

*challenging
boundaries*

Life at the Edges

FESTIVAL *of* LEARNING

TUE 20 – THUR 22 FEB 2024

A|L|C
AUSTRALIAN LUTHERAN COLLEGE

 **Uniting College**
for Leadership & Theology

PRELIMINARY – SESSIONS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

About the Festival of Learning

Welcome

Australian Lutheran College, in partnership with the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology, welcomes you to the fourth annual theological *Festival of Learning*. We are once again excited to offer a varied program with something for everyone. We thank our 2024 presenters for their willingness to be part of the festival. We look forward to learning from and with each other during this year's festival.

Primary partners

Australian Lutheran College



[Australian Lutheran College](#) (ALC) is a diverse and welcoming learning community, committed to delivering quality theological education and training that prepares tomorrow's leaders - pastors, teachers, church workers and volunteers of all kinds – to serve and lead with confident Christian faith, integrity, competence and compassion in a changing world.

Uniting College for Leadership and Theology



Located in Brooklyn Park, Adelaide, [Uniting College for Leadership and Theology](#) (UCLT) is the theological college of the South Australian Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia, equipping students for discipleship and ministry. Its mission is to educate courageous disciples and leaders for a healthy missional church.

Supporting partners

University of Divinity



Based in Melbourne, the [University of Divinity](#) is a national provider of higher education and works in partnership with over thirty churches, religious orders and associated organisations in a unique ecumenical enterprise.

The University delivers education and research in theology, philosophy and spirituality and has prepared its graduates for ministry, leadership and community service for over one hundred years. The University is regularly ranked by students as the top university in Australia for student satisfaction and learner engagement, reflecting the high quality of its curriculum and the dedication of staff. ALC and UCLT are two of 13 member colleges of the University.

General information

The *Festival of Learning* recognises that the Christian community has a rich history of gathering to learn together. ALC and its predecessors have always been an integral part of this learning culture, and this festival offers an annual opportunity to celebrate and learn together.

In 2024, the festival will be exclusively online to enable access from anywhere. Both full and partial (four-elective pass) registration packages are available. While some sessions have more complex content than others, you can participate in any sessions that interest you. Note that the views expressed at the *Festival of Learning* are those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect the views of Australian Lutheran College or the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology.

Festival participants need to ensure that their computer equipment and internet speed is suitable for accessing live stream video. Online access will be through an attendee website. The link will be provided closer to the event. Sessions generally open five minutes prior to the published start time.

There are two types of sessions: generally included sessions and elective sessions. Access to general sessions, including the keynote presentations, is included in all registration packages. You must select the elective sessions you wish to attend according to the conditions of your chosen package.

Note that all session start times refer to Australian Central Daylight Time (Adelaide, SA).

Generally included sessions

Tuesday 20 February, 9:30 am	Welcome	<i>Dr Merryn Ruwoldt</i>
Tuesday 20 February, 9:40 am	Opening presentation	<i>Rev Nick Patselis</i>
Tuesday 20 February, 11:45 am	Devotion	<i>Dr Tim Stringer</i>
Tuesday 20 February, 3:00 pm	Conversation hour	<i>Facilitator Michelle Eastwood</i>
Wednesday 21 February, 11:45 am	Devotion	<i>Rev James Winderlich</i>
Wednesday 21 February, 3:00 pm	Conversation hour	<i>Facilitator Michelle Eastwood</i>
Thursday 22 February, 11:45 am	Devotion	<i>Rev Rob Edwards</i>
Thursday 22 February, 3:00 pm	Conversation hour	<i>Facilitator Michelle Eastwood</i>

Devotion


Devotions will be held each day at 11.45am. They will be recorded for viewing later if you can't attend at the advertised time.

Conversation hour

One of the best things about festivals is chatting to other people. The conversation hour is a space to have some of these conversations within a moderated Zoom setting. If you would like to chat about what you have heard during the day or across the festival, this is the place for you to be.

Electives

Select elective sessions when you register. The elective program and available options in each timeslot are included later in this booklet and also in the online program.

Only one elective can be selected in each elective timeslot, however some are repeated in another timeslot to help you access your topics of interest. If you have other commitments during the festival, most electives will be recorded for viewing later 'on demand' as indicated by the symbol  in the program.

All electives will commence promptly on the hour and conclude 5 minutes prior to the next session to allow time to stretch between sessions.

Note that electives may be cancelled if there are insufficient registrations.

Timetable

	Tues 21 February	Wed 22 February	Thurs 23 February
9:30 am	Welcome	Elective session 4	Elective session 8
9:40am	Opening presentation		
10:30 am	Break		
10.45 am	Elective session 1	Elective session 5	Elective session 9
11:45 am	Devotion	Devotion	Devotion
12:00 pm	Lunch break		
1:00 pm	Elective session 2	Elective session 6	Elective session 10
2:00 pm	Elective session 3	Elective session 7	Elective session 11
3:00 pm	Conversation Hour	Conversation Hour	Conversation Hour

Note that all session start times refer to Australian Central Daylight Time (Adelaide, SA).

Registration costs

Both options include keynote presentation plus access to devotions and conversation hours.

Full registration **\$150.00**

There are eleven distinct elective timeslots across the festival. Full registration allows you to choose up to eleven electives (one from every timeslot).

Concession fee: \$100.00 (select concession options during registration)

Four-elective pass **\$80.00**

Choose up to four electives from any timeslot during the festival.

Two-elective pass **\$40.00**

Choose up to two electives from any timeslot during the festival.

Registration

Registrations open on Tuesday 16 January at <https://alc.edu.au/connect/events/festival-of-learning-4/> and **close** on Monday 19 February at 12 noon. A late registration fee of \$10 applies after Tuesday 13 February.

When completing your registration, it is important that you provide an email address that you can easily access. We will use this email address to communicate details about the *Festival of Learning*. Note that you will need access to this email address to login during the festival.

If you register for an elective that is subsequently cancelled, you will be able to register for another elective in that timeslot.

Watch for a very important email on **Wednesday 14 February** detailing how to access the online attendee hub. A more detailed 'FAQ' will be published closer to the time.

