District convention (2002).

As the school developed and grew, the congregation saw the need for extra pastoral presence. This resulted in the establishment (2002/3) of a Senior Pastor position with major focus on the congregation and an Associate Pastor position with major focus on the school. This continued until 2015, when the School Pastor retired and was replaced by a lay School Ministry Worker. Since that time the congregational Pastor has had some limited involvement with the college at key times including key college worship events, like beginning and commencement of term, some counselling at times of bereavement and interaction with staff and some students (eg confirmation, first communion).

The congregation's history, overflowing with God's graciousness, has developed and revealed the maturity, resilience, faithfulness and adaptability of its members. Richly blessed by dedicated pastors, the congregation looks optimistically to the future.

6. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Objects of the Congregation are:

- 6.1 to glorify the Triune God in its worship and in its work;
- 6.2 to bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ through the proclamation of the Gospel in accordance with the Confession and practice of the Church;
- 6.3 to gather into the Congregation such persons as are, or desire to become, members of the Church for their edification through the Word and the Sacraments;
- 6.4 to help the members dedicate their God-given spiritual, material and physical gifts to the service of their Lord;
- 6.5 to reach out into the community as bearers of the Good News of God's salvation in Jesus Christ for all people;
- 6.6 to exercise discipline over its members in conformity with the Scriptures and the Confession of the Congregation;
- 6.7 to join with the Church and District in building and extending the Kingdom of God;

6.8 to acquire, dispose of or otherwise deal with real and personal property in the interest of the work of the Church and the Congregation.

7. WORSHIP SERVICES

7.1 Worship at HTLC follows the recommended LCA worship practices and liturgies. Services have normally been conducted at Mildura every Sunday at 9.30 am, with evening services at 7 pm on a fortnightly basis.

7.2 The preaching place of Robinvale is approx 60 minutes from Mildura. A very small, but dedicated band of Lutherans meet monthly in the evening in the Robinvale Anglican Church Hall. Faced with declining numbers, they sold their church but have continued their coming together under the auspices of the Mildura pastor. Average attendance is around 2 to 6.

7.3 HTLC is blessed with a vibrant and active music team to support the Sunday morning worship services.

8. STATISTICS – 2017

Congregation	Baptised Members	Communing 18+	Avg. Weekly Attendance	Sunday School Children	Youth Attendees	Offerings	Offerings per Member	Synod Contrib.	Synod Contrib. per Member	Expend. Other
Mildura Holy Trinity, Vic	168	128	86	15	0	\$125,830	\$1,463	\$34,200	\$398	\$8,440

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH MILDURA

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

OUR EXPENSES

	ACTUAL		PROJECTED		
	2 YEARS AGO 2016	LAST YEAR 2017	THIS YEAR 2018	NEXT YEAR 2019	2 YEARS TIME 2020
General Expenses	\$8,720	\$4,960	\$7,850	\$8,000	\$8,000
Salary Expenses	\$96,420	\$108,17	\$105,34	\$112,00	\$115,00
Property Expenses	\$12,100	\$14,620	\$10,060	\$10,000	\$11,000
LCA & District	\$38,230	\$38,550	\$38,800	\$40,000	\$42,000
TOTAL	\$155,470	\$166,30	\$162,05	\$170,00	\$176,00

OUR INCOME

	ACTUAL		PROJECTED		
	2 YEARS AGO 2016	LAST YEAR 2017	THIS YEAR 2018	NEXT YEAR 2019	2 YEARS TIME 2020
Offerings	\$136,140	\$132,920	\$135,200	\$138,000	\$140,000
Reimbursement	\$8,600	\$14,860	\$18,400	\$22,000	\$24,000
Other Income	\$9,040	\$8,930	\$8,450	\$10,000	\$12,000
TOTAL	\$153,780	\$156,710	\$162,050	\$170,000	\$176,000

9. TRINITY LUTHERAN COLLEGE

9.1 Following its beginnings as Holy Trinity Lutheran Primary School in 1982, secondary classes were added in 2000. The prep to year 10 school then changed its name to Trinity Lutheran College, with 2018 enrolments of some 400 students. At the 2017 census, around 10-12% of college families claim to be members of the Lutheran Church. 35-40% identify with other Christian denominations (eg Catholic, Pentecostal, Uniting, Anglican, Churches of Christ, Baptist, Presbyterian, Orthodox, SDA etc.) 40-45% identify as “other” which includes other faiths such as Islam, Hindi and Buddhist or no religious allegiance at all. Teaching staff are split approx. 50% Lutheran and 50% other Christian though not all could be classified as active worshipping members. Non-teaching staff are split evenly between Lutheran, Christian and other. The school is a healthy and vibrant Christian community. It is blessed with a group of very dedicated and caring staff who work tirelessly to support the spiritual education of those in their care.

