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Reaching the Diaspora: Streamed Worship and Preaching in the Lutheran Church of Australia, Cultivating Koinonia and Ecclesia

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REACHING THE DIASPORA:

STREAMED WORSHIP AND PREACHING

IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA,

CULTIVATING KOINONIA AND ECCLESIA

by

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ABSTRACT

Reaching the Diaspora: Streamed Worship and Preaching in the Lutheran Church of Australia, Cultivating Koinonia and Ecclesia

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Streamed worship has been happening in the Lutheran Church of Australia since 2013. Who is it reaching? Where is it reaching? Is it connecting them to community and the church? Is the preaching reaching the people who gather outside of the physical church buildings? Is there anything we can do to improve the reach, the connection and the sense of belonging to the wider church even when living remotely or kept away from regular worship by illness, disability or work commitments? This exploratory case study seeks to find these answers and more and then to offer ways forward for the building up of the church through streamed worship.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CTICR   Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations

DSTO   Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions (LCA)

FIFO   fly-in, fly-out

LCA   Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand

NRSV   New Revised Standard Version

UCA   Uniting Church in Australia

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CHAPTER 1

THE STATE OF THE NATION

Personal Insights

In January of 2019 I attended the funeral of a friend. I had worked with him in

mining maintenance in the 1990s in outback South Australia. He had been a friend,

mentor, supervisor and although he was not a person of faith, he was always sympathetic

to my Christian journey and allowed me to complete church commitments before

attending breakdowns at the mine, especially at Christmas and Easter. I discovered via

Facebook messenger from another former colleague that he had passed away after a

battle with cancer. The funeral was to be held in Adelaide, South Australia,

approximately 800 kilometers from where I now live and work, but there was also to be a

live stream of the funeral for those who could not attend in person. I chose to utilize the

live stream as I had commitments that were difficult to reschedule, and due to the long

distance and associated travel costs. The live stream option gave me an opportunity to

participate without the need to be physically present.

I sat at my office desk and "attended" via my laptop computer. I heard the eulogy,

watched the audio-visual presentation and listened intently as his son played a song on

his guitar and sang as a tribute to his father. I saw the faces of the family and friends

gathered live as it was happening, and although I was not physically there, I felt as

though I was present and experiencing this event with those who were physically there.

For a brief time, I was reconnected to those days of working together, in that remote

mining community. I felt connected to the people at the funeral and in a strange way also felt connected to those who were watching online and experiencing the funeral in a remote way. They too had for reasons unknown, chosen to "attend" via streaming. We were experiencing this important event in a similar way and I somehow felt connected to them. There was a counter in the corner showing that I was not watching alone, and this was reassuring to me. I was part of a group or network of friends and family which, while dispersed, were connected to this event and by the experience. I was grateful for the technology that allowed me to participate, even though I could not be physically present at the funeral venue in Adelaide.

In contrast to the experience with my friend's funeral, I have been attending live and volunteering for almost a decade at my sons' ice hockey games as part of the Australian Ice Hockey League. The Melbourne Mustangs Ice Hockey Club has been live streaming their home games for several years. This streaming service has enabled me to continue to watch when I have been unable to attend games due to work commitments, and more recently, while attending intensives in the Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Preaching Program at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota each June. As my commitments increased with academic study, I have attended games less and needed to cease acting in my role as a game day volunteer. This past season I felt like an outsider looking in and felt more disconnected from the club and players than ever before. Having been closely connected with the game day experience as a volunteer and supporter, knowing what was going on in all aspects of the club and game day in the first eight years of the club's life, to be absent caused a feeling of disconnect and unfamiliarity. I could

still watch the games via streaming, but the sense of community and connection was different.

It is interesting and challenging that while there had been little or no connection for a number of years, I felt so connected during the funeral of a friend and, by contrast, so disconnected from the ice hockey community which I have been closely connected to in recent years. I was still able to be connected to the ice hockey club and watch the games and hear the event unfold, but with a remoteness, different from being there and interacting with the ice hockey community directly, in person.

The Streaming Phenomenon

Live streaming of events is increasingly being used by funeral directors, churches, sporting groups, emergency services organizations and others to connect dispersed people to an event that is taking place live, or for them to stream later at their convenience. Streaming provides access for people who are at a distance or cannot attend an event due to timing constraints, health issues, disabilities or even financial challenges associated with bringing people together physically.

We are becoming more and more comfortable as a society with remote connection, especially streamed video. The technology to facilitate these connections has been evolving rapidly, to the point now where wireless or cellular networking is often faster than wired connections. Such progressions are enabling an increasing number of users to access services provided online and the quality of those streams has improved at a similar rate.

However, in our shift from attending an event live are we missing out on being part of the community that is created at events? Or are we able to connect more than

would otherwise be possible without live streaming as a tool, due to the changes in the way we as a society schedule our lives or due to other factors which might cause us to be removed by distance, disability, illness, work commitments and the like?

Herein lies a conundrum. Is live streaming building or keeping us away from community, connection and relationships and live events such as worship in church buildings? This conundrum is at the heart of my research. I see huge potential for those who are dispersed and cannot attend worship to feel connected to the congregations and the church through live streaming. Yet there are also challenges which need to be identified, and overcome where possible, to enhance the ability for such a service to reach its full potential especially for building community.

The LCA Offering

The Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCA) has been using video streaming technology since 2013 to live stream worship services. The first service to be introduced was from St Michael's Lutheran Church at Hahndorf in South Australia in October 2013. This was followed by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Toowoomba, Queensland in November 2017. The aim was to provide a worship opportunity in the Lutheran tradition for those who were unable to attend a physical church for some reason.

Until this point in time research had not been conducted in the LCA context relating to the streamed worship services provided and how this resource has been received by the users and what effect this has had on their worship lives. Lutheran Media did conduct a survey of the users of a service which distributes the same streamed worship services via DVD format. The DVD distribution is a subscription-based service and as such Lutheran Media had access to subscriber details which facilitated easy

connection for them to solicit feedback via a paper-based survey. Unfortunately, prior to the collation of this data the survey forms were misplaced. I had hoped to use this data to compare against my survey results to enhance my research. My survey has now become stand-alone research.

In parallel to the streamed worship services are some trials of various models of doing ministry differently and adaptively in a changing and challenging environment in the LCA. Some congregations have been streaming locally and making their sermons or entire worship services available for their members to use. There are a couple of situations where multi-point parishes are hoping to hold a trial period of streaming the sermon to each point of the parish and having lay-leaders conduct the services at the remote locations. One district of the LCA is currently distributing some pre-recorded video sermons to remote parishes to provide some respite to lay readers who are becoming increasingly burnt out. In this case there is a perceived need to provide engaging preaching to keep people connected and involved in local worship opportunities where a pastor is not regularly available. These sermons are being sourced from the streamed services at St Michael's, Hahndorf and Good Shepherd, Toowoomba, through Lutheran Media.

The scope of my research will not stretch to these additional models. I will refer to them in chapter seven regarding the possibilities in the LCA as this researcher seeks to provide direction as to where to from here following this thesis research. Out of necessity my research focus will be on the current streamed worship services provided by Lutheran Media from Hahndorf and Toowoomba. Without conducting the research for this thesis we may never know who the streamed services are reaching, the reasons for them not

being able to attend services in a physical church building, whether they are using the streamed worship in addition to their regular worship, or if there are changes that could be made to improve the experience for them.

The Australian Context

It is important to include some information about both the country of Australia and the LCA to give some context and perspective for those who may be unfamiliar.

Australia is a vast continent of some 7.692 million square kilometers[1] with a relatively small population of 25.2 million people,[2] much of which is concentrated in the capital cities of each of the six states and two territories. In contrast to the overall population, the Lutheran Church of Australia has a baptized membership of approximately 45000.[3] These statistics also show average weekly attendance at worship services at approximately 22000. The number of ordained clergy has been steadily declining and the congregations and parishes are finding it increasingly difficult to find pastors to serve them, especially in more remote areas.[4] The trend has been to form larger parishes with multiple preaching places sharing one or sometimes more pastors, resulting in pastors trying to spread themselves more thinly or being forced to be present at

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[1] Geoscience Australia, "Area of Australia - States and Territories," May 15, 2014, http://www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/national-location-information/dimensions/area-of-australia-states-and-territories.

[2] Australian Bureau of Statistics, "Population Clock," December 20, 2018, http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/1647509ef7e25faaca2568a900154b63?opendocument.

[3] Lutheran Church of Australia, "Statistics," accessed February 6, 2019, http://www.lamp.lca.org.au/StatsLCAsummary.asp?Year=2017&Search=Go+%3E%3E.

[4] John Henderson, "Book of Reports Nineteenth General Convention of Synod" (Adelaide: Lutheran Church of Australia, 2018),17.

worship less often in individual congregations, resulting in them holding services conducted by lay leaders more frequently.

In the city areas, where most of the population reside, there are increasing societal pressures that affect a family's decision whether to attend worship or not at the regular scheduled Sunday morning time slot. These factors in effect (even as city dwellers) make them part of the diaspora, that is, those who are dispersed from regular Sunday congregational worship attendance in a sociological sense.

Project Outline

Through the responses to my survey questions I have discovered how widely dispersed the users of the streamed worship services are. I have asked their faith background and the reasoning for their accessing the service. Are they part of the diaspora due to distance, illness, sport or work commitments, disability or for some other reason? Are they watching live, or on Sunday night or later in the week? In what ways do they feel connected to the worshiping community, the pastor, and the preaching? Does the preaching "connect" with them in their context? Do they feel as though they are merely watching or that they are participating in the worship service?

At a recent regional meeting I attended, one congregation was expressing its desire to begin streaming worship services from their congregation on a regular basis. I approached the chairperson of the congregation during the break with a keen interest, given the nature of this thesis. I was surprised to discover that this person had no knowledge of the services provided by Lutheran Media (either DVD distribution or streamed), even though they have been available for at least six years. What this tells me is that in this vast land, it is still difficult to get a message around that a wonderful

opportunity exists for the diaspora to be reached through Lutheran Media's streamed worship resource.

Ultimately, the goal for all Christians is to worship regularly in a physical space - be it a house, a church or a cathedral - with the body of Christ coming together for corporate worship, building one another up in faith, hope and love as they gather to sing Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, to hear the Word of God proclaimed, and to receive the Sacraments. When we cannot attend such a physical gathering, we feel cut off, removed, isolated. Streamed worship is a tool that the church now has in its toolbox to reach the diaspora, and to potentially build both koinonia and ecclesia.

In chapter two I will define the key concepts for this thesis. These concepts are diaspora, koinonia and ecclesia as nuanced by the *Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions* of the LCA. It is in this context that both the streamed worship and the research take place.

There seems to be divided opinion amongst theological commentators around the pros and cons of streamed worship or attending worship in an online capacity. Most of the debate regarding streamed worship versus live attendance in a church is happening online rather than in the printed word. My experience of online attendance at a funeral or an ice hockey game reflects the challenges that are faced. Chapter three will discuss these opinions and seek to find common ground with the research results I have received.

As this project is in the form of an exploratory case study, chapter four will outline this methodology and the reasoning behind this format. I have needed to engage both qualitative and quantitative data to answer my question and in order to discover if streamed worship as provided by the LCA through Lutheran Media, is indeed reaching

the diaspora and if so, whether these dispersed Christians are engaged in the worship and preaching and whether they feel part of the koinonia and the ecclesia through this still-emerging technology.

Chapter five will describe the "Voyage of Discovery" that took place, through providing the results of the survey, discussions with the pastors who lead the streamed worship services, and engaging with the analytics of the streaming platforms livestream.com and Facebook live.

I will then conduct an evaluation of the process. As any research has its limitations, challenges and setbacks, chapter six will provide a review of the project and highlight matters that were missed in the research. There will also be opportunity to celebrate the positives.

As a practical theologian, the final chapter is, to me, the most critical. Here I will offer possible ways forward for the LCA in reaching the diaspora through streamed worship, enhancing the current streaming experience, adding other ideas and also seeking, in the end, for the LCA to be the best it can be at reaching the diaspora and playing their part in the building of koinonia and ecclesia here in this vast and remote land. I will also discuss where this research project has been a blessing to my personal journey.

Summary

In summary, my experiences of interacting with other online streamed products like funerals and ice hockey games has drawn me to wonder whether the streamed worship of the LCA is or can have a similar or better outcome than secular usage of the streaming platforms. Our society is becoming increasingly comfortable with streaming

video both live and delayed. My research is to discern whether the LCA is reaching the

diaspora, the dispersed Christians, who are accessing its streamed worship services and in

what ways the preaching, and the worship services in which it takes place, are building

koinonia and ecclesia. The central component of this research was an online and

voluntary survey of the users of the streamed worship services provided by Lutheran

Media, which was open for submissions for a ten-week period during August to October

2019.

