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# SAINTSalve

NEWS FROM AUSTRALIAN LUTHERAN COL





2020 APPEAL INSIDE

# STEPPING UP Stepping forward

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble.

**PSALM 46:1** 



## GODIS FAITHFUL even in our hardships



Pastor James Winderlich

Our cover: The Bible verse on the front cover is the text for ALC's 2020 annual appeal. The image shows ALC staff meeting online.

Cover montage photos: ALC and istock.com

## SAINTS VA a periodical of Australian Lutheran College

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Australian Lutheran College is the provider of tertiary

Australian Lutheran College is the provider of tertiary theological education for the Lutheran Church of Australia and is a college of the University of Divinity and an associated college of the Adelaide College of Divinity.

LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF AUSTRALIA
where love comes to life

'The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness' (Lamentations 3:22–23).

It was never going to be business as usual at ALC in 2020. We had partly planned for that but little did anyone know how true it would be.

There is so much that I want to tell you in this issue of *Saints Alive*.

I want to tell you about *Discover's* successful launch in 2020. We had seven enrolments straight up, and we expect at least another three in our mid-year intake.

Discover is an exciting, flexible and innovative vocational discernment program. It supports and guides people as they ask, 'Where and in what ways is God calling me to serve?'

Discover connects diverse vocational inquiry (pastor, teacher, lay worker, chaplain, evangelist, church planter, volunteer) with formal theological study through a distributed learning model. All of this leads to further study, formal qualifications and preparation for service. Discover students also learn as they serve where they live – there's no requirement to releast.

I want to tell you about the success of our audit and general interest study program. Twelve people are studying New Testament Greek this year. Some are preparing to be pastors, while others are studying for their own interest. Theological study at ALC is accessible for anyone throughout Australia, New Zealand and other parts of the world and you don't have to do assessment tasks unless you specifically want academic credit.

I want to tell you how proud I am of our college's staff and students. As 2020's 'business as usual' was disrupted by COVID-19, our staff and students seamlessly transitioned to a fully online learning and teaching environment. It has been incredibly challenging, even frightening. But it has been seamless because our community, staff and students never lost sight of God's call to study theology and God's endless gifts so that we might continue to serve each other and the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand. We never lost sight of the 'who' and the 'why' of our callings and were able to give up the 'whats' with joy. The sacrifice is always worth it

There are many things that I want to tell you and you can read about them in this issue of Saints Alive. But through it all, there is only one thing that I want you to hear: 'God is faithful.'

ALC has always had its challenges and, in human terms, some of those challenges are incredibly serious. We are looking at an expected 30 per cent reduction in our income for 2020 because of COVID-19, so our annual appeal is more important than ever – see the back pages of this edition.

But despite our challenges and even our hardships, God remains faithful to us. God is fully committed to the life that he gives us in Christ Jesus and God remains committed to the gospel mission to which he calls each of us. That motivates us to serve. Throughout COVID-19, many things have changed each day, except for God's steadfast love and mercy for us. That is renewed each day because God is faithful. Hear that.



program connected to a Diploma in Theology. It assists students to reflect on their call to station and vocation from three perspectives: being self-aware, thinking theologically and serving faithfully.

To this end, the reflective activity is based on practical

To this end, the reflective activity is based on practical ministry activity located in the first instance in the student's local congregation. Students are working with their pastors and local mentors to engage in their congregation in ways that facilitate a contextual reflective process and help them to grow their ministry skills.

delight to those who worked to establish the program.

The inaugural intake has members who reside in five different Australian states. It is both age and gender diverse, contains people discerning a calling to different vocational outcomes and also includes a mixture of full-and part-time students who come with a range of previous academic experiences. In short, there is nothing that

It is of particular interest that the age of participants ranges from 19 to 60 years. Some of the cohort perceive the vocational outcomes as possible first or second careers, others are more focused on volunteer ministry as a life choice in addition to their career choice.

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown up some unexpected challenges. Some congregational ministry placements have been delayed by necessity, but other students have found themselves involved in ministry in ways they could never have anticipated and have found that these suit them well. This is what *Discover* is all about – living in the moment with a heart and mind open to the call of the Holy Spirit.