Enquiries

Contact ALC if you require further information about the *Festival of Learning*:

Email: events@alc.edu.au

Telephone: +61 8 7120 8200 or Freecall: 1800 625 193 (within Australia only)

Tuesday program

Tuesday 20 February overview	
9:30 am	Welcome: <i>TBA</i>
9:40 am	Opening Presentation Who moved my biscuits? Navigating ministry in uncertain times <i>Nick Patselis</i>
10:30 am	<i>Break</i>
10:45 am	Elective session 1 A. Life shaping worship shaping life <i>Rev Jennifer Hughes</i> B. Ecomission: loving my human and more than human neighbour <i>Dr Mick Pope</i> C. Cranach's women <i>Dr Pam Zweck</i>
11:45 am	Devotion <i>Dr Tim Stringer</i>
12:00 pm	<i>Lunch break</i>
1:00 pm	Elective session 2 A. Welcoming refugees in Jesus name <i>Mr Craig Heidenreich</i> B. A fringe of identity: re-narrating a risky solidarity <i>Dr Toar Hutagalung</i> C. Misplaced people, bordered subjects discerning a theology of place in an age of displacement <i>Rev Dr Lyndon Shakespeare</i>
2:00 pm	Elective session 3 A. Personifications of evil: monster concepts and the edges of human experience <i>Maria-Anna Schüßel</i> B. Advocating well for the Christian faith: the <i>Undeceptions</i> podcast <i>Rev Matthew Bishop</i> C. Overcoming personal difficulties <i>Session cancelled</i>
3:00 pm	Conversation Hour

Welcome:

Dr Merryn Ruwoldt

This session will open the festival with an acknowledgement that ALC sits on the lands of the Kurna people and pay respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

[Check my local time: Welcome](#)

Opening presentation

“Who moved my biscuits? Navigating ministry in uncertain times”

Rev Nick Patselis

There are phrases we've heard over and over. 'The world is changing too fast,' 'it never used to be like this,' 'church was better when...' Whether we've been prepared for it or not our lives and our world have radically changed. This session presents several perspectives on approaching the world we find ourselves in with deep joy, courage and hope.

[Check my local time: Opening presentation](#)

Elective session 1

A. Life shaping worship shaping life

Rev Jennifer Hughes

In worship we are invited to bring the fullness of our living, the challenges of our lives, the places that are stretching us and how God is reforming us. Our hope in worship is to be transformed by God, as individuals, as community and as society. Often the first place we articulate a new understanding – whether of God, ourselves or all humanity and life – is in our worship. The prayers we pray reveal our hearts' deepest longings. Sermons, song choices, acts of connection are all expressions of who we are. When we experience cognitive dissonance in worship, our spirits respond and we recognise the stirrings of the Spirit to cross boundaries, to change our thoughts, actions, theologies and relationships. When our life is shaped by our communal worship, we live out our faith in transformative ways. When our communal worship is shaped by life truth, hope, connection and love are found.

This elective is also available on Wednesday in elective session 4.

B. Ecomission: loving my human and more than human neighbour

Dr Mick Pope

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus expands our vision of who are neighbour is. The message of the kingdom and the accompanying values of the kingdom, love and justice, extend to people beyond all of the boundaries that the world, and the church, produce. But what of our non-human neighbour? The New Testament provides us with many hints as: Jesus is the agent of creation and new creation, the reconciler of all things to God. God is making all things new. Creation groans in birth pains awaiting our resurrection and its own liberation. What then does this mean for mission? According to Ross Langmead, eco-missiology sees mission in terms of reconciliation at all levels. The gospel is broader than 'me and Jesus' because God is involved with the whole of creation, not just human beings. Eco-missiology is concerned for creation because God saves us with and not from creation. Ecomissiology is also a matter of eco-justice, since it is the global poor who face the worst effects of environmental degradation; and includes eco-spirituality, which represents a new way of seeing creation as reflecting God's grace, creative wisdom, and glory. This paper exams the missiological and ethical implications of this theology.

This elective is also available on Wednesday in elective session 7.

C. Cranach's women

Dr Pam Zweck

Who is Cranach and who were the women he painted? What did he have to do with Luther and the sixteenth century Reformation? Artist and collaborator with Martin Luther in the Wittenberg Reformation, Lucas Cranach's extensive portfolio includes images that portray many different women both secular and religious, often considered by some to be on the margins. These women range from nudes to saints and biblical characters, as well as portraits of women relevant to the Reformation and the reformers. In getting to know Cranach, we will first discover how he and Luther became "unlikely companions," and learn a little about their private lives and what their collaboration achieved. The presentation continues with a thumbnail discussion of a variety of his female subjects and a selection of those biblical women who were designated as on the margins, including one particular women, whom Christ allowed to serve him.

Elective session 2

A. Welcoming refugees in Jesus name

Mr Craig Heidenreich

Engaging Humanitarian entrants as they transition to a new life in Aust / NZ. Many refugees come from parts of the world that have been closed to the gospel, so in this session we will explore this real mission opportunity and why these newcomers are more likely to respond to us than other migrants. We will look at who these people are, ways to connect, and the 'window of opportunity' when they first arrive.

B. A fringe of identity: re-narrating a risky solidarity

Dr Toar Hutagalung

This theological work aims to identify the idea of liminality and solidarity in the Gospel of Mark through postcolonial perspective. The method is done by focusing not only on the narrative of the Gospel, but also on three significant elements: Re-narrating, Risky, and Solidarity. My hope is that this paper can be a transformative calling for solidarity among the ecclesial communities who find themselves as liminals or in liminal places, and to encourage people to embrace liminality as an empowering place for resisting the colonial power. It is surely running through danger, but it is a vocation of solidarity that Jesus has been performing through his whole life and death.

C. Misplaced people, bordered subjects: discerning a theology of place in an age of displacement

Rev Dr Lyndon Shakespeare

“Heaven has a wall and strict immigration policies. Hell has open borders.” Written on billboards and church signs from South Dakota to nearer the US-Mexico border in New Mexico, this sentiment perpetuates a theological assumption that sacred-like places are principally bordered and enclosed spaces. Attending to several points of contact between border studies, migrant experiences, and theologies of place, this presentation explores a sacramental vision of place that contributes to the reimagining of human location from the givenness of bordered and national narratives and barriers into a space that resembles more closely the eschatological destiny of all creation.