CHAPTER 2

KEY THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

Introduction

There are three key theological concepts from which my thesis question is derived. As I was developing the question, I was reflecting on the ability of streamed worship to reach those who could not attend worship. Is their experience like mine when I "attended" my friend's funeral or perhaps like my feeling of isolation now when watching hockey games streamed online? Are the users of the LCA's streamed worship a long distance from physical worship opportunities or are they incapacitated in some way and it is not possible for them to attend?

The concept of Christian diaspora came to mind. What is diaspora? Is the LCA's streamed worship reaching the diaspora? Below I will outline the way I have interpreted the term for this thesis project and the theological background behind the term. The second part of the thesis question asks if the streamed worship being provided is building koinonia. In order to assess this there is a need to define koinonia and how it is being interpreted in the Australian context. The final theological concept within the thesis question which needs to be defined and understood is ecclesia. Only when these concepts are understood can we determine whether the streamed worship offered by the LCA currently is reaching the diaspora and whether it is playing a role in building koinonia and ecclesia. This researcher will then use these definitions to analyze the results of the survey of the users in chapter five.

Diaspora

The first theological concept to consider is diaspora. After all, how will we know if we are reaching them if we do not define what diaspora is and, as a result, who these people are? As mentioned in chapter one, Australia is a vast country and much of the population is concentrated on the Eastern coastal areas and around the capital cities of those Eastern states. Within the rural and remote areas there can be hours of driving required between churches of any denomination, without even considering Lutheran churches. People are more mobile these days than ever before and there has been an increase in the number of fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) workers in recent years. When I was in my early twenties, I took a job in the mining industry at a mine some six hours north of Adelaide, in South Australia. We moved to Roxby Downs around a month after the Lutheran church there was opened. We were blessed to be part of a new and vibrant young congregation in a remote location. We were served by a pastor from Whyalla part-time (330km or approximately three and a half hours' drive) or Port Pirie (350km or approximately three and a half hours' drive) during most of my ten years living in Roxby Downs. Then, for a time we had a Specific Ministry Pastor who was ordained to serve in this location. This meant we had a pastor on site for usually two Sundays per month, and on the other weeks we had lay-reading services. These services were prepared and conducted by several members of the congregation using pre-written sermons that were at the time available from a series of books of Australian Lutheran sermons, and from websites run by Lutheran pastors. I was one of those lay-readers and also a congregational elder for several years.

The ten years spent in the desert gave me a sense that we were removed from the Lutheran heartland of Adelaide (570km or approximately six hours' drive) and were living in the wilderness—what I now consider, in some ways, to be part of the Diaspora, even though we were a constituted congregation of the LCA. With shift work, there were weeks when members were rostered on and could not attend worship. Others would attend following a night shift and struggle to remain awake throughout the service. Then, when they were rostered off, people would leave town for their break and numbers attending worship would fluctuate dramatically. On the Sundays when the pastor would be leading worship though, people did make a special effort to be present if possible. Was this congregation really part of what would be considered diaspora? Were the individuals who were unable to attend worship due to work commitments part of the diaspora due to their inability to attend worship as part of the congregation?

In his thesis, Joel Wight Hoogheem begins his second chapter outlining the wilderness experiences in Scripture, noting that the image of wilderness is a dangerous and promising place. Hoogheem then relates the digital realm as being a place of wilderness, encouraging "the people of God to listen carefully for how and where the voice of God may be leading them."[1]

With these challenges in mind, what is diaspora? Are they a wilderness people? The book of 1 Peter is addressed to "the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Peter 1:1 NRSV).[2] This letter is written to a

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[1] Joel Wight Hoogheem, "Cyber Sermons: Examining the Effectiveness of Preaching Podcasts" (Doctor of Ministry Theses, Luther Seminary, St Paul, Minnesota, 2012), 20.

[2] All biblical references are from New Revised Standard Version (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), unless otherwise indicated.

dispersed population of Christians spread widely in the regions listed. 1 Peter is an

encyclical letter which brings a common message to a network of people with common

beliefs that are geographically dispersed.

Shively Smith defines diaspora as:

[A] noun that means "a scattering throughout" or "dispersion," which is a state of being spread widely over a region or regions. A diaspora does not necessarily endure uninterrupted indefinitely, and dispersal does not automatically create a diaspora. In sum, diaspora (or dispersion) is a condition, a state, and a discourse of a people that touches spaces and places and includes matters of time, culture, etiquette, and consciousness.[3]

With this definition in mind, there were some factors in play in the desert scenario

mentioned above. Culturally, in this mining community, Christianity was a foreign

concept. It felt as though even the Christians who moved to the community used distance

from home as an excuse not to be involved in corporate worship.[4] For the Christians of

the Diaspora listed in 1 Peter, the community around them was similarly not conducive to

Christian faith practice. They were spread far and wide from Jerusalem and were in small

numbers who gathered together for worship. This too was similar to my experience. We

were at Roxby Downs for a time. I stayed ten years with my family before studying for

ministry in Adelaide. Others who were with us at the time are still there, twenty to thirty

years later, still worshiping and living out their lives of faith together.[5] They are at a

distance from the Lutheran heartland yet maintain their Christian faith. I checked in with

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[3] Shively T. J. Smith, *Strangers to Family: Diaspora and 1 Peter's Invention of God's Household* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), loc. 254 of 4951, Kindle.

[4] As an Elder of the Roxby Downs Lutheran Fellowship I often had families contact me to notify us that a family member or members were moving to our town and ask us to follow them up. Rarely did that contact lead to attendance at worship.

[5] The Roxby Downs Lutheran Fellowship are now served by a lay-person licensed for Word and Sacrament ministry and have an ordained minister travel to lead them every three to six months.

them via their Facebook group during this research project and was surprised to discover only one person had used the LCA livestream in the past.

Smith states that "Diaspora in 1 Peter reminds readers they are members of a diverse and vast kinship requiring only acknowledgment and embrace."[6] This kind of thinking is exactly what I was hoping for in the case of a potentially dispersed group of users of the LCA streamed worship: that they might be aware of their dispersal but feel connected to the community of faith both online and in person.

The Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions of the LCA acknowledge that there is a challenge to support isolated members of the church. While the term Diaspora is not used in the statement (last edited in 2001), it describes situations where Lutherans are isolated and are in need of care and support. While avoiding legalistic rules and regulations which may inhibit relational ministry, this document gives guidelines to assist pastors and people to remain faithful in times of isolation through providing education and pastoral care over the phone or via other methods.[7]

The book of James, like that of 1 Peter, is written to the dispersion, this time to the twelve tribes (James 1:1). Margaret Aymer states that in the midst of their dispersion, the book of James encourages the Jewish Christ-followers to live out lives worthy of the gospel rather than be caught up in the lives and practices of those surrounding them and, "For a people without video conferencing and livestreaming, this text became James's

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[6] Smith, *Strangers to Family*, loc. 464of 4951.

[7] LCA Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations, "Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions," Volume 2 G14, accessed February 6, 2019, https://www.lca.org.au/departments/commissions/cticr/.

virtual presence within the diaspora communities."[8] For those Christians who are now dispersed around Australia or around the world, has streaming become the new encyclical letter, but one that provides them with a more interactive method of receiving the good news and guidance for their praxis of the faith?

The Acts of the Apostles also includes several references to the Diaspora, referring in this case to the Jews who are living outside the heartland of Jerusalem. Beverly Gaventa's commentary suggests that those who gathered for the stoning of Stephen were members of the Diaspora.[9]

Those who are accessing streamed worship through the LCA are potentially a scattered people, spread far and wide, who feel the need to be part of the body of Christ, connected to the koinonia (or community) that is the church. This desire leads to a consideration of the nature of koinonia.

Koinonia

Koinonia is translated variously as fellowship, community or communion throughout the New Testament. For the purpose of this research and in order to test if streamed worship in the LCA is indeed building koinonia we must establish an understanding of the concept as a benchmark.

Jerry Bridges in *True Community* posits:

> In both Acts 2:42 and 1 John 1:3, the New English Bible translates koinōnia as "sharing a common life." This is the most basic meaning of koinonia, or fellowship. It is sharing a common life with other believers — a life that, as John

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[8] Margaret P. Aymer, *James: An Introduction and Study Guide: Diaspora Rhetoric of a Friend of God*, T&T Clark Study Guides to the New Testament (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017), 21.

[9] Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), loc. 1948 of 6504, Kindle.

says, we share with God the Father and God the Son. It is a relationship, not an activity.[10]

Bridges goes on to state:

Every believer of every nation, race, or station in life is a member of that body. From all over the world, God has drawn together a spiritual community whose members share a common life in Christ. Koinonia expresses, first of all, the relationship that the members of this Christ-centered community have with God and with each other. This community does not refer to a geographical location. Neither does it refer to a group of believers who have chosen to live in a close physical setting to accomplish certain spiritual and physical objectives. Though such groups may rightfully call themselves a "community," this is not the sense in which we use the word to describe the communal sense of koinonia. Rather, koinonia expresses a relationship all believers have together in Christ without regard to their geographical location. It is also true that koinonia expresses more than membership in a local congregation. As important as membership in a local congregation is, koinonia expresses even more than that. The relationship expressed by koinonia does not describe a membership but a common life that we share together in Christ. When Paul uses the metaphor of a human body to describe the family of God, he uses it to express the spiritually organic relationship we have with Christ and with all fellow believers all over the world.[11]

Bridges also adds an affirming aspect to the understanding of koinonia, "The realization that we do in fact share a common life with other believers should stimulate within us a desire to share experientially with one another. This is the whole thrust of the New Testament teaching on koinonia."[12]

Hayim Herring and Terri Martinson Elton make mention of community being built in today's context via web-based platforms. We used to gather in church buildings for that sense of community, now people are "gathering" and building community

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[10] Jerry Bridges, *True Community: The Biblical Practice of Koinonia* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), loc. 103 of 2072, Kindle.

[11] Bridges, loc. 651 of 2072.

[12] Bridges, loc. 661 of 2072.

through social media. These platforms are enabling people to build relationships, learn and grow together without necessarily ever meeting.[13]

Philip Kariatlis, an Australian theologian within the Greek Orthodox tradition, expresses that koinonia is at the core of orthodox ecclesiology, wherein "Communion" or koinonia is seen as the church concretely within the world.[14] This thinking is affirmed in another document by Kariatlis , stating, "the church was understood to be a communal event where God was the One who was responsible for gathering."[15]

Ann Voskamp tackles another dimension of koinonia when she discusses Communion in her book *The Broken Way*, "The soul craves more than only communication, it seeks communion. Is the most authentic communication always a kind of communion, a breaking and giving into oneness, into love?"[16]

Kariatlis also delves into the Eucharist, the most holy of communions. Kariatlis states that the early church quickly established the ongoing fellowship introduced by Jesus at the last supper because this communion preserves the perfect union between Christ and one another.[17] Immediately after Pentecost the newly baptized faithful, "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

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[13] Hayim Herring and Terri Martinson Elton, *Leading Congregations and Nonprofits in a Connected World: Platforms, People, and Purpose*, 2017, 4, http://www.myilibrary.com?id=964725.

[14] Philip Kariatlis, *Church as Communion: The Gift and Goal of Koinonia* (Adelaide: ATF Limited, 2013), 1.

[15] Philip Kariatlis, "Affirming Koinonia Ecclesiology: An Othodox Perspective," *Phronema* 27, no. 1 (2012): 51.

[16] Ann Voskamp, *The Broken Way: A Daring Path into the Abundant Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 66.

[17] Kariatlis, *Church as Communion*, 79.

Wight Hoogheem discusses the digital approach to forming koinonia, "All told, digital technologies may not separate people from one another, but bring them together in a sense of *koinonia* that they may not have experienced otherwise."[18]

This is where I feel diaspora and koinonia meet. For someone who can otherwise not engage in the full sense of physical worship due to their dispersion (being part of the Diaspora), does digital technology such as streamed worship enable a sense of koinonia to be built where it would otherwise not be able to?