Dr Merryn Ruwoldt

Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching

## Meet our *Discover* community

A former student of Concordia College in suburban Adelaide, **Karl Jacobson** had spent the past few years studying various disciplines, including finance, at South Australia's Flinders University. 'I inquired about study through ALC part way through last year, as I was seeking to study something with more meaning to me than economics', he says. 'Discover is very different from anything I've experienced before and although it is scary diving headfirst into studying theology, it has been refreshing. The program is built upon the foundation of a diverse portfolio of subjects, ministry participation and self-driven learning. I am hoping this year of study will provide me with some guidance as to my calling within the Lutheran church and the larger body of Christ.' Karl is a member of Our Saviour Lutheran Church at Aberfoyle Park, South Australia.





A keen blogger with an interest in Christian theology and apologetics, **Sean Hotinski** enrolled in the *Discover* program to explore a calling to the ministry. 'The program has been very enriching and insightful and my understanding of the Christian faith and life has grown', he says. 'More than ever, it has made me reflect on God and his word and has helped bring me closer to God. Upon completion of *Discover*, I hope that I will have a clearer idea of what direction God wants my life to go in and what kind of person he wants me to be.' Sean is a member of St John's Lutheran Church, Perth in Western Australia.

Raised as Sikh in Northern India, **Sukhvir Singh** came to Australia for higher education in 2014. His girlfriend, a Christian from birth, was always trying to transform his views on religion. 'As a result of a life-changing experience, the Holy Spirit touched me and my views of Christianity changed', he says. 'I felt that I had wasted 30 years of my life without knowing the true God. As I changed I wanted to know more about Jesus. I am doing *Discover* to increase my knowledge of Christianity and hope to devote my life to serving God.' Sukhvir is a member of Holy Cross at Belconnen in the Australian Capital Territory.





Following a gap year spent as an intern at Tandara Lutheran Camp at Halls Gap in Victoria, **Bethanie Mann** felt drawn to study theology and ministry. Having already completed a Certificate IV in Christian Ministry and Theology through ALC during her internship, she decided to enrol in the *Discover* program. Living just more than an hour away from ALC's North Adelaide campus, Bethanie has chosen to complete the study component of *Discover* partly on campus and partly online. 'The highlight of *Discover* for me has been being able to reflect on how far I have come in my faith journey and being optimistic about the good things and challenges God has set before me', she says. 'I have an interest in psychology and Christian counselling and hope that, by the time I complete the program, I will have a clearer picture as to how I might best serve the church with my gifts and skills.' Bethanie is a member of Christ Church at Murray Bridge, South Australia.

Not having written an essay in 25 years and having worked as a web developer and technologist for much of his life, **Michael Baker** found returning to study a daunting prospect. But he has been pleasantly surprised with his academic progress to date. 'Discover really seems to have been designed for people like me', he says. It has a light footprint. I can do it part-time. I can do it remotely and it will hopefully help me find out whether I have an aptitude for becoming a pastor and can integrate into further studies if that is what is decided. For someone who has prayed for guidance and has hurdles to overcome, *Discover* was very attractive to me and recognised the situation I was in.' Michael is a member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church at Horsham, Victoria.





Working as a Youth and Young Adults Worker for the South Burnett Lutheran Parish in Queensland keeps **Jordan Bennet** extremely busy. This is particularly as he has also been placed in the Specific Ministry Pastors' program and currently assists in serving across six churches. 'I am doing the *Discover* program on a part-time basis, as I have my church work, my school chaplaincy, my studies, my two children, and youth to deal with', he says. 'There are only so many hours in a day! I have been a remote learner for most of my life (being in a rural area) so a highlight of *Discover* for me has been attending webinars which allow me to interact with other students. I am glad that *Discover* is now part of the recognised pathway to ordination.' Jordan worships most regularly at St Paul's in Murgon, and St John's and Trinity in Wondai, Queensland.



Thanks to our

new-found

insight and experience, ALC

has become a

more inclusive

community.

As a result of forward-thinking and the introduction in 2020 of more flexible study options across all vocational programs, including its pastoral program, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit Australia, ALC was well equipped and ready to transform into a virtual learning community almost overnight.

With the launch of its *Discover* program earlier this year, ALC had already begun live-streaming classes for students located in various parts of Australia – allowing for interaction between on-campus students and off-campus students for the first time in the college's history.