This elective is also available on Wednesday in elective session 5.

Elective session 3

A. Personifications of evil: monster-concepts and the edges of human experience

Maria-Anna Schüssel

From the beginning of traceable human history, monsters have been an essential part of all human cultures which in many cases have survived massive cultural, religious, social and political shifts because they touch on various parts of the human experience that cannot be expressed otherwise. Often these experiences have been those of marginal groups – women, homosexuals, foreigners, Jews - for whom these concepts of personified evil both perpetuated their demonization and dehumanization within the society they lived in and gave them the only voice they had against it. They, very often, not only interacted with them, but used the language of monsters to find their own narrative and set it against the original one that sought to rationalize their marginalization. This presentation is going to focus on three of them – vampires, zombies and demons – which, across the globe, are the most prevalent in our cultural grammar today and which are also the ones that have been most deeply shaped by the Judeo-Christian tradition. It's going to trace those Judeo-Christian roots and their evolution within various of these concepts as well as the historical experiences, especially those of the marginal groups, that gave rise to them. As we will see, the issues they touch – racism, colonialism, sexuality and sexual orientation, women's rights and the autonomy of the

individual within an overarching society – are a large part of why their fascination is, so far, unbroken and likely to remain so.

B. Advocating well for the Christian faith: the *Undeceptions* podcast

Rev Matthew Bishop

For many years I have followed and found helpful the highly Christocentric work of Australian academic Dr John Dickson in explaining and advocating for the Christian Faith. In this presentation we will take a look at John's remarkable and thoughtful *Undeceptions* podcast. We will orientate ourselves to its style, explore the categories of topics it addresses, connect with some big highlight episodes and discuss how it can assist us in our own day-to day advocacy of the Christian faith. The podcast's own description is 'Every week on *Undeceptions*, we'll explore some aspect of life, faith, history, culture, or ethics that is either much misunderstood or mostly forgotten. With the help of people who know what they're talking about, we'll be trying to 'undeceive ourselves', and let the truth 'out'.' So be prepared to be equipped, a little enlightened and certainly encouraged as you join in.

C. Overcoming personal difficulties [CANCELLED]

This session has been cancelled.

Wednesday program

Wednesday 21 February overview	
9:30 am	Elective session 4 A. Challenging denominational boundaries <i>Rev Rob Edwards</i> B. Reading Psalms from the edges <i>Dr Michelle Eastwood</i> C. Life shaping worship shaping life <i>Rev Jennifer Hughes</i>
10:30 am	<i>Break</i>
10:45 am	Elective session 5 A. Resilience and spirituality: strength and treasures amidst adversity <i>Dr Alison Short</i> B. Overcoming personal difficulties <i>Rev Dr Kevin Sarlow</i> C. Misplaced people, bordered subjects: discerning a theology of place in an age of displacement <i>Rev Dr Lyndon Shakespeare</i>
11:45 am	Devotion <i>Rev James Winderlich</i>
12:00 pm	<i>Lunch break</i>
1:00 pm	Elective session 6 A. Courage, shame and violence: reflections on the dehumanized man in Mark 5:1-20 <i>Rev Professor Vicky Balabanski</i> B. Shining a light on DFV and religion in Australia <i>Professor Sarah Wendt</i> C. Recording and revival of the Aboriginal Kurna language of the Adelaide plains <i>Gerhard Ruediger</i>
2:00 pm	Elective session 7 A. Ecumenism – reaching out together to a hurting world <i>Dr Neil Bergmann</i> B. The construction of femininity in Second Temple literature <i>Dr Anna Nürnberger</i> C. Ecomission: loving my human and more than human neighbour <i>Session cancelled</i>
3:00 pm	Conversation Hour

Elective session 4

A. Challenging denominational boundaries

Rev Rob Edwards

The definition we find in scripture of “church” is as a unit. Unity is vital for the people of God, and unity is the goal for the Lord of the church. In fact, He sees only one church. The call of Christ challenges our definition of church and our view of one another. The true church, right doctrine, pure teaching, are all brought under scrutiny and redefined under the lens of “the body of Christ” How separate should we be from other denominations? How “independent” are we really? If we are one church, how does that impact our mission to the world, and our church activity in our home town?

This elective is also available on Thursday in elective session 9.

B. Reading Psalms from the edges

Dr Michelle Eastwood

The Psalms offers a unique opportunity within the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) to hear directly from the perspective of the writer. Within the psalms we can hear a range of emotions spoken, particularly when the psalmist feels they are isolated, attacked, and vulnerable. The psalmist cries out to God, sometimes to change God’s mind, sometimes just to voice their frustrations. In a similar way today, the psalms provide words that can express our own frustrations and help us to navigate times when we feel vulnerable. In this workshop, participants will be given some background to the writing of the psalms and current trajectories in psalms scholarship. We will consider some specific psalms, as well as themes and ideas that are present throughout this rich and diverse collection.

C. 'Life shaping worship shaping life'

Rev Jennifer Hughes

In worship we are invited to bring the fullness of our living, the challenges of our lives, the places that are stretching us and how God is reforming us. Our hope in worship is to be transformed by God, as individuals, as community and as society. Often the first place we articulate a new understanding – whether of God, ourselves or all humanity and life – is in our worship. The prayers we pray reveal our hearts' deepest longings. Sermons, song choices, acts of connection are all expressions of who we are. When we experience cognitive dissonance in worship, our spirits respond and we recognise the stirrings of the Spirit to cross boundaries, to change our thoughts, actions, theologies and relationships. When our life is shaped by our communal worship, we live out our faith in transformative ways. When our communal worship is shaped by life truth, hope, connection and love are found.

This elective is also available on Tuesday in elective session 1.