9.2 The College works on a spiritual life theme each term that ties together staff devotions, class devotions and chapel services. Each day commences with staff devotion. All students take part in the regular devotional life of the school. Each term commences and finishes with a whole college chapel service. Christian Studies as per the LEA framework is part of the College curriculum for all year levels.

9.3 In 2017, Trinity Lutheran College became a District school and its constitution was amended accordingly to reflect the fact that HTLC is now a supporting congregation rather than an approving congregation. Thus, the College is still vitally connected to the congregation through mission and ministry. Lutheran membership and therefore HTLC members constitutionally maintain a majority of membership of the College Council and therefore are directly involved in the governance dimension of the College. Reporting and approvals in the strategic areas of finance and leadership are now directly under the auspices of the Victorian District for Lutheran Education (LEVNT).

9.4 The College does not support a separate pastor. The pastor of the supporting congregation has a role in the College to:

- Provide theological expertise to the College especially through its Principal
- Be a spiritual advisor to the College Principal, executive leadership and College ministry staff
- Be a consultant to the College Council (which meets monthly).

The congregational pastor has usually been requested to conduct the opening and closing chapels of the College year. He is warmly welcomed into the life of the College community and is encouraged to attend staff devotions, student chapels, College celebrations and school activities when available. The pastor is a very valuable resource for the Christian Studies teachers and may be requested to do a guest spot in the classroom.

9.5 The College employs a part time ministry worker who has key responsibilities for oversight of primary chapel and organising whole school chapels, 0-5years of age pre-school programs, coordinator of parent support group ministry and a ministry to children in the lower primary years. The ministry worker also liaises with FUSE, a local team of youth workers and youth ministers from other Christian churches, who run lunch time programs at the College for upper primary and secondary students once a week.

9.6 God has blessed the Trinity greatly since its beginnings. In 2018 we celebrate 36 years of God's blessings. We pray that He will continue to direct our efforts to share the message of salvation to the students and to the wider community associated with the College.

10. PRESENT & FUTURE DIRECTION

The congregation recognises that the Pastor and the Deacons will be involved in reactive home visitation ie visiting congregational members for specific reasons: sickness, death, personal and family crisis, as well as for celebration such as significant birthdays or anniversaries and family events like a birth. The congregation sees proactive home visitation as significant also. It believes that reactive and proactive visitation must be approached equally.

A proactive visitation program toward the congregation's membership - through the pastor and the deacons - is a natural extension of the congregation's worship, nurture and fellowship and is important in encouraging and helping the members in their vocational ministry within one of their most significant environments; the home. It is an important tool in identifying members who may be undergoing difficulty or who are in danger of drifting away from the congregation.

The strategic planning meetings of 2015-16 and the NCLS 2017 survey identified areas for consideration and further development. The rewrite of the Congregation's Ministry and Mission Plan is a current work in action by the HTLC Church Council and Deacons. This is being carefully, albeit slowly, articulated with a set of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time framed goals in the areas of:

- a) Worship/Bible Study Groups/Pastoral Acts/Special Services
- b) Nurture/Discipleship/Child Youth Family with a multi-generational focus
- c) Building and enhancing Christian relationships to strengthen fellowship, communication and service, encourage stewardship
- d) Outreach: Service and justice, welfare and community engagement
- e) Mission outreach (local, national and international)
- f) Facilities and church physical development and maintenance

11. SWOT Analysis: WHERE ARE WE AT AS A CONGREGATION?

11.1 In the last 1-2 years, list which of the activities of your congregation you consider to be ...

a) Positives

- Ongoing pastoral services and the administering of the sacraments
- Skilled and energetic musicians with strong congregational singing
- Ongoing improvements to the church plant
- Sunday School every Sunday, Children's addresses during service, deacon involvement in services, young people involvement with musicians
- altar guild re-involvement in planning on improving the aesthetics of the church (banners, pew cushions etc)
- Mission connections with POSHU in Uganda, Days for Girls
- Improvements to communication practices via technology (emails etc.)
- A variety of after service fellowship activities such as Soup Sundays during winter, trading tables and Mother's Day pancake day
- Weekly rosters and bulletins, Congregational Family Booklet, Powerpoints for services with hardcopies for those having difficulty viewing the screen, emailing of service documents and LCA information each week

b) Needing Development

- Reaching out to recently baptised and confirmed children and their families and supporting their journey with the Lord
- A renewed focus on intergenerational ministry leading to a recognition of the inherent opportunities
- Active connection with the College in ministry and outreach

11.2 When you consider the resources your congregation has at its disposal (including people and their skills, buildings and facilities, and other material resources) where are your strengths?