Following directives from Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, on Monday 23 March ALC ceased conducting classes with students physically present on campus and moved to online delivery. As one student commented, 'I was very surprised with how quickly the college and lecturers responded to COVID-19. We were up and running online with very little setback'.

Lecturers began live-streaming classes from their respective home office spaces and students attended classes from workspaces in their homes. Although ALC had set up some purpose-built areas for streaming classes on campus earlier in the year, the government restrictions at the time meant that only 20 per cent of staff could remain on campus, while the majority – including teaching staff – settled into working from home. Although closed to the public, ALC's library has continued to service staff and students throughout the pandemic restrictions in a more limited way, with a large focus being on remote access and e-resources.

Reflecting on the past few months, ALC Principal Pastor James Winderlich said, 'I am humbled by the way in which all of our staff have risen to this COVID-19 challenge and have adapted to ensure minimal disruption to our students' learning and research activities'.

'As Principal, I am overwhelmingly proud of our staff – the people who are serving our student community in so many diverse ways – for all that they are doing. I am also grateful to our student body, who have remained committed to their studies and their calling to serve the church, despite the challenges of this pandemic. None of us are

here because we are only committed to building our careers. We are all committed to witnessing and serving for the sake of God's life-giving kingdom.'

So what of the community that we once knew? Thanks to our new-found insight and lived pandemic experience, ALC has become a more inclusive community. Where once only on-campus students were offered the support of belonging to a care group, the invitation to join has been extended to all

students, regardless of their location. Where previously only on-campus students attended worship together, worship has transformed into an experience shared by the whole student body using an online platform.

During these difficult times, staff and students throughout Australia and beyond have made a more concerted effort to connect with each other, to reach out to each other and to check on each other. For ALC, the pandemic has opened our eyes to what being 'community' can really mean.



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic meaning churches have been closed to worshippers since late March, ALC pastoral stream students (above, left to right) Joseph Theodorsen, Stephen Noblett and Chris Johnson have experienced vicarage placements like no other vicars before them, with unique challenges.

# A vicarage experience like no other

For pastoral stream students, vicarage is a time to put all they have learnt into practice in a supervised ministry context. This placement runs from December to June and encompasses the main celebration points of the Church year.

As one of this year's vicars explained it so well, 'It is a time when everything comes together – all the classes, all the hours of fieldwork suddenly find their nexus and you start to realise **that you might actually be able to do this** (serve as a pastor) ... with God's help'.

Just prior to Christmas 2019, ALC's vicars commenced placements with their assigned congregations, under the supervision of their vicar fathers. Vicarage has been a time of learning and adapting to new situations. COVID-19 has meant these vicars have also observed pastoral ministry firsthand during a pandemic. Here they share some of their experiences during these extraordinary times.

'St Paul's is a tight-knit congregation and this pandemic has only strengthened that. Members are calling to check in with each other and driving around to deliver resources to those without computers. There's a lot of intentional care being given to the community which is spontaneous. God is working in and through these members quite clearly. It's been wonderful to see the truth of "a church is not a building" in action. We may not see each other face-to-face as often or at all but we still remain connected in faith and as members of God's church.'

Chris Johnson
 (St Paul's Glenelg SA/Rev Tim Ebbs)

'Preaching a service or leading worship in an empty church as we record services for the congregations of the Concordia Loxton Parish is very different to the normal Sunday experience – especially as services are recorded earlier in the week. Members are looking forward to the time when they can worship together again and they have

I think the pandemic has helped in bringing the welfare of others to the forefront of people's minds, which is a great thing and what we are all called to do as God's people!

a greater appreciation now for how special it is to receive the Lord's Supper – rather than taking it for granted, it is now seen as a privilege. The pandemic has also prompted a number of members on the fringe of the congregations to look to reconnect online, especially over the Easter period. Similarly, some children and grandchildren who had lost contact with the church over the years, have now been listening to services with their parents or grandparents. This can only be a good thing.'