Ecclesia

The Augsburg Confession, article VII states; "The church is the assembly of the saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly."[19]

In his book *The Real Church: An Ecclesiology of the Visible*, Harald Hegstad points toward a practical ecclesiology, suggesting that the case for the invisible church is largely theological and considers ideas of what the church is rather than what we experience as church.[20] Hegstad also highlights that the church is primarily by nature a body of community and fellowship, and then discusses the tension between the individual and the community of faith. There is a tendency in our time to lean toward individualism, yet the individual plays an important role in the makeup of the community which is the visible church, a combination of koinonia and ecclesia.[21]

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[18] Wight Hoogheem, "Cyber Sermons", 30.

[19] Robert Kolb, Timothy J. Wengert, and Charles P. Arand, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 43.

[20] Harald Hegstad, *The Real Church: An Ecclesiology of the Visible* (Cambridge: James Clarke and Co, 2013), 3.

[21] Hegstad, 122.

The LCA's Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions (DSTO) documents

also shed some light on the nature of fellowship and the church as set down at the

founding of the denomination in 1966 and as reviewed in 2001. Thesis of Agreement

article V: The Church discusses both koinonia and ecclesia.

> 1. The Church, essentially or properly so called, the One Holy Christian Church, the Una Sancta, the Church Universal, is the people of God (1 Pet 2:9), the communion or congregation of saints, which Christ has called, enlightened and gathered through the Holy Spirit by the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments, and which He has thus created to be His Spiritual Body. Matt 16:18; 1 Cor 1:2; 12:12f; Eph 1:22f; 1 Tim 3:15; Cat.Minor, Art.III; Cat.Maior, II, 47-51; Augsburg Confession VII-VIII; Apology VII-VIIII, 11-15; Smalc. Art. III, 12.
> 2. The Church is the communion of believers and therefore also a communion in love and hope, that is, a fellowship of those who at all times and in all places have been led to faith in Jesus Christ as their only Lord and Saviour, and who have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ (Col 1:13; John 3:5; Matt 28:19). The Church therefore comprises only believers and all believers at all times and places. No unbelieving, unregenerate person, no hypocrite, belongs to the Church (ecclesia proprie dicta). Gal 3:26; John 15:6; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16,17; 1 John 2:19. Apology VII-VIII, 6-8, 11.
> 3. The Church is therefore a communion of those who have become 'one' in their Redeemer (John 17:21), and who, as members of His Spiritual Body, are in mystic union with Christ and have communion (koinonia) with Christ and one another (1 John 1:3; Rom 12:5). The Church is 'a fellowship of faith and of the Holy Ghost in the hearts' (Apology VII-VIII, 3).[22]

Given that my research examines what is happening within the LCA, it is

pertinent to use the definitions set down by them as a guide for my questioning in the

survey used in this thesis project and in analyzing the results.

The writer to the New Testament letter to the Hebrews urges "Let us not neglect

meeting together, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all

the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). I will discuss the need and

desire of God's people to meet together in worship in chapters five, six and seven. One of

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[22] LCA Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations, "Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions," A9.

the main challenges of streamed worship is that worshipers miss the aspect of physically meeting together and encouraging one another. This is a reality which manifests itself through the results of the research.

Summary

It can at times be difficult to separate koinonia and ecclesia. "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Matthew 18:20) suggests both. The church, ecclesia (God's people) are gathered and they are inherently koinonia (or community). The church is encouraged to meet together and to support one another, to practice the faith (praxis). Yet when individuals are dispersed by distance, or other physical reasons, this inherent community is more difficult to identify. The invisible church is indeed still there, the communion of saints is still in action, yet from the perspective of human reason, there is an absence of the physical which potentially makes the individual feel less connected or part of the koinonia (or community) than if they were physically present with the other worshipers.

For the purpose of this research project I have defined Diaspora as a group or individual, who for a period of time, are unable to physically attend worship in a physical church or gathering place. This is regardless of the reason for the dispersion, that is, the reason why they are unable to attend in person.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?

The State of the World

In an online world everyone has an opinion, it seems. It is easy to get your thoughts out to the world with various social media platforms, blogs and websites being so accessible to users of all ages. In this chapter I have gathered some of the voices which are speaking to the matters at hand - streamed worship, streamed preaching, the sacrament issue - and whether koinonia can exist in an online space. Our access to the internet has become easier and more frequent.

Ewan Watt states:

Internet users in Australia spend an average of 5.5 hours per day using internet services, including approximately 3 hours viewing streaming services and internet broadcasts, ~45 minutes streaming music, and ~1.5 hours using social media.[2] Telstra's Head of Fixed Products Jana Kotatko, said in 2018 that video streaming is the biggest driver of the changes in data use being observed.

Download volumes from mobile devices are growing particularly quickly. There was 40% growth in data downloaded from mobile devices from June 2017 to June 2018.[1]

Ownership of mobile devices has increased and now covers some eighty-nine percent of the Australian population over the age of fourteen.[2] As such we cannot deny

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[1] Ewan Watt, "Australian Internet & Social Media Statistics 2019 | ROI.COM.AU," accessed February 8, 2020, https://www.roi.com.au/blog/australian-internet-social-media-statistics-2019.

[2] Roy Morgan, "Australians Are Bringing Their Own Phone to New Mobile Plans," accessed February 8, 2020, http://www.roymorgan.com/findings/8032-mobile-phone-trends-march-2019-201907010451.

that Australian society has become technologically literate and is becoming increasingly accustomed to engaging in life online.

Online Worship

Is online worship a legitimate form of worship? There are some for whom this is a categorical no, for others the exact opposite applies, and every point on the spectrum in between.

For some churches, streaming is an important piece in their overall offering of worship opportunities. Hillsong Church, which began in Australia and is now worldwide in physical church buildings, also have a site called "Church of the Air".[3] This is aimed at those who live in isolated areas including the outback, and encourages users to gather family and friends for a worship experience together through streamed worship.

The Church of the Air concept is similar to the School of the Air which has operated in Australia since 1951[4] where remote students accessed teaching via radio equipment from Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. As such, Australians are familiar with the concept of using remote connection to facilitate schooling. It is the next best thing to being in the classroom, and so is streamed worship the next best thing to being in the worship space in a physical way—does it match up?

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[3] Hillsong Church, "Church of the Air | Hillsong," accessed February 4, 2020, https://hillsong.com/church-of-the-air/#.Xjjs1GgzZPY.

[4] Alice Springs School of the Air, "History | Alice Springs School of the Air," accessed February 4, 2020, https://www.assoa.nt.edu.au/visitors-centre/the-centre/history.

There is also precedent in Australia with people in remote areas accessing health appointments via "Telehealth". The Australian Department of Health provides the following information:

> The International Organisation for Standardisation defines Telehealth as the 'use of telecommunication techniques for the purpose of providing telemedicine, medical education, and health education over a distance', while drawing a distinction between this and telemedicine, which is defined as the 'use of advanced telecommunication technologies to exchange health information and provide health care services across geographic, time, social and cultural barriers'.

> Telehealth services use information and communications technologies (ICTs) to deliver health services and transmit health information over both long and short distances. It is about transmitting voice, data, images and information rather than moving care recipients, health professionals or educators. It encompasses diagnosis, treatment, preventive (educational) and curative aspects of healthcare services and typically involves care recipient(s), care providers or educators in the provision of these services directed to the care recipient.

> Video-conferencing is one of the main ways in which telehealth is improving access to healthcare services for patients who live in regional, rural and remote areas.

> Instead of having to travel to the nearest major city to see a specialist, an increasing number of patients are using video-conferencing. This facility might be offered by their local GP or another local healthcare venue.

> Medicare-funded telehealth services are also available to residents of eligible aged-care homes and to patients of Aboriginal Medical Services across Australia.[5]

Pastor D J Soto (in the United States) is using virtual reality to reach out to a world he believes is ready for worship in a unique online space.[6] Virtual reality and using avatars to "attend" worship are perhaps a stretch for many who are still trying to come to terms with "attending" worship through a streaming service. Yet there is clearly a need

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[5] Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, "Telehealth," accessed March 5, 2020, https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/e-health-telehealth.

[6] Kristen French, "Pastor D.J. Soto Is Putting His Faith in a Virtual Reality Church | WIRED," February 2, 2018, https://www.wired.com/story/virtual-reality-church/.

and a take-up by users around the world who are looking for an alternative to worshiping

in a physical building.

On the other hand, James R. Nieman argues that gathering is imperative to the

Christian worship experience:

> To gather is not simply a sociological coincidence but an active statement of meaning. For one thing, it says that Christian faithfulness is not sufficiently embodied in isolated living. Believers gather as a way of being fully human in the image of God, sharing with others as body of Christ, supporting one another as sisters and brothers.[7]

Brady Shearer from Pro Church Tools on YouTube, in his episode titled *8% Of*

Millennials Say THIS Is Why They Don't Attend Church discusses the challenge of

engaging this sector of society in the life of the physical church.[8] While referencing

Barna Institute statistics, he states that only eight percent of this sector state that church is

too old-fashioned and boring as a reason for not attending church. Rather, some thirty-

nine percent state that they experience God in other ways instead. That one hour per week

gathered in community with other worshipers is replaced by four songs and a sermon that

they might find in any number of places and access directly from any mobile device.

Shearer goes on to discuss that churches are pouring their resources into the one

hour per week and neglecting the other 167 hours available within the week to engage

this age bracket, or any bracket for that matter. Pro Church Tools states regularly that the

internet is the biggest shift in communications in 500 years, that is, since the printing

press. They spend their time encouraging congregations to seize those 167 hours and fill

them with other content (such as Bible studies) as well as other content on social media

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[7] James R. Nieman, *Knowing the Context: Frames, Tools, and Signs for Preaching*, Elements of Preaching (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 56.

[8] Brady Shearer, *8% Of Millennials Say THIS Is Why They Don't Attend Church | Pro Church Daily Ep. #077*, accessed January 17, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxWGNCfEw9c.

platforms. Pro Church tools feel that, rather than trying to compete with the worship

content of the bigger and maybe better quality worship opportunities on the internet, there

is more value in producing other resources. Shearer's co-host Alex goes on to consider if

congregations might be better to offer some kind of online presence rather than sermons

to engage the user. This angle is an interesting one and may well be a challenge for the

LCA to consider if millennials are an important audience to which there is a need to

connect. As will be discussed in chapter seven of this project, what is currently being

offered is a complete worship service package from two points: St Michael's, Hahndorf

and Good Shepherd, Toowoomba. There may be other ways to "value-add" to this in the

future. For now, Word and Sacrament ministry through streamed worship is the chosen

platform and seems to be reaching a diverse and relatively dispersed group of individuals,

families and congregations and is meeting their needs.

One user of the LCA stream is Maureen Turner, a Lutheran who travels around

Australia as a "Grey Nomad." She states that she appreciates the online worship provided

by the LCA. She recounts that during her travels:

> If we were unable to attend a church service somewhere, we joined in with the
> online worship from St Michael's, Hahndorf, when we were in internet range. It
> was great to join in with the responses, and sing the hymns, along with the
> congregation. It was also great, in May 2017, to actually attend a service there and
> see what the church looked like in real life. Online worship is a wonderful
> resource if you are unable to attend a church service.[9]

Laura Turner in a *New York Times* article suggests *Internet Church Isn't Really*

Church.[10] She admits that there is a place for online worship for the homebound, but

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[9] Maureen Turner, "Church Attendance as Grey Nomads," *Lutheran Women*, July 2018, 22.

[10] Laura Turner, "Opinion | Internet Church Isn't Really Church - The New York Times," December 15, 2108, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/15/opinion/sunday/church-live-streaming-religion.html.

posits that to be the body of Christ - even when it would be easier to just stay at home - is to turn up in the midst of the joys and trials of life and to be there for each other in a physical sense.

Blogger Phil Schneider[11] describes his congregation as being one that was fearful of people simply staying at home rather than turning up for worship in their church building. A year after commencing their streaming they have discovered that attendance has remained the same. He cited three situations where streaming has been advantageous. Firstly, during inclement weather, such as snowstorms, people can stay at home, safe and warm and still participate in the worship. Secondly, when persons are sick or housebound, they may feel a little less isolated due to the streaming connection. Thirdly, seekers are viewing their stream prior to arriving on the doorstep for worship. While snowstorms are not an issue in Australia the other two benefits experienced in Schneider's situation resonate with the experiences that were shared by those who responded to my survey as outlined in chapter five. As I make my final edits to this thesis the coronavirus COVID-19 has begun to cut people off around the world, with people being encouraged to self-isolate or quarantine themselves if they have potentially been exposed to the virus or if they have symptoms. Large gatherings are being banned in many countries or strongly discouraged. As a result, congregations are rushing to implement streamed worship and Bible study options at an incredible rate.

