

Contents

Editorial 50

Articles

Roger Whittall Reflections on the Australian Lutheran–Catholic dialogue on the Augsburg Confession 54

Steen Olsen Good news and godly action: Anglicans and Lutherans working together in God’s mission 59

Peter Lockwood A chronicle of joy: plotting the path to full eucharistic agreement between the Uniting Church in Australia and the Lutheran Church of Australia 70

Jeff Silcock Where East meets West; International Lutheran-Orthodox conversations 2000–2018: a personal reflection 83

Geraldine Hawkes Receptive Ecumenism: a journey in patience, love and humility 93

Reflections

René Pfitzner The sliding doors of denominational affiliation 103

Emma Strelan From the Lutheran Church via Tabor College to the Uniting Church 105

Mark Juers What makes the grass on the other side of the fence greener? 106

Philippa Lohmeyer-Collins The fellowship of the church and the encouragement of believers 108

Leigh Newton Reflecting on leaving the LCA NZ 110

The fellowship of the church and the encouragement of believers

Philippa Lohmeyer-Collins

A colleague of mine, also an ordained Anglican priest, and I both recalled how formative growing up in the Lutheran Church was for both of us. We agreed that those principles we learnt as children, key precepts which still govern our practice of faith, remain at the forefront of so much of the ministry we do today.

Is the preaching faithful to the Word of God?

Does the speaker hold the bible as God's gift to us, God's inspired Word revealing what God has done in love for his creation to restore full fellowship?

Does the worship service honour God's Word?

I have a deep love for the Lutheran Church. This love is of the kind that is there in good times and bad. This love for the Lutheran Church has never left me. The upbringing I had, parents teaching me the bible stories and praying with me formed me. It was a huge gift from God and one I wanted to gift to my children. How I came to take the two separate steps of joining the Anglican Church and then becoming an ordained priest reflects the ongoing dance that a relationship with God always is because God is good, and God keeps asking us to step out in faith.

After I finished my honours degree in Adelaide, I moved to Melbourne for work. Young people are particularly vulnerable when they leave secondary school and then again when they move to take up work after their tertiary studies. The latest National Church Life Survey reports that only four out of ten church-attending children stay in the church, with many leaving between the ages of fifteen and thirty.¹ I found myself attending church less and less after I moved to Melbourne, and it wasn't helped by not being missed by the congregation I attended. The people I was sharing a house with invited me to attend their church, a large Anglican church in Lygon Street, Carlton.

The preacher was excellent, although with my usual well trained Lutheran upbringing I wasn't going to agree immediately and checked the preacher against the questions I was taught by my father, as noted above. I found a home at this church. I was fed by God's Word, I was nourished by the fellowship and by participation in Holy Communion, and I was encouraged to use my gifts to serve others. I experienced a living expression of the writer's admonitions in Hebrews 10:24–25!

1 'For the Anglican Mission and Ministry Commission: Anglican General Synod', Ruth Powell and Sam Sterland, in the December 2023 report of the National Church Life Survey, completed in 2022.

At this Anglican church in Carlton, I thrived. I was given opportunities to lead worship, with supervision, to lead bible studies, to become involved in various church governance teams, and to pray regularly with and for others. The senior minister challenged me to think about ordained ministry. I was encouraged to study at the local theological college. And so, after many years praying, working through theological issues including the role of women in the church, and gaining a deeper understanding of Holy Communion, I became a priest in the Anglican Church. One of the requirements is that you have a job to go to before you are ordained. I was sure of a calling into School Chaplaincy and so it was that I have spent the last 11 years as School Chaplain at Mentone Girls' Grammar, leading worship, teaching philosophy and religious studies, and being 'God's person' in this community. It has proved a privilege and a joy. This year I was appointed Canon Pastor at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne, helping prepare and lead worship, and providing pastoral care for the congregation and those who come as visitors, or more profoundly those who come to enquire, or to rest and recuperate.

My love for the Lutheran Church remains. It just happens that in honouring God, in walking with God and enjoying God's blessings in the midst of my failings, I have ended up serving him as an Anglican priest in the Diocese of Melbourne.

Rev Philippa Lohmeyer-Collins has spent the previous eleven years as school chaplain at Mentone Girls' Grammar School, before being appointed as Canon Pastor at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne, helping prepare and lead worship, and providing pastoral care for the cathedral congregation and its visitors.