Elective session 5

A. Resilience and spirituality: strength and treasures amidst adversity

Dr Alison Short

We all experience good times and adversities, and being able to bounce back with resilience contributes to coping. This presentation links concepts of resilience with biblical themes, drawing connections into current society and challenges such as the pandemic. Further, it outlines an innovative tertiary teaching approach focused on building resilience and spirituality for trainee health workers, and discusses the findings of a subsequent formal research study evaluating this educational initiative. Conclusions are drawn about the way that, as a church community, we can cross boundaries to communicate spiritual values of meaning and purpose, in order to support young people as they transition into their field of work. In the context of reassurance that Christ has overcome both our inner and outer world, this in turn fosters strength and wellbeing to meet the everyday challenges of life.

B. Overcoming personal difficulties

Rev Dr Kevin Sarlow

With a focus on areas of Practical Ministry, Biblical Studies and Homiletics, issues / questions addressed will include: How do we best overcome major difficulties or hurdles that impact our lives? What resources does the Gospel of Mark provide to strengthen us? Using Mark as a resource, what can preachers find helpful for people who are struggling with life issues?

This elective is also available on Tuesday in elective session 3.

C. Misplaced people, bordered subjects: discerning a theology of place in an age of displacement

Rev Dr Lyndon Shakespeare

“Heaven has a wall and strict immigration policies. Hell has open borders.” Written on billboards and church signs from South Dakota to nearer the US-Mexico border in New Mexico, this sentiment perpetuates a theological assumption that sacred-like places are principally bordered and enclosed spaces. Attending to several points of contact between border studies, migrant experiences, and theologies of place, this presentation explores a sacramental vision of place that contributes to the reimagining of human location from the givenness of bordered and national narratives and barriers into a space that resembles more closely the eschatological destiny of all creation.

This elective is also available on Tuesday in elective session 2.

Elective session 6

D. Courage, shame and violence: reflections on the dehumanized man in Mark 5:1-20

Rev Professor Vicky Balabanski

This presentation brings Mark's account of Jesus' encounter with the Gerasene demonic (Mk 5:1-20) into dialogue with some insights from Jess Hill's book *See What you Made Me Do* (2019). The dehumanized man shows aspects of what we now call 'toxic masculinity'. Jesus restores the man to his humanity and to his community, helping us notice what true courage and grace look like.

E. Shining a light on DFV and religion in Australia

Professor Sarah Wendt

Domestic violence often forces people to live life at the edges. This session will explore the research findings of the recent report "Religion and Domestic Violence: Exploring men's perpetration" (2023) through interviews with the researchers and members of the LCA NZ Domestic Violence Taskforce. The report's findings show that the church needs to address gender-based inequalities and to support individual safety and caring communities of worship. The recommendations challenge us to re-examine the links between theology and church culture as we seek to understand and respond to domestic violence and grow pastoral practice that focuses on men and masculinity.

F. Recording and revival of the Aboriginal Kurna language of the Adelaide plains

Gerhard Ruediger

Clamor Wilhelm Schürmann was one of four Lutheran missionaries sent to the infant colony of South Australia by the Dresden Missionary Society in Germany. Traditionally, we say, that between 1838 and 1846 these early missionary-linguists recorded three Aboriginal languages in South Australia that are today being spoken and taught again (Kurna / Adelaide Plains, Ngarrindjeri / around Lake Alexandrina, and Barngarla / Eyre Peninsula). However, you cannot acquire knowledge of a language like, for instance, the earliest geologist in South Australia, Johannes Menge about the soil of the Barossa Valley or the minerals in Kapunda. To learn a language requires native speakers teaching you in detail, essentially adopting you and establishing a close relationship. So, how was this possible for Schuermann and his colleagues and, even more important, what was the agency by the Kurna Community itself? How do we glean from whitefella-Western colonial and missionary sources the self-agency role of Aboriginal peoples in Australia?

Elective Session 7

A. Ecumenism – reaching out together to a hurting world

Dr Neil Bergmann

The church has split over the past 2000 years into many different denominations and organizational units. Coptics, Ethiopians and Syrians split in the 5th century, the great schism of 1054 split eastern and western churches, and the 16th century reformation saw splits between catholic, protestant and Anglican churches. It has only been since the 19th century that these divisions have started to be addressed, with the establishment of bodies such as the World Council of Churches in 1948 an important step forward.

The 1925 World Conference of Life and Work, which concentrated not on doctrine but on the Church's role in God's mission to the world, used the slogan "Doctrine Divides, Service Unites" and this is still a useful insight into practical ecumenism.

For theologians, ecumenical activity often focusses on bilateral or multilateral doctrinal dialogues. However, for most Christians, ecumenism plays a limited role within their faith communities. It is a useful extra, not an intrinsic part of church life.

This talk explores how practical ecumenical cooperation has been yielding significant positive outcomes in areas such as creation care, prevention of domestic violence, first nations reconciliation, child safety and international development, and makes suggestions for how these initiatives can be more impactful. Ecumenical cooperation is one way in which all churches can publicly proclaim the visible unity of Christ's one holy catholic and apostolic church.

This elective is also available on Thursday in elective session 9.

B. The construction of femininity in Second Temple literature

Dr Anna Nürnberger

This presentation explores literary depictions of women in biblical times, with a focus on a selection of early Jewish and early Christian writings. Given that extant sources were written (almost ?) exclusively by men and for men, what can be said about female agency and voice and to what extent are women marginalised in respective texts? Which culturally constructed representations of womanhood can we encounter and what do they reveal about underlying constructions of femininity? Which perceptions of accepted and rejected femininity are promoted and how do these align with stereotypical conventions of the hybrid Greco-Roman cultural world in which these depictions emerged?

C. Ecomission: loving my human and more than human neighbour [CANCELLED]

This session has been cancelled.