Another congregation which has made the leap to streamed worship services is Wellspring in Englewood, Colorado. Like the LCA, they are a liturgical and sacramental

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[11] Phil Schneider, "Live Church Streaming: Fears & Situations for Use - ChurchMag," August 14, 2017, https://churchm.ag/live-church-streaming-fear/.

church. In a worship tech tour of Wellspring Church by Jake Gosselin[12] the pastor

explains that they were apprehensive that people would choose not to be in the room for

worship. To encourage people to attend in person they have kept the "product" low

definition and simple rather than going for a slick high-definition production. They want

it to serve a purpose without creating an excuse for people not to be there. The

sacramental nature of their worship necessitates attendance in person for full

participation. Another consideration for Wellspring to keep the production simple was

that it is operated by volunteers. They went for one button start and stop in order that

operators can also focus on being present in worship.

Online Preaching

Joel Wight Hoogheem's Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Preaching thesis[13] tested

the effectiveness of hearing a sermon in person during regular worship services in

contrast to listening to them via a podcast. This was an appreciative enquiry model which

had participants either listen to podcasts or attend the live presentation and compared the

way people engaged with the preaching. Hoogheem admitted that he was "surprised at

how clearly the podcast participants identified a lack of community as a hindrance to

their experience of hearing sermon podcasts."[14] This 2012 project encouraged further

research in the realm of online preaching and in particular streamed video sermons, or

"vodcasts". In 2012 the LCA's streamed worship was still in its planning stages, yet to

become a reality. With the pace of technology's advancement, it is little wonder there are

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[12] Jake Gosselin, "Worship Tech Tour - Wellspring Church - YouTube," accessed January 17, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8-tG3CRP20&t=22s.

[13] Wight Hoogheem, "Cyber Sermons: Examining the Effectiveness of Preaching Podcasts."

[14] Wight Hoogheem, 91.

now thousands of churches streaming sermons in video format. Some congregations choose instead to include the entire worship service in their streaming. This has been the choice of the LCA. Preaching is not done in isolation, it is done in a context and surrounded by liturgy and spiritual songs and hymns in the LCA context and each aspect of the service informs the other and functions together.

Daniel J. Schmidt in Feasting in a Famine of the Word: Lutheran Preaching in the Twenty-First Century, discusses the need to be present in the preaching moment rather than downloading a sermon from the internet. The context given for this argument is that when the law convicts in the sermon the pastor who is preaching is also there to proclaim absolution. To download from the internet creates a disconnect between the one who holds the office of the keys and the individual hearer. He also describes the disconnect of the preacher not knowing the lives and contexts of the hearers. The content of the sermon is edifying, yet cannot meet the hearer in the same way.[15] While Schmidt is correct that knowing the context and lives of the hearers provides a far better opportunity to engage the listener of the online sermon, (and the pastors of LCA who are involved in the streamed preaching would all agree), the entire worship service is currently streamed. The user has the opportunity to engage in the confession and absolution from the preacher/pastor who is leading on that day.

Another church which has its sermons available on the internet for live streaming and streaming after the event is The Village Church in Texas. Pastor Matt Chandler makes a point at the beginning of each sermon to reiterate that it is God's good will that each and every one of us is meant to be in the community of a local church and that the

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[15] Daniel J Schmidt, Feasting in a Famine of the Word: Lutheran Preaching in the Twenty-First Century, ed. Mark W Birkholz et al. (Eugene: Pickwick, 2016), loc 7096 of 8142, Kindle.

stream should be used as a supplement rather than replacing physical attendance at worship in a local context.[16]

A major challenge for online preaching is the lack of connection to the context of the listener. While the preacher might carefully prepare the content of the sermon in order to touch the hearts and minds of those who are sitting in the pews on any given Sunday, those who are watching online are not necessarily aware of any locally referenced items or events. Then when watched back at a later date there is an even greater risk of contextual items being out-of-date or when the viewer is on the other side of a state, country or world, cultural and local information will be irrelevant.

In the past, some of my own sermons were placed online in manuscript form to enable lay-readers to utilize them when a local pastor was unavailable. Often these were used three or six years later in a different part of the country. There needed to be some updating and editing to make these sermons relevant to the local hearers. Leonora Tubbs Tisdale was a pivotal writer in my own journey as a preacher. She says that preaching should be local theology, understanding the intricacies of the place into which the sermon is preached and the people sitting in the pews, enabling the biblical text and the congregation to come face to face in the preaching event.[17] Bartow is in agreement:

> The preacher's design and composition of the sermon and, most importantly the preacher's *delivery* of the sermon is, or ought to be, a design, composition, and delivery that takes seriously who is listening, where, when, how, and why.[18]

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[16] Village Church, "Home | The Village Church," accessed January 15, 2020, https://thevillagechurch.net/.

[17] Leonora Tubbs-Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*, Fortress Resources for Preaching (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).

[18] Charles L. Bartow, *God's Human Speech: A Practical Theology of Proclamation* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub, 1997), 142.

It will be noted in chapter five of this project that both pastors and hearers struggle at times with this challenge in the existing format provided by the LCA. The preaching provided online is not and never will be perfect contextually for those who are accessing the streamed service online, but when a local preacher fails to conduct a thorough exegesis of their congregation, there can still be a disconnect between the preaching and the individuals in the pews.

Karl Barth expresses that preaching must be done in the concrete expression of the church and not in isolation from the mission and existence of the church.[19] Of course Barth knew nothing of the internet and streamed worship. As such we can only examine Barth with the understanding that his homiletic theology lives in a different era, yet is still relevant today in our networked world and context. Preaching is not done in isolation and is one of the key tenets of what church is as discussed previously. Where the gospel is taught in its purity and the sacraments are rightly administered, there is the church. As will be discussed next, the sacraments are the major challenge for streamed worship in a sacramental and incarnational church:

> The concept of incarnational church and preaching is reiterated by Nieman:
>
> [P]reaching is social. Although sermons occur at particular times in specific places, they are intended for real people. These people are not reducible to analytical concepts like social structure or organization. Nor are they best treated as independent individuals, separable integers who just happen to be together. Instead, preaching typically is a social event in a gathering that knows and sustains a group identity. It is an address from people to people that, among other things speaks to what it means to be human as a participant in that group. Socially embedded and enacted, preaching engages in what it means to be fully human in the company of others. That company of others is a special one for preaching, since it is called and assembled by God's word of life. That is, preaching typically

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[19] Karl Barth, *Homiletics*, 1st ed (Louisville, KY: Westminster/J. Knox Press, 1991), 56-67.

happens in some form of church for the sake of its distinctive identity and mission.[20]

Herein lies the challenge for online worship: how does this social and incarnational group activity play out in the online environment? Often the user is alone, an individual receiving preaching prepared for a particular congregation at a particular time on a specific date. The pastor is often called according to their letter of call document to preach and teach and administer the sacraments to a physical congregation or group of congregations in a parish. In the case of the LCA, pastors involved in the Lutheran Media streams are not specifically called to online ministry.[21]

The Sacrament Issue

While this thesis is to fulfil the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Preaching, the service that is being researched is Word and Sacrament ministry of the LCA. The entire worship service is made available in streamed form from St Michael's, Hahndorf and Good Shepherd, Toowoomba and most of those services include Holy Communion. This key aspect of the Divine Service cannot be ignored. There were some questions added to the online survey for this thesis for participants to discuss Holy Communion and how this aspect of the faith is lived out through an online worship experience.

The Catholic Church back in 2002 made the call that Sacraments on the internet cannot exist, although it does not rule out the benefits of an online presence:

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[20] Nieman, *Knowing the Context*, 11.

[21] While the call document or letter of call does not specify the online component of this ministry, it is considered and is part of the roles and responsibilities of the pastor in a more informal way. The LCA letter of call is a document which is not usually altered. This may need to be a consideration in the future to include online "members" as part of the congregation. The issue of connecting with these online users as members of the church will be discussed further in chapters six and seven of this thesis.

Although the virtual reality of cyberspace cannot substitute for real interpersonal community, the incarnational reality of the sacraments and the liturgy, or the immediate and direct proclamation of the gospel, it can complement them, attract people to a fuller experience of the life of faith, and enrich the religious lives of users. It also provides the Church with a means for communicating with particular groups—young people and young adults, the elderly and home-bound, persons living in remote areas, the members of other religious bodies—who otherwise may be difficult to reach.[22]

An early adopter in the online worship space was St Pixels, a virtual worship space which began in 2005 and has had various iterations and now resides on Facebook as a page where interactions within the community now take place. In 2007, Mark Howe, St Pixels' programmer and management team member, shared the following insights regarding the challenges surrounding sacraments online:

Sacraments have been discussed since the first St Pixels service. Quite apart from the obvious issues that are unique to online church, St Pixels is a diverse community theologically, with members from catholic, Lutheran, high and low church Anglican and memorialist traditions, as well as non-sacramentalists such as those from the Salvation Army. Achieving consensus as to the place of sacraments in cyberspace was never going to be easy.

In practice, as in many areas the community adopted a pragmatic approach. For high sacramentalists, careless experiments with online communion could cause considerable offence, and this tempers the enthusiasm of those for whom communion is purely symbolic.[23]

The choice of St Pixels' community was to only practice the sacraments when the community gathered together physically or where individuals were also part of an existing worship community elsewhere.

The other sacramental aspect of Lutheran worship is baptism. In one circumstance at St Michael's, Hahndorf, a family from Coober Pedy, (870km and approximately nine

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[22] Pontifical Council for Social Communications, "The Church and Internet," February 22, 2002, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_church-internet_en.html.

[23] Mark Howe, "Online Church? First Steps towards Virtual Incarnation" (Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 2007), 16-17.

hours' driving) travelled to St Michael's to have their baby baptized. The family had been participating in worship online for some time and felt as though they were members of the St Michael's congregation.[24]

Networks vs Groups/Institutions

The concept of "Digital Natives" was discussed by Ramona Hayes in her 2018 Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Preaching thesis. This research compared the way digital natives and analog natives received various sermon styles in an appreciative enquiry method.[25] With so many people now either living their entire lives or vast amounts of time each day on the internet, our receptiveness to digital or online preaching and worship must surely be increasing.

In *The Digital Cathedral: Networked Ministry in a Wireless World*, Keith Anderson uses the metaphor of the physical cathedral to describe how digital natives are now connecting wirelessly to the online "cathedral":

> [C]athedrals are places where many people, regardless of their religious identity, feel welcome to pray and to grieve. Today social media can provide a similar kind of space to express our grief and console one another in times of tragedy.[26]

Unlike local churches and parishes there is less direct connection in the cathedral. People come and go, tourists, bishops and people of other faiths, taking photos and sharing them on the internet, tagging their locations on social media and sharing their experiences with others. This metaphor fits well with the experiences that will be

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[24] This account has been shared variously by pastors, connections with St Michael's and lay members of the LCA over several years, including connections of the family sharing it with me directly.

[25] Ramona Hayes, "Digital and Analog Preaching in a Multi-Media World" (Doctor of Ministry Theses, Luther Seminary, St Paul, Minnesota, 2018).

[26] Keith Anderson, *The Digital Cathedral: Networked Ministry in a Wireless World* (New York: Morehouse Pub, 2015), loc. 664 of 4089, Kindle.

described by the survey respondents in chapter five of this research project. They are a diverse group, who sometimes visit the physical space they are viewing online or have some connection with it, but for a time are connecting online, networked rather than present. As Anderson states:

> Like the networks through which people increasingly live their lives, the Digital Cathedral is distributed and situational, local and digital, non-geographic; it is networked, relational, and expansive, whether it be Canterbury, the West End of St. Paul, the streets of Boston, train stations, pubs, coffeehouses, neighborhoods, farming fields, or the internet.[27]

It seems that our society is becoming less connected to institutions and more connected to networks, particularly with millennials as they have grown up as digital natives, and more readily accept the shift to connecting with one another online.[28]

So, if we are to connect or network with digital natives and those who have made the migration we need to be prepared to lead the way forward. Anderson suggests:

> The Digital Cathedral needs leaders whose ministries are networked, relational, and incarnational. These leaders must speak and act in ways that are culturally resonant in today's digitally integrated world, and in order to be meaningfully engaged with those around us, that requires that they also be technologically fluent. Like cathedral builders of old, we must harness the latest technologies of our time to share the Gospel.[29]

In the world we now live in there has been a paradigm shift, and there is a need to both be aware and be present, not only in the institutional and physical sense, but in the network space. Herring and Elton state that leaders need to be present in those spaces, not

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[27] Anderson, loc. 967 of 4089.

