



AUSTRALIAN LUTHERAN COLLEGE

L E A R N I N G F O R L I F E

Dear ALC Partner

I greet you with words from Hebrews 10:24–25.

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. [NLT]

What have you learned from the COVID-19 pandemic? I learned how empty life can feel when I lose my connections with other people. The isolation that we experienced last year was horrible. We were cut off from family and friends, our churches and other community groups, and our daily routines. And yet we found ways, innovative ways, to reach out and connect with each other. We committed ourselves to each other, carrying each other along in new ways through our vital connections.

At ALC we struggled just as much as everyone else in 2020. Our campus was closed for a long time, and we had to find new ways to teach our students whom we train to serve you in many ways—as lay workers, as teachers in Lutheran schools, as pastors. Almost all of our activities were shifted to online modes. But that’s not what got us through. Instead, it was our connections. It was God’s connection with us, through Jesus Christ, that renewed our sense of purpose and commitment to serve each and every day, even when we were uncertain and frightened. It was through our internal connections with each other, staff and students alike, that we were able to urge each other along (*to motivate one another to acts of love and good works*).

It was our connections with you—our sisters and brothers in the faith—which always kept the reason for our service in front of us (*to encourage one another*). We are connected through our common confession of life in and through Jesus Christ. Our existence remains in God and Him alone. It connects us, and so we exist for the sake of each other and for the whole of God’s creation. Our connections matter.

Thanks to COVID and the need to find new ways to connect, our ability to reach out and teach others about the good news of Jesus improved. New opportunities for delivering education and training to wider audiences were trialled and found to be effective.



1800 625 193



104 Jeffcott Street,
North Adelaide SA 5006



www.alc.edu.au



alc@alc.edu.au

ALC's new forms of connection include:

- two online short courses developed to help alleviate the isolation of lockdown and which attracted participation from all around Australia as well as New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore, the Philippines, America and even a class of students from Martin Luther Seminary in Papua New Guinea;
- international webinars (organised in conjunction with LCA International Mission) run specifically for our partner churches in Malaysia and Indonesia which were well received and will continue to be offered during 2021;
- live-streamed research seminars for postgraduate students that attract participation Australia-wide;
- PhD candidate supervision via Zoom™ for international students; and
- an inaugural Festival of Learning held earlier this year, which used a hybrid approach to bring people together on campus and online, enabling many to sample ALC's theological program for the first time.

When you support ALC's annual appeal you keep these vitally important connections in front of all of us and help ALC develop new ways of connecting with others through learning. Your gifts are a witness and encouragement to us at ALC (*let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works*). They witness to our life together in Christ Jesus. They witness to our shared purpose and mission. They witness to our mutual love and concern for each other. Your gifts help to sustain our continuing service to you, and they strengthen our connections and our ability to serve the wider Church. Every gift—no matter how large or small—is valued and makes a difference.

I hope that we never forget what we learned about ourselves and each other during the pandemic. More importantly, I hope that we never forget God's faithfulness to us. Things have changed, but they are not ended. Time remains for us to witness to God's love as we serve together (*especially now that the day of his return is drawing near*). Together let's make good use of the opportunities that 2020 provided for us and rejoice in the new connections that came about as a result of a challenging year.

We thank God for your precious connection with ALC and your support for our 2021 annual appeal.

God bless you.

James Winderlich
Principal, Australian Lutheran College
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