Thursday program

Thursday 22 February overview	
9:30 am	Elective session 8 A. Life at the edges: loving one another when the other is very different. <i>Hanna Schulz</i> B. Learning to sing in a strange land - practicing a pedagogy of conscious relinquishment <i>Rev Dr Sean Gilbert</i> C. Life at the edges – in Jesus’ time. In our time. <i>Dr Meg Noack</i>
10:30 am	Break
10:45 am	Elective session 9 A. Learning to sing in a strange land - practicing a pedagogy of conscious relinquishment <i>Rev Dr Sean Gilbert</i> B. Ecumenism – reaching out together to a hurting world <i>Dr Neil Bergmann</i> C. Challenging denominational boundaries <i>Rev Rob Edwards</i>
11:45 am	Devotion <i>Rev Rob Edwards</i>
12:00 pm	Lunch break
1:00 pm	Elective session 10 A. Challenging our digital boundaries - social media and web presence as missional opportunities <i>Dr Tania Nelson</i> B. Seeking a convertible: preaching to be heard in contested times <i>Rev Dr Tim Hein</i> C. Ethical responsibility at the edges of death (Part 1) <i>Peter Schulz</i>
2:00 pm	Elective session 11 A. Ethical responsibility at the edges of death (Part 2) <i>Rev Mike Pietsch</i> B. Ambitious youth – finding a future in Kakuma refugee camp <i>Ms Jacinta Harford</i> C. Seeking a convertible: preaching to be heard in contested times <i>Rev Dr Tim Hein</i>
3:00 pm	Conversation Hour

Elective Session 8

A. Life at the edges: loving one another when the other is very different

Hanna Schulz

After working as a Bible translation advisor in a remote location with Indigenous people groups in Papua New Guinea for more than a decade, I have often asked myself what it means to love my neighbour as myself, when my neighbour is so different to me, and especially when they are causing me heartache. We have different languages, cultures, assumptions and expectations, yet we are called to love each other. Through this process I have learnt more about what it means that God is love, to love myself as God loves me, and to love my neighbour as myself. Thankfully the Bible gives both definitions and stories to demonstrate what God’s love is like, to help us answer the question of what love looks like when loving is hard. I have also learnt that when we are on the edge and we take a step of faith to trust God, that God is trustworthy, even when it is hard and confusing. This presentation is a reflection of what it means to love across boundaries, and to trust God in the hard times.

B. Learning to sing in a strange land - practicing a pedagogy of conscious relinquishment



Rev Dr Sean Gilbert

Willie James Jennings’ *After Whiteness: An Education in Belonging* (2020) and Cindy S. Lee’s *Our Unforming: De-Westernizing Spiritual Formation* (2022) have been landmark literary encounters for me during 2023. Each in their own way have challenged working assumptions around teaching within a theological institution. Namely, an epistemological assumption about a so-called ‘body’ of

specialised knowledge that students need to learn. Also, an assumption about the inherent superiority of western ways of processing and acting in relation to all things biblical, theological or spiritual. Adopting a professional stance of conscious relinquishment may sound like a contradiction in terms. However, in order to frame the Christian Gospel with a lively sense of congruity (one which will often lead us to the edge of things), admissions of unknowing and confessions for the need of re-learning, are essential to the way our teaching is conveyed—embodied. The Gospel of Mark with its latent theme of transformative movements forward will be an ideal conversation partner to this overarching theme.

This elective is also available in elective session 9.

C. Life at the edges – in Jesus’ time. In our time.

Dr Meg Noack

We begin by examining the power of ‘story’ to explore ‘life at the edges’. Next, we meet 3 of the gospel story tellers who surprise us with the characters they choose and the detail they note when recounting Jesus’ encounters at the margins of Jewish society. We will select 3 specific narratives - and characters - who seem to be merely ‘bit’ players in the sweeping saga of Jesus’ life. They offer Jesus everyday-ordinary gifts. Water. Muscle-power. Basic food. In each case, following their encounter with Jesus, the life of the gift-giver is irrevocably transformed! Finally, we explore & share our own narratives about encounters with ‘God at the margins’. I wonder what gifts we received?

A participatory creative workshop.

Elective Session 9

A. Learning to sing in a strange land - practicing a pedagogy of conscious relinquishment



Rev Dr Sean Gilbert

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For theologians, ecumenical activity often focusses on bilateral or multilateral doctrinal dialogues. However, for most Christians, ecumenism plays a limited role within their faith communities. It is a useful extra, not an intrinsic part of church life.

This talk explores how practical ecumenical cooperation has been yielding significant positive outcomes in areas such as creation care, prevention of domestic violence, first nations reconciliation, child safety and international development, and makes suggestions for how these initiatives can be more impactful. Ecumenical cooperation is one way in which all churches can publicly proclaim the visible unity of Christ's one holy catholic and apostolic church.

This elective is also available on Wednesday in elective session 7.

C. Challenging denominational boundaries

Rev Rob Edwards

The definition we find in scripture of "church" is as a unit. Unity is vital for the people of God, and unity is the goal for the Lord of the church. In fact, He sees only one church. The call of Christ challenges our definition of church and our view of one another. The true church, right doctrine, pure teaching, are all brought under scrutiny and redefined under the lens of "the body of Christ" How separate should we be from other denominations? How "independent" are we really? If we are one church, how does that impact our mission to the world, and our church activity in our home town?

This elective is also available on Wednesday in elective session 4.

Elective session 10

A. Challenging our digital boundaries - social media and web presence as missional opportunities

Dr Tania Nelson

For all our talk of missional renewal, church planting and reaching our multiethnic society, we in the Church still seem to struggle to actually move from a preservation mindset - where care of our members is the primary concern, as worthy as that is - to an outwardly-oriented mindset. This presentation will provide some practical website and social media tips and tricks to assist your church to bless your local community.

B. Seeking a convertible - preaching to be heard in contested times

Rev Dr Tim Hein

Preaching faithfully in complex times is a profoundly important task, but being properly heard is never assured, and rarely easy. This session presents several principles that can assist preachers hone their message in a manner that will help it land gently and yet effectively in cynical ears.

This elective is also available on Thursday in elective session 11.

C. Ethical responsibility at the edges of death (Part 1)

Peter Schulz

Reframing VAD with Dietrich Bonhoeffer as responsibly bringing God's love to a suffering neighbour in a fallen world.