[28] Pew Research Center, "Millennials in Adulthood," *Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project* (blog), March 7, 2014, https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/03/07/millennials-in-adulthood/.

[29] Anderson, *The Digital Cathedral*, loc. 265 of 4089.

simply with marketing themselves in mind, but to be truly present and build relationships and community.[30] This is a challenge for all involved in ministry and leadership.

The world is a changing place. People have become reliant on connection to an incredible degree, with the majority of Australians now carrying a smartphone and being connected to the internet. It is nothing to sit on a train or in a waiting room of the doctor or the dentist and listen to a podcast, watch a video clip or even to engage in worship streamed online. The church might not be ready for this as a general rule. Yet this is where people are gathered, networked and connected. This is both an opportunity for mission and for an opportunity to maintain connections or to reconnect with the believer whose life has become over-scheduled and hectic. We can choose a preacher that we relate to, a musician we enjoy listening to and access twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week. This is our new reality.

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[30] Herring and Elton, *Leading Congregations and Nonprofits in a Connected World*, 55.

CHAPTER 4

GATHERING FROM THE DIASPORA

In order to discover whether the streamed worship offered by the LCA through

Lutheran Media is indeed reaching the diaspora, and in some way building koinonia and

ecclesia, I needed to engage with the users of the resource. As Peter Nardi explains, there

are times when research must be of an exploratory nature.[1] An exploratory case study

was the best model for framing the research in this instance as there was no benchmark

research extant. It was necessary, therefore, that I design an instrument with which I

might survey those who access the LCA streamed worship in order to establish an

understanding of firstly, who has been utilizing the resource. Secondly, when, where and

with whom? And thirdly and importantly, why? In addition, to gauge the effectiveness of

this ministry, I asked questions to determine the level of connectedness and engagement

with the preaching, and other liturgical elements of the worship experience online

compared to worshiping in a church building.

Methodology

Given the nature of online access to streamed worship and the anonymity

involved, posting out a paper survey for registered users to complete was not an option. I

simply did not have access to users' contact information as they are not required to

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[1] Peter M. Nardi, *Doing Survey Research: A Guide to Quantitative Methods*, 2nd ed (Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon, 2006), 9.

identify themselves in order to access the streamed worship. I instead created an online survey instrument using Survey Monkey. I created my own Survey Monkey user account to ensure confidentiality of the data and to give me full control. Once created, I asked for feedback from two independent individuals on the nature of the questions and the usability of the survey instrument. Then, with the cooperation of Pastor Richard Fox, Director of Lutheran Media, the link to the survey was advertised on the landing page of the Lutheran Media Worship sites asking users to assist us to improve the service by completing a short survey. The users were required to either copy and paste or click the link which took them to the online survey. The survey was set up with the first question asking for agreement to the implied consent form to use the data for this thesis research. If the user was unwilling to consent, they did not gain access to the survey. If they agreed, they were then allowed to continue and answer the remaining forty-one questions. A copy of the survey instrument is located in Appendix A.

The survey was opened for access on August 19, 2019 and was closed on October 21, 2019. I had hoped that my required minimum sample size of thirty completed surveys might take five or six weeks. However, in order to reach the target, I had to do some additional advertising of the survey via the Australian Lutherans Facebook user group and then an advertisement in the Lutheran Church of Australia's eNews email in order for the final surveys to be completed. In total the survey was open for nine weeks, which included ten Sundays of worship streaming.

In addition to the online survey, I was given access to data from Lutheran Media's Facebook Insights in order to ascertain the reach of the stream on Facebook live. This was supplemented by St Michael's, Hahndorf's own Facebook analytics for the same

worship services and dates that the survey was open. The analytics data corresponded to the same time frame that my survey was open and was for the same worship services that were streamed but accessed through different Facebook pages, Lutheran Media and St Michael's Hahndorf.

I manually accessed the total number of streams for each worship service over the same time frame of ten Sundays in order to have a total number of views at the time of the survey and to double check the analytics. In addition, I collated the total number of streams over the corresponding Sundays in 2018, as a comparison. As the total number of views can increase over time, I took this data in the week of October 21, 2019.

I had hoped I would be able to access the www.livestream.com/luthworship analytics for the same Sundays. However, as livestream's analytics are now a premium user subscription and budgets are tight, it was only decided at the last minute to pay the premium for access, only to discover they do not provide retrospective access. Hence, I was unable to access the data for the same dates. This was a disappointing outcome, but as an alternative I have included data for a similar span of Sundays early in 2020 for comparison.

I also asked the pastors who currently serve at St Michael's, Hahndorf and Good Shepherd, Toowoomba and one previous pastor who served at St Michael's whether I might be able to interview them and discover their insights and some anecdotal information to supplement the survey research. They were happy to oblige, and I have included some of their responses in chapter five, "A Voyage of Discovery." One user (who will remain anonymous) responded in a free text question that she was watching a new streamed worship service being provided out of Lifeway Lutheran Church at Epping

in New South Wales. I was unaware that this congregation (a congregation of the LCA) was streaming. I discovered they have been doing so since August 2019. The user offered to make themselves available for additional information as a user of the resource if desired. I will include some of that conversation in chapter five also.

As this thesis is to fulfil the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Preaching, I wanted to ask questions of both users and the preachers how the preaching component of the streamed worship firstly meets the users and secondly whether the preachers were considering the wider context of online users as they were both preparing to preach and then in the preaching moment. I asked users and preachers both qualitative and quantitative questions where possible and gave opportunity for free text answers to gain individual insights and reasoning behind some answers as a way of expanding the information gathered and its usability.

Wight Hoogheem stated that "The goal of this [his] project is to be one small corner of the important work of ongoing conversation about the intersection of technology with faith in general and in preaching in particular."[2] It is my goal in this thesis research project to follow on from Hoogheem's project, which covered preaching delivered using the means of podcasts, with research into the preaching and worship that exists in the LCA through streaming video.

In summary, in this chapter I have described the nature of the process of gathering information from the Diaspora, as I have defined the users of the streamed worship provided by the LCA. The research project itself was primarily a survey of the users who were invited to respond anonymously to forty-two questions. This survey instrument was

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[2] Wight Hoogheem, "Cyber Sermons: Examining the Effectiveness of Preaching Podcasts," 47.

supplemented with website analytics data and interviews or discussions with the pastors who have been involved in the preaching at the streamed services provided by the LCA at both St Michael's, Hahndorf and Good Shepherd, Toowomba, and one user of another alternative streamed worship resource who offered herself for additional information as required.

CHAPTER 5

A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

Introduction

How do you know what people are experiencing unless you ask them? The

voyage of discovery to explore how the streamed worship provided by the LCA meets the

people who access it began on August 19, 2019 when the first online survey response was

received. I then closed off the survey after the last response was received on October 21,

2019. In all there were forty-four respondents with a seventy-five percent completion rate

of the survey. The highest number of completions of any question, was thirty-three

responses; however, the most consistent response rate was thirty-two; a minimum of

thirty completed surveys was required for a valid sample.

In this chapter I will outline the results of the survey and the learning that comes

from them. It is interesting to note that during the period when the survey was open for

responses there were ten Sundays with an average number of views across the Hahndorf

and Toowoomba streams of 296 which gives a response rate of just eleven percent.[1] As a

matter of interest I checked the number of views for the same Sundays in the 2018 and

the average number of views was 398. There has been a drop in the average number of

views by some 102 in the twelve-month period. This may be due to the Hahndorf stream

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[1] Data accessed directly from the Lutheran Media Facebook page and Livestream sites on October 30, 2019. These were the number of views on this date by 12:00pm Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time. As the videos remain accessible these numbers may well have increased over time.

being placed on Facebook live for the first time on August 26, 2019 and also the initial

take-up being high. In contrast the average weekly views via

www.livestream.com/luthmedia have remained constant over that same period. In his

report in February 2020, Lutheran Media Director, Pastor Richard Fox noted that there

are 165 people following the www.livestream.com/luthworship stream with an average of

eighty-nine watching St Michael's, Hahndorf and seventy watching Good Shepherd,

Toowoomba, and an average of twenty watching via the Facebook live link. There are

currently eighty-five DVDs of these services being distributed per week.[2]

Survey Data

As mentioned previously, there were forty-four respondents to the survey. The

first question was a simple yes or no for the purposes of implied consent for the use of the

data gathered in the survey. If the user answered yes they received access to the rest of

the survey and a no denied access. As such, forty-four people clicked yes and were

allowed access. Of those, thirty-three answered the remaining questions and the rest

skipped through without completing their answers.

Question two was to ascertain whether the respondent was indeed a user of the

streamed worship services provided by the LCA through Lutheran Media. There were

thirty-one who replied yes and two replied that they do not use the streamed worship

provided by Lutheran Media online. Having thirty-one respond in the affirmative

provided the required minimum sample for a valid survey sample.

Question three was to discover which delivery method or platform was preferred.

In all, twenty-five respondents stated they access the stream via

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[2] Richard Fox, "Lutheran Media Director's Report February 2020," February 2020.

www.livestream.com/luthworship and ten replied that they use

www.facebook.com/luthmedia through the Lutheran Media Facebook page,

www.facebook.com/luthmedia.

Q3 Which streaming site do you access?
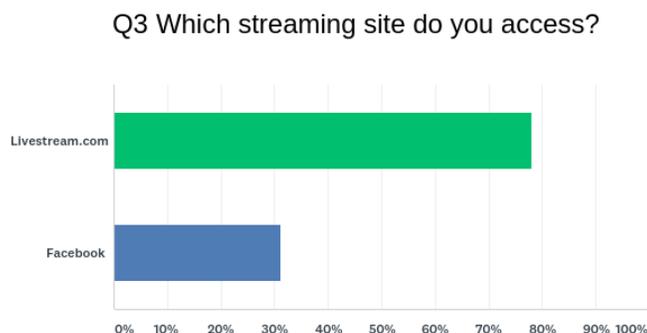
Figure 1 Which streaming site?

It is important to note that respondents were allowed to click on either or both

services, therefore even though there were thirty-two individuals who answered the

question the total was thirty-five. This results in a ratio of 5:2, where

www.livestream.com/luthworship had five viewers to every two viewers via

www.facebook.com/luthmedia. In comparison to the number of viewers of the worship

services during the survey period, the ratio was 1.3:1. This may be due to the way users

were recruited to the survey through promotion on Facebook and via a link to it on

www.livestream.com/luthworship. The Facebook link to the survey was more easily

accessible and visible, or they may simply not have accessed the alternative during the

time the survey was open.

When I began thinking through the topic of this thesis and discussing it with

others, one of the most common questions asked was whether the users were located

within Australia or were they part of the global community? Question four asked

respondents to indicate the country from which they were accessing the stream and one

hundred percent of the thirty-two who answered the question stated they were located within Australia (although one user noted that although they live in Australia they had accessed the stream while travelling in the United States of America).

While it is interesting to note that the LCA is reaching viewers from within our home country, there were no respondents from our sister country New Zealand.[3] It was surprising that New Zealand was not represented, given our close connection geographically and synodically.

As this project seeks to discern whether the streamed worship of the LCA is reaching the Diaspora, it was important to ascertain whether these users responding to the survey were geographically dispersed around this vast continent. To gauge dispersion from a geographical perspective, question five asked users to list their postal code, which in some cases might include several suburbs or localities in a region. The legend on figure two was created by selecting just one of the listed locales per postcode and may not be an exact match with the place the person accesses the stream from. The map was created using the Google My Map tool online.[4] Of note on this map is that most of the users were located in and around either capital cities or Hahndorf and Toowoomba where the streamed worship physically takes place.

In contrast to the respondents to the online survey, there are users who are accessing the LCA streamed worship from overseas locations. Lutheran Media were kind

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[3] The LCA is made up of districts from around Australia and the Lutheran Church New Zealand functions as a district of the LCA. I was surprised to have no users respond given our connection and close proximity.