a) Strengths

- Diversity, maturity and a variety of experiences within members of the congregation.
- Regular fellowship of the aged members (Sunbeamers)
- Women's Fellowship
- The initiation of the Worship Committee with a broad skill base and experience
- ICT skills to enable improvement of communication processes through technology (email), the gradual coordination of congregational and LCA information provided to the congregation, weekly powerpoint, weekly recording of the worship service

b) Needing Development

- The changing of internal structures to allow all members of the congregation to be part of consultation processes and the methods of allowing their thoughts/suggestions to be heard and acknowledged
- Ongoing reaffirmation of the common mission and ministry directions of both the congregation and TLC and what this looks like

11.3 As you look to the future, what opportunities does your congregation have for growth and what threatens to hinder your development?

a) Opportunities

- Trinity Lutheran College physically located in growth zone of town
- Maintaining and enhancing the bond between the Congregation and Trinity Lutheran College

b) Threats

- Mildura has a highly transient population
- Missing opportunities to welcome, engage and follow up with visitors
- Not engaging in positive, resourceful stewardship activities

12. WRITE A BRIEF SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE YOUR CONGREGATION'S MINISTRY IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

12.1 Worship

- Traditional Lutheran service orders that allows flexibility within the LCA framework

12.2 Witness/Outreach

- Ongoing support for current overseas mission projects (POSHU, Days for Girls) with further development to identify and form a common understanding of mission/ministry/outreach across the congregation

12.3 Christian Education

- Pastor has led a Bible studies series once a year
- Weekly Sunday School and Children's Addresses
- Classes for confirmation classes and first communion

12.4 Service to those in Need/Pastoral Care

- The deacons visit the shut-ins with administering of Holy Communion and taped worship services
- Home visits (both formal/informal) by deacons and members of the Christian care team
- Hospital visitations by the pastor with support from the deacons

12.5 Fellowship

- The main continuous groups are Ladies Fellowship and Sunbeamers. The reintroduction of home groups in 2016 has been a mixed success.
- A range of casual fellowship activities are offered such as after service tea/coffee, soup days in winter, trade tables, Longest Lutheran Lunch, an annual Church picnic, Christmas lights tour.

12.6 Children/Youth/Family

- While we provide Sunday School, we need to create a more solid foundation of continued ministry from Sunday School to confirmation to youth engagement
- As a rural regional site, a number of young people leave the district for tertiary education in Melbourne or Adelaide

13. WHERE DO WE BELIEVE THAT GOD IS LEADING US?

13.1 What hopes and dreams do you have for your congregation?

- A united congregation of believers focussed on the Word of God leading to thankful actions towards ministry and mission
- Sustained spiritual growth within our congregational members

- Strong growth in Christian relationships across the parish and between the parish and LCA
- Exemplary communication throughout the congregation and its various components
- Committed and stable stewardship throughout the congregation

13.2 What aspects of ministry and mission should be your congregation's priority for the next 1-2 years?

- A common understanding and encouragement of our ministry within the congregation and within the College community
- Encouragement from the congregation to reach out in outreach and mission in our local backyard; and support for equipping our members for this action
- Nurturing our members in their daily spiritual life and encourage them to daily put into action the Word of our Lord

13.3 If you knew that you would not fail, what would you like your congregation to do in the next 1-2 years?

- Build stronger foundations in communication and relationships and reap the God given benefits of this process
- To utilise and build on our strengths, to grow our weaknesses/opportunities into positive Christian actions

14. DEMOGRAPHICS

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church is situated at the corner of Olive Avenue and Ninth Street, Mildura. Mildura is the "capital" of the Sunraysia district which incorporates the City of Mildura and the towns Red Cliffs, Merbein, Irymple and Robinvale in Victoria, and the NSW towns and districts of Buronga, Gol Gol, Dareton, Wentworth and Euston. It is 550km north-west of Melbourne.

The population of Mildura is around 50,000 and in the Mildura Rural City Council area, approx. 70,000. The major economic activities of the area are tourism, viticulture, horticulture, dried and fresh vine fruits and the citrus industry.

Mildura is serviced for air travel with QantasLink, Virgin Australia and Regional Express offering services connecting Mildura with Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Broken Hill. Train travel to Melbourne is provided by V-Line with a bus link to Swan Hill then to Melbourne by train. Bus lines service the Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne, Horsham and Broken Hill routes regularly. Public transport within Mildura is a 24-hour taxi service and a daily timetabled bus service.

15. SELECTED DATA FROM NCLS 2017

(Around 50 members responded to the survey)

15.1 Church Life Profile

The people of this parish want to give ATTENTION to:

69% Sharing in Holy Communion/the Eucharist/Lord's Supper

42% Traditional style of worship or music

28% Praying for one another

22% Contemporary style of worship or music

51% Worship services that are nurturing

41% Ministry to children and youth

35% Spiritual growth (e.g. direction)

32% Encouraging new approaches

Note: Attenders could select up to three options so percentages may not add up to 100%.