- Stephen Noblett (Concordia Lutheran Parish Loxton SA/Rev Darren Kohrt)

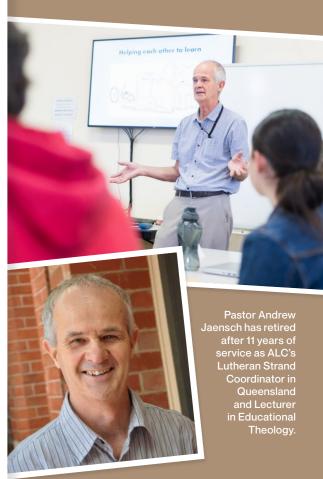
'The ways in which members of St Marks have cared and provided for the people most at risk in our congregation has been a real blessing to witness. So many people have offered to help those who are most in need, in the limited ways they are able to, with physical distancing measures in place. I would go so far as to say that I think this situation (the pandemic) has helped in bringing the welfare of others to the forefront of people's minds, which is a great thing and what we are all called to do as God's people!'

— Joseph Theodorsen

(St Marks Mount Barker/Rev Ben Pfeiffer)

As Chris Johnson concludes: 'This unique vicarage experience has highlighted how ALC can never fully prepare a student for pastoral ministry – there are just too many unknowns, too many things to learn. What they can and have done is provide us with a basis for making decisions, a way to find these answers in the field. And they've helped to highlight that these decisions are never our own. They are the decisions of the parish, of the congregation, of God. While it might seem that we get sent out and then we're on our own, there's always a community which loves and cares for us. It's a wonderful thing to experience as we face this pandemic.'

The vicars return to ALC at the beginning of Semester 2 to finalise their studies before meeting with the LCA/NZ's College of Bishops to determine their readiness for ordination later in the year. ALC, together with the vicars, would like to take this opportunity to thank the congregations and pastors who have hosted them over the past six months.



## Andrew Jaensch RETIRES

In February this year ALC staff – both past and present – came together in North Adelaide to send off their friend and colleague, Pastor Andrew Jaensch

Andrew joined ALC in 2009 and for the duration of his employment served as ALC's Lutheran Strand Coordinator in Queensland and Lecturer in Educational Theology, based at Australian Catholic University in Brishane

A passionate teacher, Andrew's special interests throughout his career included:

- School ministry
- Worship in Christian education
- Indigenous and cross-cultural education
- Spiritual and vocational formation
- Teaching English as a second language
- Developing teaching techniques which maximise student engagement.

In recognition of his years of service to the college, the ALC Board awarded Andrew the status of Lecturer Emeritus.

The ALC community wishes Andrew every blessing for his retirement as he looks forward to spending quality time with his wife Fiona, their beloved labrador Winton and their children and grandchildren.



Just as research and development play an important role in the success of a business, research can play an important role in the life of a flourishing and effective church. ALC is active in partnering with LCA/NZ across its ministries under the leadership of Professor Wendy Mayer (pictured), Associate Dean for Research. Current projects include:

### Worship in a Multi-Point Parish

Supported by an LLL Mission Grant, this project is being conducted in partnership with the SA-NT District's Mission Department. It uses an ALC VET subject sponsored by the LCA/NZ's Commission on Worship to support the training of effective lay worship leaders.

The project will consider how regular worship can be sustained during a lengthy vacancy or in a multi-point parish by using lay leaders proficient in worship design and leadership, who work in partnership with pastors.

### Church Worker Wellbeing

Commissioned by the LCA's Church Worker Support Department, this project will run over 10 years.

The study, one of very few conducted in Australia, will track the wellbeing of all church worker employees, providing important data for the church and its decision-

makers. During COVID-19 a smaller version of the survey is being run to provide swift data during this crisis and to assess the impact of increased stress on the LCA/NZ's many church workers.

## Religion and Domestic Violence: exploring men's perpetration

This project, commissioned by the LCA's Domestic Violence Taskforce, will generate knowledge about how religious beliefs and practices are used by men to perpetrate spiritual abuse as a form of domestic violence. The project is led by Professor Sarah Went at Flinders University, with Professor Mayer as a project co-researcher.

ALC's research department runs as a 'fee for service' venture and, as such, is reliant upon income from projects and financial support from sponsors and donors. ALC would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the generous sponsorship provided over 2019/2020 by the members of Pilgrim Lutheran congregation of Magill South Australia.