The official church narrative on Voluntary Assisted Dying (which selectively absolutises sanctity-of-life as an overriding ethical principle) has an illusory truth effect that obscures the inadequacies and inconsistencies within that narrative and crowds out other perspectives. In this session we will subject the traditional church narrative to some critical thinking and explore the inadequacies and

inconsistencies of a simple deontology that says responsible Christian discipleship in a fallen and hurting world is just a matter of preserving our moral purity before the law and leaving compassionate action up to the providence of God. This will create space for an alternative approach to VAD that prioritises compassionately and responsibly following Jesus' law of love as discussed by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. There will be more time to discuss how this fits with Bonhoeffer's theology of self-murder during Michael Pietsch's session: 'Ethical responsibility at the edges of death (Part 2)'.

Elective session 11

A. Ethical responsibility at the edges of death (Part 2)

Rev Mike Pietsch

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology of self-murder.

Bonhoeffer addresses the question of self-murder in his Ethics, which he had almost completed before he was imprisoned in 1943. He specifically titles this particular section of his large volume on Christian ethics as 'self-murder', choosing the stronger German reference over against two other possibilities. In this way he is very honest about what is occurring, but then he addresses this issue from both a non-Christian and Christian perspective. In this second session I will briefly summarise Bonhoeffer's thoughts (as I have written about them in the August Lutheran Theological Journal) and then allow for much of the session to be open for further discussion between the audience, myself and also Peter Schulz, who will have just presented in the previous session.

B. Ambitious youth – finding a future in Kakuma refugee camp

Ms Jacinta Harford

ALWS, along with like-minded partners, have funded the first phase of a pilot project entitled Ambitious Youth. Youth in Kakuma Refugee Camp, and refugee camps all over the world, struggle to find employment and career prospects in their host countries, where they often have restrictions on where they can travel and who they can work for. This is why Ambitious Youth is looking to bring the market to them. In our modern employment landscape, more and more people are turning to online workplaces – and so Ambitious Youth trains participants in freelancing skills, so they can sell their skills in an online marketplace. The first cohort have learnt 3D modelling and already have work lined up for when they graduate. Our partner, the Lutheran World Federation Kenya, has built a Freelance Lab in the camp, where the freelancers can access computers and internet, and market themselves in a globalised world.

This presentation will include stories from those participating and running the project in Kakuma Refugee Camp and will cover the how's and why's of finding a future for youth in a refugee camp setting.

C. Seeking a convertible - preaching to be heard in contested times

Rev Dr Tim Hein

Preaching faithfully in complex times is a profoundly important task, but being properly heard is never assured, and rarely easy. This session presents several principles that can assist preachers hone their message in a manner that will help it land gently and yet effectively in cynical ears.

This elective is also available on Thursday in elective session 10.

Presenters



Rev Professor Vicky Balabanski

Principal, *Uniting College for Leadership and Theology*

Vicky is a New Testament scholar who is internationally recognised for her work in ecological hermeneutics, receptive ecumenism and feminist studies. She was appointed to the membership of the Society for New Testament Studies in 2017, has recently become the General Editor of the Earth Bible Commentary Series with Bloomsbury T & T Clark, and is editor of a special issue of the Journal for the Study of the New Testament. She is Principal of Uniting College for Leadership and Theology (which is the theological college of the Uniting Church in South Australia), held major leadership roles within the Adelaide College of Divinity and serves in the national leadership of the Uniting Church in Australia. She has been a keynote speaker in ecumenical contexts such as the world Diakonia conference and the Receptive Ecumenism Conference.



Dr Neil Bergmann

Chair, *Lutheran Earth Care Australia and New Zealand*

In addition to professional qualifications in engineering and computer science, Neil Bergmann has a coursework masters in theology from Australian Catholic University, and a research masters in theology from Flinders University. He represents the LCA NZ on ecumenical creation care committees within Queensland Churches Together, and the National Council of Churches Australia.



Rev Matthew Bishop

Pastor, *St Paul Lutheran Church Blair Athol*

Matt had a 13 year career in public policy and economics in the Treasury and Finance departments of the Australian Government before training as a pastor and heading out to full-time pastoral ministry. This real world connection and interest in the big issues helps him to connect the Christian faith with the everyday. He loves gently advocating for the person and work of Jesus in all the places he meets people.



Dr Michelle Eastwood

Director of Research, *Australian Lutheran College*

Michelle is a Hebrew Bible scholar whose research interest includes Hebrew poetry (such as the Psalms), gender and sexuality, worship and liturgy, and public theology. She has degrees in Psychology, History, Education, and Theology. Michelle currently works in a variety of roles at ALC, ANZATS/CDT, and the University of Divinity School of Indigenous Studies. Michelle lives and works on the unceded lands of the Waddawurrung People of the Kulin Nation.



Rev Rob Edwards

Pastor, *Peace Lutheran Church, Gatton QLD*

Rob Edwards was born in Loxton in South Australia and grew up on a farm east of the town. He has had experience as a mechanic, barman, fruit picker, counsellor in drug & alcohol rehab, and served as a parish worker before entering the seminary in 1994. Rob Edwards was ordained in 1998 and has served as a parish pastor for over 20 years, serving for over 10 years as an Army Chaplain. He is married to Joy, and they have four children, Luke, Linda, Samuel and Timothy, and currently boasts four grandchildren. Apart from the new life in Christ and the healing and blessing it can bring, his interests include music, camping, cars and motorbikes. He is passionate about helping people find their place in this world as God's beloved children, and the blessings He has for them.



Rev Dr Sean Gilbert

Director of Pastoral Theology & Ministry Practice, *Uniting College for Leadership & Theology*

Rev. Dr Sean Gilbert is Director of Pastoral Theology & Ministry Practice at Uniting College where he has been a faculty member for 11 years. Before that he was in congregational ministry for over twenty years serving as a Minister of the Word with the Uniting Church in Australia. His lived integration of pastoral ministry and pastoral theology informs his approach to teaching, engendering a genuine sense of encouragement and care for his students yet without lessening the need for academic rigour. Formative in his own educational journey was a Masters' program (and research thesis) he completed while living and studying in Boston, USA as well as his more recently awarded PhD through Flinders University, SA in which he explored the close relationship between spiritual affections and the pastoral disposition.