[4] Timothy Stringer, "Copy of Streamed Worship Survey Respondents," Google My Maps, accessed January 16, 2020, https://www.google.com.au/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1D5-1S4ZulqDDbrYWJoIb877vTvLHsZIy&cid=mp&cv=qu0PhjrFlBc.en.

enough to provide me with data via Facebook Insights[5] for the period corresponding to

the survey instrument being open for responses. This data was provided in a spreadsheet

format and includes data for the streamed worship service at St Michael's, Hahndorf

which is made available through www.facebook.com/luthmedia.These results will be

discussed further under Web Analytics later in this chapter, as will the data from

www.livestream.com.
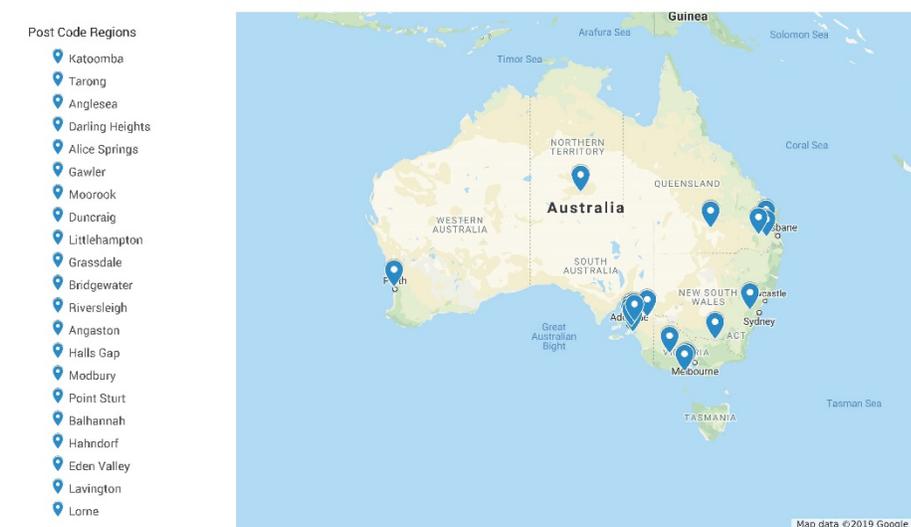
Figure 2 Respondents by postal code

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[5] Richard Fox, "Facebook Insights Lutheran Media Video 20190819-20191026.Xlsx," November 21, 2019.

Question six was used to discover whether users were viewing the stream alone, with family, a small group or in a congregational setting instead of a lay-led service.

Q6 Do you usually watch the stream:
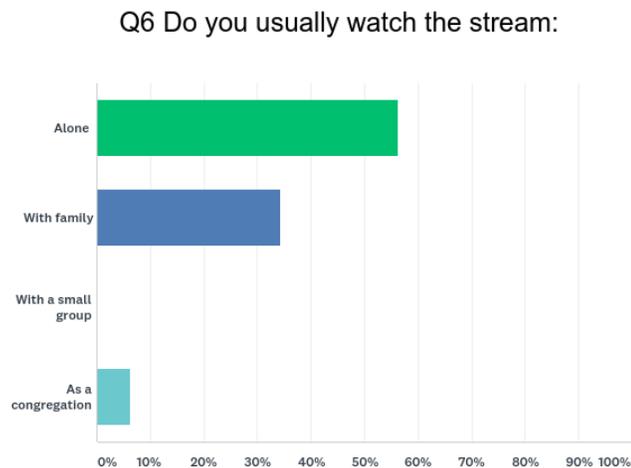
Figure 3 With whom do you watch?

As can be seen in figure three the majority of users view the stream alone with eighteen users doing so. It was pleasing to me, the researcher, that two responded that they have used the stream as a congregation. This is one mode of use that has great potential for the future in congregations during a pastoral vacancy or where lay-led services on a regular basis have drained the resources within a congregation and there is a need for assistance or there are not enough suitable/willing lay leaders.[6]

Families viewing together rated eleven responses, a factor which was surprising and pleasing to me as it means when a family is unable to worship together in a physical church building they are willing to gather together and "attend" via streaming.

The next factor to consider, given the thesis is that the LCA streamed worship is reaching the Diaspora, was whether viewers were accessing the stream from within their own home, in a church building, in an aged care facility, or while travelling. In answer to

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[6] The potential to increase lay usage will be discussed further in Chapter 7—Where to from here?

question seven there was an overwhelming majority of twenty-nine respondents who access the stream from their home. There was just one response in each of the other categories except in a school.

Q7 Do you usually access the stream:
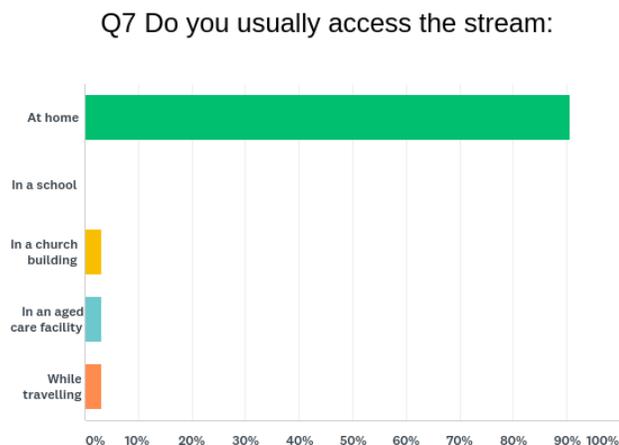
Figure 4 Where do you usually access the stream?

There were also some surprises in question eight where I asked which age demographic the users fall into. As shown in figure five, those sixty-five years and above were in the largest group while there were no respondents in the thirty-five to forty-four years category. Eighteen to twenty-four years was the smallest sample and the other three categories were similar to each other in the range of fifteen to twenty percent. It was a little surprising that the over sixty-five years group was the highest representative group in the survey as the general trend is to consider this group the most computer-illiterate. This is clearly not the case in the LCA and they are also open and able to complete an online-only survey. The large number in this category also suggests that the over sixty-five years group may have a greater need to access streamed worship due to being dispersed due to health issues or confinement due to age. My observation in congregational worship is that the age groups responding to the online survey are similar

to those attending physical worship spaces.

Q8 What is your current age?
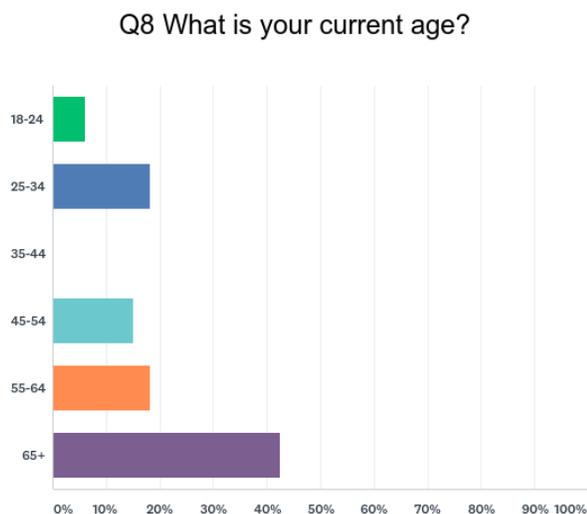
Figure 5 Age distribution

There were thirty-three users who answered question nine regarding the gender of the survey respondent. The gender distribution was sixteen male and seventeen female, with zero identifying as other.

As was stated in the introduction to this chapter, there are two methods of access to the streams, one is via www.facebook.com/luthmedia and the other www.livestream.com/luthworship. The St Michael's, Hahndorf service is streamed on both platforms[7] however Good Shepherd, Toowoomba only streams on www.livestream.com. Question ten sought to learn whether St Michael's, Hahndorf, Good Shepherd, Toowoomba or both were the preferred locale with which to connect. The thirty-two responses indicate that the majority, or fifty percent of the viewers are accessing St Michael's, Hahndorf exclusively and twenty-eight percent Good Shepherd,

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[7] A platform is a method of delivery of internet content. Sites such as facebook.com and livestream.com provide a platform for content creators to distribute their resources.

Toowoomba, while the remaining twenty-two percent are accessing both services. It is

appropriate to note here that there are other LCA congregations streaming live, although

not advertised or provided through Lutheran Media. I received feedback through the

online survey that there was not an opportunity in this question to state 'other' and to

identify the other service which is accessed.
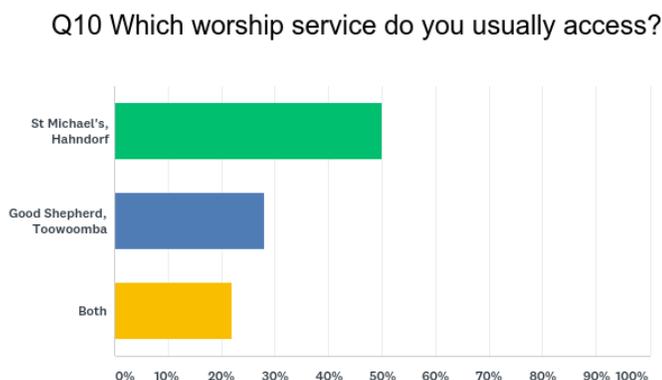
Figure 6 Service location accessed

Question eleven followed the topic in question ten to ask the users the reasons for their

preference of one service location over another or even why they might choose to access

both streams. The free text answers given can be grouped generally into the following

categories. For several respondents either St Michael's, Hahndorf or Good Shepherd,

Toowoomba are their local congregation. As such there is a natural affinity to utilize

online attendance when physical attendance is not possible. This was reiterated as a

benefit of streamed worship by the pastors I interviewed who are or have been involved

in the services streamed by the LCA through Lutheran Media. Local members who are

sick or incapacitated have the ability to remain connected with their regular worshiping

community during a short-term change in their lives. There is also (as mentioned by

pastors and some commentators) a risk that members of St Michael's, Hahndorf or Good

Shepherd, Toowoomba might take the "easy" option and stay home rather than make the effort to get to the physical worship opportunity, but this researcher ascertained through this online survey that the preferred option is attendance in person.

There were also comments indicating that watching a particular congregation's stream provided an ongoing connection to their family or a familiar pastor. This connection or affinity suggests that there is an existing koinonia (or community) which draws the person to the particular streamed worship service.

Choice of liturgical style was an additional factor influencing which streamed service is accessed. St Michael's, Hahndorf leans toward more modern style generally, with bands and modern songs, and the presiding pastor usually does not wear vestments. Conversely, Good Shepherd, Toowoomba is more traditional liturgically, with traditional hymns and the pastor vested. Of interest in the responses to this question were those who enjoy variety and access both services.

Some respondents did not know that there are two choices available through Lutheran Media and, as such, had only ever accessed one or the other. Another respondent mentioned the quality of production and music drew them to the service of choice. One respondent in the free text answer to this question indicated that they were watching a different stream to the two provided by the LCA through Lutheran Media. Lifeway Lutheran Church at Epping in New South Wales began streaming in August 2019 and are doing so as a congregation rather than under the auspices of Lutheran Media. This researcher was unaware prior to reading that response that Lifeway were now streaming regularly. The user in this case indicated that they preferred to access the Lifeway stream and offered to have me contact them for further discussion if required.

Question twelve was designed to discover the reasons for people using the LCA's streamed worship and therefore why they may possibly be considered Diaspora, that is, being separated from the church for a time for some reason.

Figure seven gives a visual representation of their responses, expressed in percentages for each category. Of note and surprise to this researcher was the number of people who indicated that their interaction online was in addition to their usual Sunday worship (a total of eleven responses). Coming a close second in the list was illness with seven responses.

Important to this research was the six respondents who replied that they cannot get to a physical church. People in this category have no choice but to access online worship. These are perhaps the true Diaspora as they are dispersed physically from "regular" worship opportunities. Four respondents listed disability as the reason and two stated that there are personal issues which lead them to stream worship. In the "other" category, one found it helpful to hear the sermon again later with less distraction around them or where their mind had wandered off on a tangent during the preaching of the sermon and they had struggled to get back to the narrative of the preaching. Another respondent leads worship elsewhere and the streamed worship allows them to worship as a participant instead. There were also five who were working on Sunday and only one who was affected by sport on Sunday. The result regarding sport was unexpected.

Q12 Do you use the streamed service because...
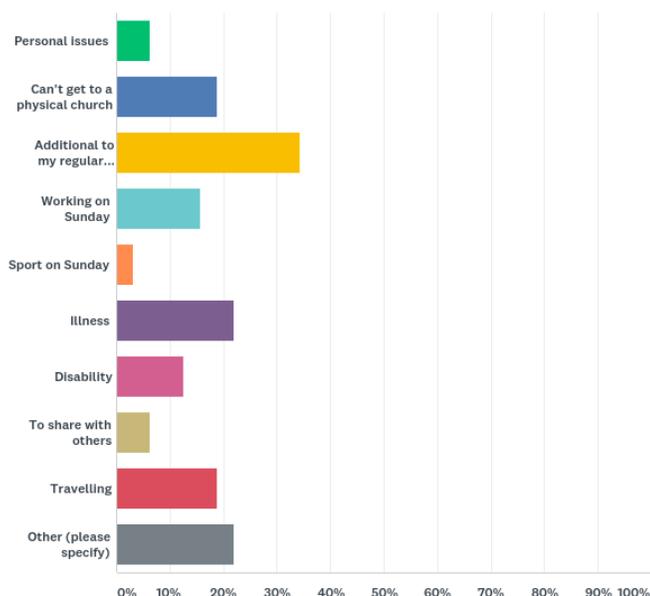
Figure 7 Reason for using streamed worship

In the "other" category (where free text answers were required) there were some who use the sermons in place of lay-reading in their regular congregational worship, one likes to hear the sermon again, and another attends a local church of a different denomination and likes to remain connected to Lutheran worship. An understanding of the reasons for these users being dispersed and unable to attend physical worship is important in discovering who streamed worship is benefitting and whether they might be long-term Diaspora or just for a season in life.