Investing in ALC's research activities – whether it be at a grassroots level or a scholarship level – benefits not only the college but also the work of Christ through and within our church. For more information email research@alc.edu.au

# ALC's library is a staff and also the houses a wide refrequiries are well.

## Library supports wide-ranging needs

ALC's library is available to support the learning, teaching and research needs of students, staff and **also the wider pastoral and academic community of the LCA/NZ**. The library houses a wide range of print and electronic resources and subscribes to current periodicals. Enquiries are welcome to library@alc.edu.au

# Greek@ALC

Dr Merryn Ruwoldt

Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching

Sometimes, good ideas just occur at the right place and time to take on a life of their own.

After a layperson from the LCA/NZ Churchwide Office indicated an intention to audit the biblical Greek class in 2020, the idea caught on. The class ended up including a range of local people who enrolled simply because they were interested in learning biblical Greek. Some are doing the unit for academic credit, others are auditing, but it is a lively and engaged group that keeps

lecturer Dr Stephen Hultgren on his toes.

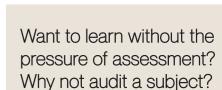
Some are doing the unit for **academic** credit, others are auditing, but it is a lively and **engaged** group.

To have an on-campus class in which students not studying for pastoral ministry outnumber those who are, is unusual at ALC. Non-pastoral stream students – and there are many – tend to enrol in units that do not require them to be on campus.

To have had this particular cohort of students studying Greek on campus in a semester during which all oncampus classes suddenly and unexpectedly became off-campus classes, made it even more interesting. Three times a week the Greek class is now 'beaming in' from lounge rooms, home offices and various

workplaces. If they are wearing their PJs (because everyone knows Greek is easier to learn in PJs!) no-one cares.

The potential to explore this modality even after ALC is free to resume oncampus classes in their more traditional format is exciting, because it may well mean that in future, people who don't live in easy proximity to ALC could also take biblical Greek (or in 2021 biblical Hebrew!) just because they want to. This is a very satisfying thought. Sometimes good ideas do just take on a life of their own.



If you are looking to

- make some first steps on a pathway to higher education,
- · study for personal interest only,
- undertake professional development, or
- revisit a topic you've previously completed (e.g. a biblical language)

you may be interested in ALC's audit options.

Auditing a unit within ALC's higher education programs enables you to participate in a class but you don't complete assignments and you won't receive any credit towards a qualification.

To find out more, email enquiries@alc.edu.au

### Flexible ministry and theology study

Ten years ago, ALC recognised that not every potential student wants a university experience and introduced a Certificate IV in Christian Ministry and Theology into its suite of educational offerings.

This is an entry-level theology course containing practical content, delivered in a variety of study modes including workshops, intensives, group studies and online. Subjects reflect the growing needs of contemporary Christians, which include a greater understanding of the Bible and our beliefs, personal spiritual growth, volunteer team engagement and time management.

Assessments are competency-based, which allows the student to be supported to achieve a positive result. The Certificate IV is ideally suited to those in paid ministry roles – chaplains, lay and youth workers – as well as volunteers within congregations and those just wanting to gain both theological knowledge and a broad range of practical, personal ministry skills.

Importantly, the Certificate IV forms part of the foundational qualification for lay worker accreditation within the Lutheran Church of Australia/New Zealand.

To learn more, click on the Study tab on the ALC website and go to VET Study. Enrolments are accepted year-round.

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## Servicelearning and community engagement opportunity

In Semester 2, ALC will be offering a three-day online intensive equivalent (with assessment for credit as optional) for educators with a passion for service-learning and community engagement.

The intensive Who is my neighbour? is facilitated by Dr Meg Noack, former Director of Identity & Formation with Lutheran Education Queensland, and Jodie Hoff, Principal of Lutheran Ormeau Rivers District School. It is an opportunity to work and learn with leaders in this field and will include virtual face-to-face sessions. Designed to be practical and innovative, the intensive probes lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic as a point of reflection.

This is a professional development opportunity that can also be completed as part of ALC's Graduate Certificate in Education and Theology – see https://alc.edu.au/study/courses/graduate-certificate-in-education-and-theology/.

For more information and to express interest in this workshop, email enquiries@alc.edu.au.





# ALC PROVIDES customised MINISTRY TRAINING

ALC Training provides churches, schools and ministry groups with training customised for their ministry context. All of our training content is presented with a Christ-centred focus, is relevant to individuals, groups and their ministry situations and meets personal and professional development needs.