Ms Jacinta Harford

Program Coordinator, *Australian Lutheran World Service*

Jacinta Harford is a Program Coordinator for the Australian Lutheran World Service and the focal point for our partnerships in Kenya and Somalia. Jacinta thrives working in international teams working on issues of injustice in global poverty and gendered inequality. Jacinta hopes to bring in views of those working directly on this project into the presentation and looks forward to participating in this year's Festival of Learning.



Mr Craig Heidenreich

Cross-cultural ministry facilitator, *Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand*

Craig joined the LCANZ as Cross-cultural ministry facilitator in early 2020 from a couple of decades working among refugees. For much of this time his role was to mentor a wide range of ethnic community leaders from the middle east, Africa and Asia. These years afforded a unique opportunity to hear the heart of these new arrivals and to observe the Lord at work among them.

There are now many coming to Australia and New Zealand from non-European backgrounds and these people tend to be quite open as they transition to a new country.

He is convinced that the harvest is ripe, and the Lord has prepared 'men and women of peace' who are ready to respond when we demonstrate the grace of the gospel. He is also amazed at how God can use us even when we don't feel very competent. If you are up for an adventure – let's talk.



Rev Dr Tim Hein

Executive Officer, Mission & Leadership Development, *Uniting College for Leadership & Theology*

Tim Hein is the Minister at Malvern UC and Executive Officer of Mission & Leadership Development in the Uniting Church in South Australia. He has 25 years ministry experience in a variety of contexts, and his great passion is helping Australians understand the gospel. He is the author of the book *Understanding Sexual Abuse: A Guide for Ministry Leaders & Survivors*, and his current research is on pneumatology in *The Basis of Union*. He co-hosts *The Unmade Podcast*, loves surfing, indie rock, and has recently gone a bit mad on tennis.



Rev Jennifer Hughes

Associate Executive Officer, Mission and Leadership Development, *Uniting College for Leadership & Theology*

Jennifer has served in congregational ministry for over 20 years. She has experience in diverse worship settings including, blended, intergenerational, jazz, Taizé prayer, tent revivals, youth and young adult, Synod, Presbytery and Assembly settings. Jenni writes worship material for use in many settings. She has served on the Assembly Worship Task Group (now named Transforming Worship Circle) for ten years and on the Church in the Digital age task group. Jenni leads MiniM choir and served for 13 years as the coordinator for the Centre for Music, Liturgy and the Arts, a ministry centre of the SA Synod. She has a passion for life-long faith formation and discipleship, science and ethics, social justice and public theology. She is now serving as Associate Executive Officer with Mission and Leadership Development working with Uniting College and Mission Resourcing.



Dr Toar Hutagalung

Director of Theology & Church History, *Uniting College for Leadership & Theology*

Toar Hutagalung is currently the Director of Theology and Church History at the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology (UCLT). His research is on connecting the politics of identity as a result of colonial legacy in Asia with certain theological conversations. His works always intersect theology with multiple disciplines, such as anthropology, postcolonial, races, sex and genders, and religions. His forthcoming book *Dishoming Space: Toward an Embodied Decolonial Pneumatology* (Fortress Academic) will focus on the question of identity as well as postcolonial/decolonial theology. His teaching area is systematic/constructive theology and church history in dialogue with postcolonial/decolonial studies. He also has wider interests in race studies, theology of religions, pneumatology, anthropology, as well as in online education. He was also involved in multiple ecumenical ecclesial activities, including interreligious conferences.



Dr Tania Nelson

Manager, Lutheran Media, *Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand*

Dr Tania Nelson is the new Manager of Lutheran Media. Tania is passionate about the intersection of mission and media. She sees the positive use of media (websites, social media, podcasts and more) as a vital means of sharing the good news of Jesus with Australian and New Zealander society - societies that are crying out for hope. Tania is keen to discuss ideas of how local congregations can bless their neighbourhoods through media.



Dr Meg Noack

Dr. Meg Noack has been a teacher and school leader who is inspired by her retirement surroundings in the Bunya Mountains Qld. She enjoys artistic pursuits and has become involved in her local community. In retirement has co-taught a series of Service-Learning & Community Engagement Short-courses and continues to facilitate retreats for educators.



Dr Anna Nürnbergger

Director of Research, *Australian Lutheran College*

Anna was born and grew up in Nuremberg, Germany. She studied theology, Anglophone literature and English linguistics at the universities of Erlangen and Augsburg in Germany, and at Flinders University and the Adelaide College of Divinity in South Australia. After working as a high school teacher in Bavaria, she obtained her doctoral degree in Biblical Theology in 2017 from Augsburg University. Anna has worked as a Research Assistant and Lecturer at Hamburg University and currently serves ALC as a co-Director of Research, and an editor of the *Lutheran Theological Journal*.



Rev Nick Patselis

VET Co-ordinator, *Uniting College for Leadership & Theology*

Nick Patselis is the VET Coordinator at the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology. He is an ordained minister in the Uniting Church in Australia. Nick is passionate about the Bible, leadership and healthy teams who create defining moments. Before working at the Uniting College Nick was based in congregations across SA and QLD.



Rev Mike Pietsch

University chaplain, *Lutheran Church of Australia*

Pastor Mike Pietsch is a pastor of the Lutheran Church of Australia and currently serving the SA/NT District of the church as a university chaplain. In his more than forty years of ministry he has served three congregations during half of that time and the remainder in university and government high school chaplaincy. He completed his Masters thesis on "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christology as a Framework for University Chaplaincy". Mike co-ordinates a monthly Bonhoeffer reading group in Adelaide. He is a member of the Human Research Ethics committee of the University of South Australia. He and his wife, Dr Helen Pietsch (deceased), are parents to three children and six grandchildren.



Dr Mick Pope

Professor of Environmental Mission, *Missional University*

Mick Pope has a PhD in Meteorology from Monash University in tropical climate, and a M Phil in Theology from the University of Divinity. His masters looked at the Priestly tradition as a basis for an ethic for the Anthropocene. He is currently working on a PhD proposal in the area of panentheism and a theology of mass extinction and ecocide. Mick has three published books on a Christian theology of climate change, with his masters being released later this year with Pickwick. He also has several book chapters and articles in the area of ecotheology.