I was interested to discover when in the week users were accessing the stream. I had originally planned on using "live" streamed in the title for this thesis but realized that the opportunity was available for users to watch later as the recorded service remains available online.

There were thirty-two responses to question thirteen, with fourteen watching live on Sunday mornings. Sunday afternoon was the preference for three and Sunday night, four. The rest of the week accounted for the other seven responses. Of note in the free text answer option was that one respondent was unaware that the stream was available for later replay rather than live only. There is potential for further promotion of using the www.facebook.com/luthmedia and www.livestream.com/luthworship sources during the week and after the event for congregational usage rather than requiring the distribution of DVDs as in earlier times.

Q13 When do you usually access the stream?
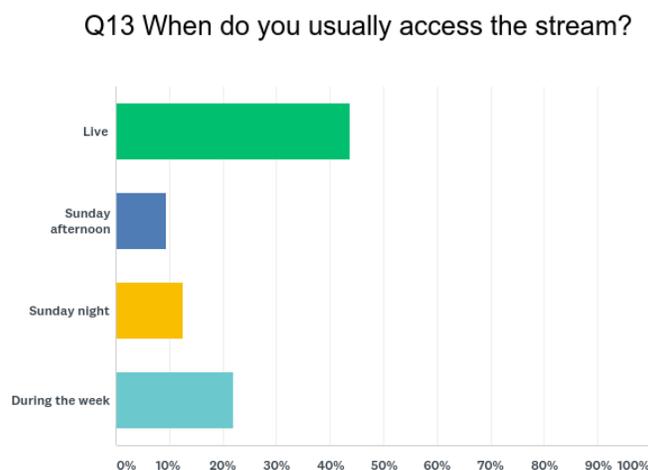
Figure 8 When do you access the stream?

Following directly on from discovering when they access the resource is question fourteen, asking how often the users access the online resource. There were thirteen users who access the stream on a weekly basis, while ten are occasional users. Another seven were accessing the stream more than once per month and two were monthly visitors. These results establish that there is some consistency in usage which is further reiterated

in question fifteen which asked how long users had been taking advantage of the stream (see figure nine).

There were twenty respondents who had been using the LCA streamed worship resource for more than a year. A further nine who had been accessing the stream for one month to one year, two had accessed for one week to one month and just one user had been accessing for one week. These figures are pleasing given that there are users in each of the categories, therefore there is some consistency with long-term users and there are some newer users accessing the resource suggesting that reach is continuing to grow. A question that should have been asked was whether any users had made the move from using the DVD distribution to the streamed option.
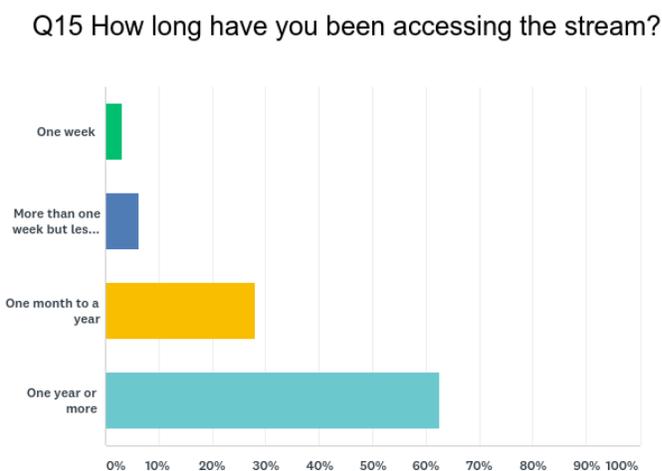
Figure 9 Length of time accessing

Question sixteen asked those responding to the survey which elements of the service they usually access. Of the thirty-two who answered this question twenty-five watched the entire service, three watched everything but the Holy Communion component, while five indicated they watched just the sermon. It was possible in this

question to click multiple components, as some people no doubt pick and choose which parts of the service to access.

Q16 Which parts of the service do you access?
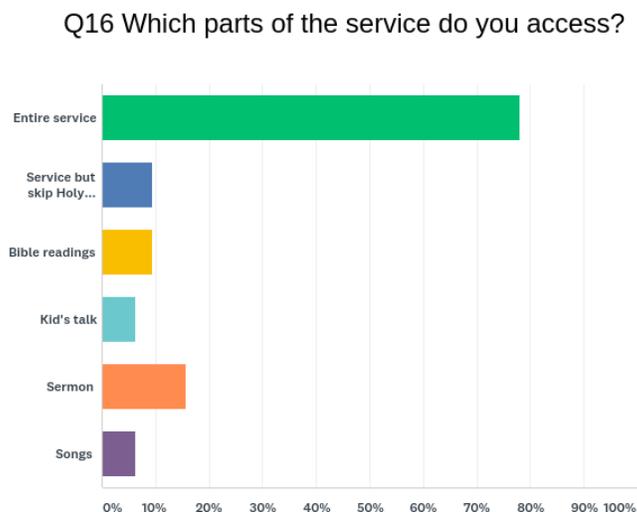
Figure 10 Which parts of the service do you access?

It is pleasing to note the number for whom the entire service is important, giving them the full experience of liturgical worship, which (as Lutherans) they are used to. It is also pleasing from the perspective of preaching research that some also choose to access the sermon specifically.

To give context to the answers in question sixteen, I then asked in question seventeen for reasons why these components of the service were preferred. The vast majority answered that they were there to experience the entire worship service just as they would if they were attending in person. One added that the children's address informs the preaching and assists in their engagement with that, and yet another mentioned that watching the entire service made them feel as though they were there.

There were a couple of comments that stated they liked the delivery and the content of the sermons and one who uses the stream to revisit the sermon after attending,

to clarify and enhance what they received in person. Another stated they usually watch the whole service but if they are "short on time" will just watch the readings and the sermon, and one who watches the readings and sermons and uses their own choice of music in the home. One user stated that they like to feel as though they are there in person, so the entire service helps achieve that sense of presence in the physical worship space. This was good to see and note. Yet another user commented that they use the service in a congregational setting in place of lay-reading services. The use of the streamed resource either live or played back for lay-led services is one which is perhaps under-utilized at present but which should be promoted or encouraged. This will be discussed further in chapter seven.

Question eighteen was a simple yes or no to "Do you consider yourself a Christian?", with all thirty-two who responded answering that they considered themselves to be Christian. Similarly, in the follow up question, question number nineteen, one hundred percent also consider themselves to be Lutheran by denomination. I had wondered whether this might be the case but expected some other denominations to be represented in the survey sample.

When asked in question twenty if the users currently attend a physical church a total of twenty-seven answered yes and just five answered no. I was surprised by this result as I was thinking that the majority of users might be unable to attend a physical worship service and therefore using streaming as their only method of worship. I should have added an extra question here to discover how often or with what regularity they attend a physical church. A question such as this would have added valuable insights to the data.

In question twenty-one, respondents were asked, "Are you a member of St Michael's, Hahndorf, or Good Shepherd, Toowoomba?" which yielded a response of twenty-four stating no and nine saying yes, a total of thirty-three responses. This result was virtually reversed in the next question, twenty-two, "Are you a member of another congregation of the Lutheran Church of Australia?" with twenty-three stating yes and ten, no. In retrospect this question should have been an additional answer to the previous question as there was most likely some overlap with members of St Michael's and Good Shepherd simply stating no in this question, rendering it redundant.

As preaching is one of the pillars of Lutheran worship, and at the heart of the thinking behind this research project, I asked in question twenty-three that if users stated that they watch the sermon in the streamed worship, to what extent does the sermon relate to their life/circumstance? I was wanting to gauge whether being separated by distance or circumstance might have an influence on the context of the preaching for the hearer. The scale was zero to five with zero being not at all and five being a lot. The average answer from thirty-two responses was four, indicating the sermons did have a highly significant relationship to their lives. This is a great result but can be tempered slightly by the inherent connection that comes from being a member of the congregation that is streaming the worship you are watching.

I then provided an opportunity in question twenty-four for free text answers to discover what aspects of the preaching related to the survey participants. As expected, given the results to earlier questions, the answers were varied and Lutheran! Answers included that the sermons included the gospel message, were confessional, included proper distinction between law and gospel, and sin and grace. Other comments included

the appreciation of the use of PowerPoint slides to follow points on the screen, the giftedness of the preacher, inclusion of current world issues and life application aspects. Still others commented that in their circumstance there was no access to Lutheran preaching, so they appreciated the opportunity to experience Lutheran preaching online. There was also a comment about hearing and understanding the preaching but knowing that they are not the person(s) the pastor is talking about. I personally found this troubling.

It was important at this stage of the survey to discover what role (if any) the sermon plays in building a connection between the user and the worshiping community they are streaming. I asked at question twenty-five, "Does the sermon assist you in feeling part of this worshiping community?" There were thirty-two users who answered this question and of those, twenty were in the affirmative while there were six who stated no, fifteen responded maybe and one not applicable. There is clearly potential for improvement in this area. It would be better if there was a higher number in the affirmative. This could be an issue for the preacher, but equally for the listener to resolve. The sermon is a significant aspect of Lutheran worship which has the potential to engage and connect online and local worshipers alike. In discussion with the pastors who prepare and deliver the preaching online it was noted that they do give consideration to those who may be listening and watching online and consider what topics they should be careful with, given that they do not know them or their circumstances necessarily. The pastor's first call is to the local congregation who has called them for Word and Sacrament ministry. It seems that at present there is no formal documentation that includes the

online worshiping community in their call to serve. This might need to be considered and changed if deemed appropriate by the local congregations who provide streaming.

Still on the preaching topic, I asked in question twenty-six for free text responses from the participants as to what they would like to hear in the preaching that they are not currently hearing. There were twenty-six individual responses although many stated there was nothing "topic wise" that was missing. Of note was a desire by one person for the gospel reading of the day to be referenced during a preaching series, and also more references to relate the Bible into our current context. One user mentioned that at times the sermons can be lengthy and repetitive, and sought a simpler explanation of the biblical texts. Still another cautioned the use of humor which might belittle or demean others, even if meant in jest. A couple of respondents mentioned that as long as there was proper application of law and gospel, they were happy.

The above requirement for law and gospel was reiterated in question twenty-seven which asked, "What in the sermons is important to hear?" The goal of this question was to find a balance between expectation and reality when preaching is being considered. No less than six comments were directed at ensuring that the Word of God was interpreted for today's context and relational to our lives. There was a need to hear the truth based on God's Word, forgiveness of sins and not surprising (to me and no doubt most preachers) a good story to assist in relating to God's story for us.

The next question, number twenty-eight was a shift from preaching to the sacramental aspect of worship. One of the key challenges with streamed worship for a church like the LCA is that we are a sacramental church. We in the LCA focus on Word and Sacrament ministry and seek to celebrate the Lord's Supper as often as possible.

Many congregations who have full-time pastors available have today opted for conducting the Divine Service each Sunday. Both streamed services of the LCA include the Lord's Supper in the stream. I was interested to discover how this meets those who access online worship. I was perhaps a little bold in asking whether users participate in Holy Communion themselves at home when they view that part of the stream. Once again thirty-two respondents answered the question and twenty said they do not participate. There were three who stated that they do and the same number for whom this question was not applicable as they do not view that part of the stream.

I then asked if the survey respondent does not participate, what were their reasons? The answers ranged from there being no pastor present so they could not, to they attend a local church regularly and do not need to, or have a pastor bring them communion in the home. Others did not feel included so skip that part of the service, and another stated they did not know the people at the remote streaming site so how could they commune with them. This is an interesting theological conundrum which is beyond the scope of this thesis but does have an impact on the connectedness of an online user when they are potentially disenfranchised by one element of the liturgy. It has the potential to make them feel more isolated rather than connected. This topic will be discussed briefly in chapter seven as a challenge for online worship.