In addition to facilitating training sessions, ALC has a long-standing partnership with the LCA/NZ's Church Worker Support department to provide its Congregational Leadership Training online, and also with Lutheran Education Australia to provide its school communities access to 'Valuing Safe Communities' training.

Recent training projects undertaken by ALC include partnering with the Professional Standards Department to develop online training as well as working with the College of Bishops to develop local, on-the-ground skills and resources to support congregations, especially during times of pastoral vacancy.

There are many other topic-specific projects being developed that will allow further upskilling of church members in their local context. Many of these upcoming projects are also linked to the Certificate IV that ALC already offers, allowing participants to consider engaging with formal study as part of the professional development opportunity.

To find out more about the training ALC provides, please visit https://alc.edu.au/training/.



## $\Lambda |L|C$

#### AUSTRALIAN LUTHERAN COLLEGE

LEARNING FOR LIFE

### God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble. PSALM 46:1

#### Dear Supporter

These are extraordinary times. As Christians, we take comfort because we know that God is with us. Even when we are forced to endure self-isolation and times apart from our loved ones, God remains present – our ever-present help in times of trouble.

The coronavirus pandemic has rapidly changed many aspects of our everyday lives. That is also true for Australian Lutheran College (ALC). It seems not long ago that our first semester was launched. Towards the end of March we followed government advice and informed students that classes would no longer be offered on campus – so that we could all move forward and continue our life as a learning community – albeit a virtual community, which learns remotely.

ALC's response has been to step up and step forward.

That is because in the midst of all of the changes taking place, our call from God to serve the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand has not changed. Our call to prepare pastors, teachers, chaplains, lay workers and volunteers – servants of all kinds – remains because the LCA/NZ needs these people now more than ever.

#### This is the time to face up to challenges this pandemic throws at us and move forward.

ALC has always delivered large parts of its program in a distributed format, outside of traditional classroom settings. This includes online, distance and eLearning. For now our whole program, which includes the training of pastors, has switched to a distributed format and it may remain that way for the whole of 2020. Thank and praise God that he has provided us with the knowledge, skills and resources to make that transition with minimal disruption for our students.

Thank and praise God for the generosity of donors like you, who have contributed to the purchase of much-needed technical equipment that supports online/distributed learning.

Thank and praise God for the staff at ALC, who are stepping up and stepping forward to ensure the ongoing learning success of all of our students. Thank and praise God for our students, who are stepping up and stepping forward with us – remaining faithful to their call to service in the church.

We don't know what the future will bring. But we do know that God will be with us into that future with all of its new challenges and that at ALC we will continue to step up and forward into it.

The church needs its leaders and servants, people who are prepared and ready to serve in a new world, now more than ever. ALC is open and ready to prepare those people for that service but we can't do it without your help. Will you step up and step forward with us?

Your financial support for our college during these especially troubling times is vital. Any gift you are able to give makes a difference and is received with joy and gratitude. Knowing you care means so much to our community. We thank God for you and your ongoing support, encouragement and generosity.

May God, who is our refuge and strength, continue to be an ever-present help to you in the days ahead and bless and keep you safe always.

Pastor James Winderlich

PRINCIPAL

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### Invest in the future -LEAVE A LEGACY

None of us can know what lies in the future. The coronavirus pandemic reminds us of that. We, therefore, prepare by wisely and lovingly using our gifts and resources. How, with what we now have, will we care for those who come after us? What legacy do we want to leave?

We live by faith. While we don't know what our futures hold, we do know with complete certainty who is our future. The God whom we now thank, praise, serve, and obey is also the God of our certain future. The writer of 1 Peter reminds us that we have a living inheritance 'that can never perish, spoil or fade' (1 Peter 1:4).

How has God provided for you? Is it time to consider your legacy – one that will continue to support and equip people to serve?

Legacies enable ALC to provide quality training for church workers now and into the future and to support students as they pursue their call to ministry – preparing to proclaim and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You can contribute to this vision by including ALC in your will. You may like to support a specific project at ALC. Alternatively, you can dedicate your bequest for general purposes, which means we will direct it to the most crucial area of need. Through your bequest, your partnership with ALC will continue long into the future.

To find out more about including ALC in your will, contact the Business Manager, Barclay Watson, on freecall 1800 625 193, email business@alc.edu.au or write to Barclay at Australian Lutheran College, 104 Jeffcott Street, North Adelaide SA 5006.

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