Gerhard Ruediger

As a German, Gerhard lives with Liz in the Barossa Valley. Now retired, he studied in Germany "Ministry of Deacon" (Gemeindepädagogik) and Theology and worked for Protestant churches in intercultural and Ecumenical community education, with migrants and refugees, and in international Ecumenical and mission exchange programs. He met Liz in PNG and moved to Australia in 2006. By coincidence, Gerhard got involved with the Aboriginal Kurna Language reclamation and revival program and worked for them out of the University of Adelaide as support admin. He re-established contact with partner agencies in Germany who hold in their archives parts of the history of the recording of this language through German Lutheran missionaries in the 1840s. Gerhard is an associate member of the Kurna Warra Karrpanthi (KWK) Aboriginal Corporation that coordinates the language revival today. His research interest is the self-agency of the Aboriginal people past and present in the preservation and reclamation of their language.



Rev Dr Kevin Sarlow

Academic Skills Adviser, Uniting College for Leadership & Theology

Kevin has been a Uniting Church minister for over forty years, thirty of which were served as senior parish minister in six full time placements (three in NSW and three in SA). He retired from parish ministry in 2013 to pursue a Flinders University PhD in Biblical Studies. He lectured there for four years in Academic English, retiring in 2019. Kevin married Jenni in 1977 and they have three amazing children living around the world: USA, West Africa and Sydney. They have eight grandchildren. Kevin, his wife, and elderly mother-in-law live in Mount Barker. He is the 'minister on call' serving in the Macclesfield Uniting Church and shares in preaching the Gospel, doing Bible Studies and pastoral care.

He is an adjunct staff member of the Adelaide College of Leadership and Theology to which he has been associated for the past 21 years.



Peter Schulz

Peter is a retired hospital social worker. Four decades of working with suffering patients and families and four decades of living with a loved one battling a debilitating and demoralising illness have taught him that suffering demands compassionate action from others, not moral lectures and cheap words, and that compassionate action is often costly and risky. He has had a life-long fascination with critical thinking, particularly the deconstruction of dominant discourses that restrict our individual and communal thinking in politics, economics, current affairs and discipleship. He is a member of the Adelaide Bonhoeffer reading group.



Hanna Schulz

Wycliffe Bible Translators

Hanna Schulz has been working as a Bible translation advisor in Papua New Guinea since 2012, and working as translation advisor to the Kope translation project since 2015. Together with the Kope team they have dedicated Luke and are drafting Acts and Genesis, as well as working on literacy materials and a dictionary. In 2021 she became team leader for the Gulf Delta Cluster Project, which is working with multiple language communities in the delta area of Gulf Province by providing training in Oral Bible Storytelling (OBS), vernacular literacy and Scripture Use. Hanna also helps to manage the Oro'io Madei (Living Word) Training Centre in Ubuo village.



Maria-Anna Schüßel

PhD Candidate, Theology and Religious Studies, *Tübingen University*

Maria-Anna Schüßel is currently a PhD candidate at the faculty for Theology and Religious Studies of Tübingen University and a member of the Tübingen Ethical Institute. She has also studied Biblical Archaeology, History and Philosophy and her current areas of research include Feminist Theology, Theology and Colonialism and Prehistoric Religion.



Rev Dr Lyndon Shakespeare

Anglican Studies Director, *Iliff School of Theology (Denver, CO)*

Lyndon Shakespeare is an Episcopal (Anglican) priest who serves the congregation of Holy Comforter in Broomfield, Colorado and as Anglican Studies Director at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado. He is the author of *Being the Body of Christ in the Age of Management* (Cascade, 2016) and writes regularly for the *Anglican Theological Review*. He is currently working on a co-edited volume on church leadership and an essay that explores questions of place and land in light of Christian identity and social formation. Originally from Australia, Lyndon has lived in the United States for longer than he is willing to admit.



Dr Alison Short

Senior Lecturer, *Western Sydney University*

Dr Alison Short, PhD, is a lifelong Lutheran with a strong sense of community vocation and ministry. During the pandemic, Alison completed a Diploma in Theology (ALC/UD, 2022) and worked to support her students with pastoral care innovations. Alison is an Advisory Board Member of the Frontier School of Mission (LCA NSW/ACT District) and elected lay delegate for the NSW Ecumenical Council. Alison has engaged with the contemplative prayer movement since 2009, practising and training in Christian Meditation within the ecumenical World Community of Christian Meditation (WCCM).

Her knowledge and experience of spiritual and meditative practices is informed by qualifications in professional music therapy, specifically the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music, as an internationally accredited trainer and academic.

Alison has published three articles in the *Lutheran Theological Journal*, is a member of the Humanities Religious Studies Research Collective at Western Sydney University, and as Senior Lecturer, Alison continues to write, present and lead research and thinking in many academic fields.



Professor Sarah Wendt

Director SWIRLS, *Flinders University*

Sarah is commencing as Professor of Social Work at Melbourne University in 2024, and she is also establishing the Registration Scheme for Social Workers in South Australia. Prior to academia Sarah practiced in the field of domestic violence. She has taught in social work for over a decade. She has published on violence against women and social work practice. Her research projects explore the impact of domestic violence on women's citizenship, service provision in the field of domestic violence, and engaging men to address domestic violence. More recently she has been researching religion and domestic violence.



Dr Pam Zweck

Pam completed her doctoral studies at the end of 2023, through Australian Lutheran College, University of Divinity. Her thesis on Lucas Cranach the Elder includes the three disciplines of church history, theology and art.

Her thesis argues that Cranach's images are rhetorical artefacts that speak the teaching and writings of Martin Luther and that Cranach should be considered a theologian of the Wittenberg Reformation.

As part of her post doctoral studies, Pam plans to publish her findings and engender a greater appreciation of Lucas Cranach's reformational art in general and explore its possible use in Christian churches and schools.

Prior to her doctoral studies, Pam was Acquisitions and Liaison Librarian in Löhe Memorial Library, Australian Lutheran College.