

Shaping Mission in 21st Century Australia & NZ

By Zoom

Eight Thursdays in August and September 2025

9.30-11.30pm NZ / 7.30-9.30pm Eastern / 7.00-9.00pm Central / 5.30-7.30pm WA

The mission of Jesus remains the same, but Australia and New Zealand have changed radically in the past decade. To bring Jesus to our families, friends and neighbours today we need to move beyond programs and techniques and get back to the basics of being disciples of Jesus in our communities. This course will help you to develop a better understanding of joining the Spirit in walking with someone on their journey to faith, as well as beginning to shape an effective approach to mission in your congregation and context. It will be led by Dr Steen Olsen (LCANZ emeritus pastor, bishop and mission director) and Pastor Mat von Stanke (Life Way Lutheran, Newcastle NSW).

Why do this course? 1

Sometimes we spend so much time *growing* our knowledge and faith that we never actually get around to *going* into our communities with good news. The Holy Spirit certainly shapes us to participate in God's mission to his world and this is an ongoing process in our Christian walk. It is as we *go* that we *grow*. In this course we will explore the holy habits and practices that enable us to *go* more effectively. They are ordinary things and as ancient as the church itself, yet they take on a fresh perspective and energy as we reflect on them in the context of our everyday post-modern lives. We will dwell in the Word of God, and explore how we dwell in the world, receive and offer hospitality, grow in working with others to discern what God is doing in our midst and in our community, walk with someone on their journey to faith and work for the healing of the world.

Why do this course? 2

For Australian and Kiwi Lutherans mission was once primarily overseas (especially in PNG), in Central Australia (Finke River Mission) and through media such as radio and print. We still do that, but now mission has also come home. Back in the day we prepared missionaries to work cross-culturally and to deal with what was then called culture-shock. Now the world has moved in next door, and we can experience culture-stress when going to the pub, or even when watching the news on TV. In this course we will examine contemporary cultures in our communities and learn from overseas experience to relate cross-culturally. How does a small group of Christians form church when going out into their local community, walking with people on their journey to faith and nurturing their Christian maturity? Today it is more about being who we are as God's people in the midst of the ordinary things happening locally, than it is about establishing new programs.

Why do this course? 3

Nowhere does the Bible say that people become Christian by inviting Jesus into their hearts or lives, though many people have no doubt come to faith in Jesus through that sort of process. Our society has radically changed in the last five or ten years. Practically speaking, then, how do we walk with friends and neighbours on their journey to faith in today's Auckland, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth or elsewhere? How do we recognise where they are on their journey and respond appropriately, without being aggressive or delivering some pre-packaged program? Waiting for people to come to worship, or our events and programs is no longer very effective, and even when they do, we need to know how to sensitively engage with them. In this course we will work on practical ways we can bring Jesus to others where God has planted us.

**The course will be led by Dr Steen Olsen (LCANZ emeritus pastor, bishop and mission director)
and Pastor Mat von Stanke (Life Way Lutheran, Newcastle NSW).**

To find out more about the course content, contact steen.olsen@lca.org.au or mathew.vonstanke@lifeway.net.au
For details about participating and to register contact mark.worthing@lca.org.au