15.2 Demographic Profile of HTLC

62% of all people are female and 38% are male

29% of all people have a university degree

18% have a trade certificate, diploma or associate diploma

The AVERAGE AGE of members is 64 years; 43% are 70+, 30% are 50-69, 28% are less than 50

95% of all people were born in AUSTRALIA

5% were born overseas

2% speak a language other than ENGLISH at home

15.3 Church Background and Attendance at HTLC

15% of attenders here are new arrivals to this parish in the past five years.

98% attend church worship services at least monthly

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98% attend church worship services at least monthly

B. PASTOR PROFILE

After prayerful consideration, we believe that our next pastor will display the characteristics described below.

1. **Preacher/Teacher:** The Pastor for this position will preach the Word of God and administer the Holy Sacraments. He should have the ability to prioritise the study and teaching of the Word of God and present it boldly in a clear and understandable manner. He should help God's people apply the Word of God to their relationships and daily lives.
2. **Devotional life:** The Pastor should be an individual who puts a high priority on his personal devotion to the Lord. He should be an individual who sees this as critical to the success of his preaching and other pastoral functions.
3. **Professional growth:** The Pastor will seek to build and develop his learning through professional growth, including meeting with like-minded Pastors and Deacons for study purposes and mutual encouragement. He should also continue his education through seminars, conferences, and the like.
4. **Pastoring skills:** The Pastor should be a person who
 - a) relates well to people in an intergenerational manner establishing healthy Christian relationships and communication practices with a variety of different people promoting sincerity and humbleness;
 - b) be a servant-leader who leads by his own example;
 - c) be able to discern the particular needs of individuals within the congregation and provide them with the necessary pastoral care;
 - d) be able to delegate pastoral care responsibilities among his fellow Deacons and other gifted individuals within the congregation; and
 - e) be willing to warn, admonish, rebuke and correct as this becomes necessary for the church as a whole or for individual members who need these ministries.
5. **Family and Children:** Within an intergenerational framework the Pastor should support children and youth ministries with a vision to developing Christian families through encouraging and equipping those in the church with a desire and heart for these ministries.

6. **Discipleship:** The Pastor should be gifted at encouraging the congregation to be learners and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ in their relationships and daily lives. This includes teaching them how to relate to and study God's word, to love one another, to pursue God's will, and to bear fruit for the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. **Mission:** The Pastor should encourage and support internal and external mission and assist the Church Council, Deacons and Church Groups in the field of mission. He should encourage, exhort, motivate, and lead HTLC in reaching out with the gospel of Jesus Christ to the local, national and global communities.
8. **Worship:** The Pastor should be able to conduct and coordinate the worship service in conjunction with the worship team. He should encourage the congregation to worship God not only on Sunday but in all their relationships and life activities.
9. **Administration:** The Pastor should possess organizational skills adequate to coordinate and administer his assigned duties within the church.
10. **Visitation:** The Pastor should be willing to visit individuals and families within the church and community and to encourage the congregation to demonstrate hospitality to one another and to those in the community. He will work with the Deacons to enhance the existing pastoral visits framework.
11. **Leadership:** The Pastor should be able to lead this church in its mission to its members and to the community. He should recognize leadership potential in others, helping them to develop their gifts, all to the greater glory of God. He should be available, as much as possible, to attend the meetings of all committees and organisations of the congregation.
12. **Counselling:** The Pastor for this position should possess pastoral counselling skills for both formal and informal counselling opportunities as they arise. He should be committed to counselling people biblically. He should be able to wisely delegate counselling responsibilities among his Deacons, other gifted individuals within the congregation, and to seek LCA guidance in situations that are beyond his abilities and time limitations.
13. **Family/Recreation:** The Pastor should be diligent in recognising and, with the assistance of the Church Council and Deacons, establishing an appropriate recreation and family time within his designated weekly schedule. This would include one day off per week, accrued leave/holidays and other such situations according to the LCA requirements.

What gifts does our new Pastor need in order to help lead us?

We take it for granted that the Pastor meets the requirements laid down by the LCA, however we seek a Pastor who has the gifting to walk with our congregation in these priority areas:

- a) Visiting, counselling and ministering to the elderly, bereaved and suffering
- b) Understanding the dimensions of relational leadership and the need to initiate action where required
- c) Nurturing Christian faith and spiritual development in our congregational members at all stages of faith development
- d) Encouraging and equipping others for discipleship, ministry and outreach especially in the context of our Lutheran School
- e) Encourager of intergenerational worship