With this sense of connectedness in mind, I asked at question thirty, on a scale of zero to five, "To what extent do you feel connected to the online worshiping community?" There were thirty-two who answered this question and the average was three, a middle of the road response. To give some sort of benchmark to the above question I also asked in question thirty-one, "To what extent do you feel connected to St

Michael's, Hahndorf or Good Shepherd, Toowoomba?" The result was identical to question thirty. Users of the streamed worship feel as connected to each other as they do the congregations they are "attending" online. The next logical question was, "To what extent do you feel connected to your local church?" In question thirty-two there were thirty responses and the result jumped up to a four. The higher response is no doubt the result of feeling more connected to a local church where they know the people and are familiar with the space and the pastor. To follow this topic further, I then asked in question thirty-three, "To what extent do you feel connected to the Lutheran Church of Australia?" With thirty-two responses the result was an average of a four on the sliding zero to five scale.

In a similar vein I asked in question thirty-four, "To what extent do you feel connected to the pastor of the stream you access?" The responses to this question went back to the average of three, in line with the earlier question of connectedness to the online community and to the congregations who provide the streamed worship services. One of the pastors commented that it is currently difficult to connect because there is no means of having a personal conversation with those who stream the online worship. On www.facebook.com/luthworship there is an opportunity to make comments but it seems this rarely takes place, and is not really a forum for open and heartfelt conversation when anyone accessing the stream can view and comment.

Question thirty-five related to the opportunity for online participants to submit prayer requests to St Michael's, Hahndorf in particular as they advertise pre-service the email address to do so. None of the respondents had ever submitted a prayer request. I will discuss this aspect further in chapter seven also.

Knowing from anecdotal evidence that at least one family has travelled to Hahndorf to have their child baptized at St Michael's, I asked in question thirty-six if users had participated in the worship life at St Michael's, Hahndorf or Good Shepherd, Toowoomba in any way. The pastor and congregation had previously been unaware that people such as these were feeling connected to St Michael's as members of the congregation. Of thirty-three responses to question thirty-six there were fifteen in the affirmative. This was followed in question thirty-seven by an opportunity for free text input which resulted in answers such as they attend when they are in town. One responder was a member at the physical church but unable to attend currently due to physical issues. One had made monetary donations and others responded that they were members of the congregation.

Q38 In general did the streamed service make you feel part of a Christian Church?
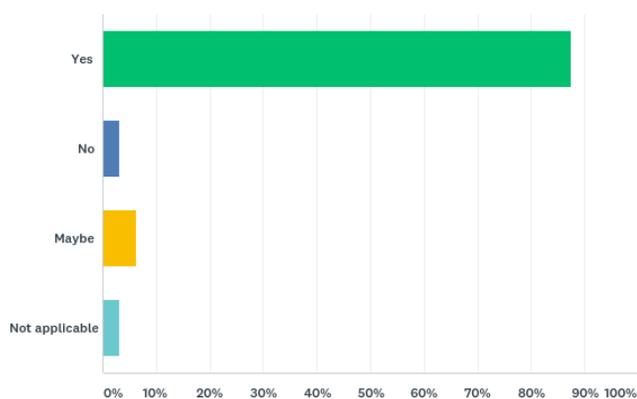
Figure 11 Feeling part of a church

The final group of questions were aimed at gauging the level of connectedness or feeling of community and the church. Question thirty-eight asked, "In general did the streamed service make you feel part of a Christian Church?" There were thirty-two who

responded and twenty-eight said yes. There was one no, two maybes and one not applicable (see figure eleven).

Question thirty-nine asked, "Have you been in contact with the congregations or pastors in any way?" There were thirty-one responses to this question and there were fourteen who had, and seventeen who had not. This is likely due to membership of the congregations as mentioned previously.[8]

I then wanted to discover whether there was a sense of actual participation in a worship service or whether the user felt as though they were watching someone else's worship. In question forty there were thirty-two responses, and twenty-three felt like they were participating, which was pleasing! Seven stated that they felt as though they were watching (see figure twelve).
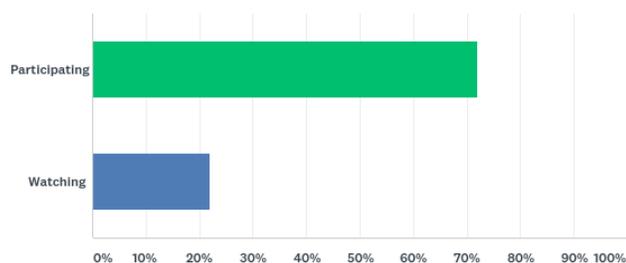
Figure 12 Are you participating or watching?

The crunch point came when I asked at question forty-one if the users preferred to worship in person or online. There was a resounding majority of thirty-one to one who prefer worshiping in person. This response was not surprising for a Word and Sacrament

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[8] LCA membership is based on a minimum attendance of two Sundays per calendar year and attending Holy Communion. Voting members are over the age of 16. This is a challenge where members are accessing worship online and not communing at a physical church.

denomination that focuses on the real presence of Christ and the church as Christ's body here on earth.

I asked for open responses as to why users had this preference. Nine stated participation in Holy Communion as the reason. Others cited mixing with others and catching up, relationships, and feeling more part of the body of Christ. One stated they prefer in-person worship but online is a great alternative when they cannot physically attend worship in a physical church. Another sometimes enjoys a personal worship service and at other times likes to be with others. Still another said it is much better to sing with others than when online. One did state it is much easier to hear when online than in person.

Wight Hoogheem's discovery with podcasts was similar to the experience of those participating in streamed worship via video:

> [P]odcasts were experienced as a stop-gap measure or a life preserver. Sermon podcasts were a way to stay connected with what happened in the sermon instead of being seen as a way to get connected with the faith community. The provocative proposal the large group generated highlights this reality, as the reality of the digital revolution is noted, but its reality is mediated by the language of "active participation." The large group saw sermon podcasts as a passive, not active, experience, so even though the generative statement acknowledges and accepts the use of multiple forms of media and technology, it is active engagement and participation that get the last word. This group strongly affirmed the value of proximity in the lived reality of the body of Christ.[9]

Finally, I asked "Are there any suggestions you would like to make that might help you feel more connected to the Lutheran Church of Australia, St Michael's, Good Shepherd, your local church or the wider church?" One asked if there could be a blessing of some kind included during the communion liturgy for those attending online, while

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[9] Wight Hoogheem, "Cyber Sermons," 79-80.

another suggested advertising the alternatives as they did not realize there was more than one until completing the survey, and perhaps there could be more promotion of prayer requests. Some do have internet connectivity issues which create lag and stutter in the stream while accessing online, and one asked that the pastors regularly introduce themselves as they are not known to all.

Web Analytics

I was disappointed that I was unable to access the analytics data from www.livestream.com/luthworship for the specific weeks that the survey for this thesis project was live to provide a direct comparison with the survey. Lutheran Media did however obtain data for a group of Sundays from November 18, 2019 to January 27, 2020 for both St Michael's, Hahndorf and Good Shepherd, Toowoomba.[10]

Livestream's analytics were presented in an accessible format and provide evidence that there are users from around the globe accessing the streamed worship, rather than only within the confines of the continent of Australia. It is both interesting and exciting to know the reach of the streamed worship of the LCA, even though there were no survey responses from overseas users. It would have been a great addition to the research if some of these international users would have provided the detailed insights into their situations and the reasons for them connecting in this way to the LCA. Although, as we will discover, the engagement is not as great as in Australia.

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[10] See Appendix B for copies of the Livestream data analytics.

St Michael's, Hahndorf

The maximum number of concurrent users via www.livestream.com/luthworship was seventeen during the period noted above. The average watch time was nineteen minutes and fifty seconds, with a total number of views at 1072, and the highest number of views falling on December 23, 2019. It was interesting to note that sixty-five percent of users used a desktop computer to view the stream, while twenty percent were on a mobile device, thirteen percent on a tablet and under one percent on a connected television (although the television only totaled an average of just thirty-five seconds of viewing, which does not constitute substantial usage!).

Of significance was the statistic for live and recorded access. Sixty-six percent watched the recorded version at a later time and/or date and thirty-three percent accessed the stream live. This figure is slightly different to the result from the survey of users for this thesis project which in question thirteen returned a result of forty-three percent live and the rest at a later time and/or date.

The data shows that the users in the following countries accessed the LCA worship stream at Hahndorf during the analysis period: Australia, United States of America, Canada, Singapore, Japan, Philippines, Turkey, Brazil, Netherlands, United Arab Emirates. However, the average watch time data suggests that many of those outside of the continent of Australia were just "checking it out" rather than actively watching and participating. The exceptions were the Netherlands, where one user stayed for twenty minutes and a United Arab Emirates user for fifty-seven minutes.

Good Shepherd, Toowoomba

During the same sample period Good Shepherd, Toowoomba had a total number of concurrent viewers of twenty-two, with 913 total views and an average watch time of twenty-three minutes and thirty-three seconds. Like Hahndorf, the highest number of views was for the December 23 service. Devices used to access the streams were similar to Hahndorf also, with sixty-one percent using a desktop computer, twenty-seven percent on a mobile device and ten percent on a tablet of some kind. In this case there were no connected televisions used to access. Sixty-two percent accessed the stream after the event and thirty-seven percent accessed it live. There were users from several different countries during the sample period. The countries accessing were Australia, United States of America, Spain, Canada, Singapore, Serbia, Italy, France, Puerto Rico, and Lithuania. Again, people from countries other than Australia mostly watched for less than one minute. It was significant that New Zealand was not represented in this sample. As a significant partner in the LCA, there is perhaps potential to promote the stream further in New Zealand.

Facebook Insights

The data from Facebook Insights for the period that the thesis project user survey was open provided similar data to that of www.livestream.com/luthworship. While several foreign countries were included in the data, they were only passing by rather than engaging and connecting with the worship and preaching. The countries included Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Egypt, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia,

Kenya, Laos, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Switzerland, United

Kingdom, United States of America and Venezuela.[11]

I have laid out in this chapter the data as I have received and interpreted it. In

chapter six I will look more critically at my methodology and how the research may have

been improved. In chapter seven I will provide some further interpretation as well as

offer some ways forward for the streamed worship offerings in the LCA.

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[11] Fox, "Facebook Insights Lutheran Media Video 20190819-20191026.Xlsx."

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSING THE ANALYSIS

Strengths

Perhaps the most pleasing aspects of this research project are that it has reached out to those worshipers who are dispersed around this vast nation of Australia and has allowed them to have some input regarding the resource that is being provided to them for their benefit. The project has discovered reasons for users accessing streamed worship as provided by the LCA. It has also discovered their locations and when during the week they are accessing this service. There has been affirmation for continuing the streamed worship services offered by the LCA through Lutheran Media. Having learned that most of the users were accessing the stream from a relatively close proximity to the two streaming centers, there is now an opportunity to encourage more congregations to consider streamed services from different locations around the country to provide a more contextual experience for users.

This research has highlighted the challenge of an incarnational and sacramental church in engaging fully in online worship. There is an inherent need for connection to individuals and for the elements of the Lord's Supper to be consecrated and present for worship to be complete. It has also been noted that when the streamed worship includes the Lord's Supper the separation from the physical church is highlighted or exacerbated for some who desire to be in full communion with those who are worshiping in the physical location being streamed. It was also discovered through the pastors involved in

leading the streamed worship that there is a small percentage of their own members who choose to stay at home and connect with the stream rather than attend the physical church. This is an important discovery and an issue that needs to be approached in a pastoral way to discern the reasons for this choice. It is interesting that some who are unable to attend for a time are keen to attend physically and crave the incarnational interaction while others choose to stay away and use the easy option of streamed worship. As Carey Nieuwhof explains:

> [O]n those Sundays when I have no official role, I'm plagued with the question "Why go to church?"
> After all, our church streams our services live online. I could literally watch live on any device I own anywhere. Plus we share the services on demand, so I could watch or listen any time during the week via our website or catch the message for free via podcast.
> If your church doesn't have an online experience, no worries, about a million others do. You can access almost any church you want, anywhere, anytime. Free.
> Which brings us back to the question: *Why attend church?*
> Increasingly, I'm convinced there's no point to merely attending. You drive all the way in to connect with three or four songs, hear the message and then head home. All of that you could almost do by yourself in a much more convenient way. Slip on Spotify and grab the message via podcast or on demand and boom, you're covered.[1]

When we are faced with questions like that of Nieuwhof above, what do we answer? How can we be armed for the discussion? Knowing that most people do indeed benefit from connecting in an incarnational way goes some way to answering this. In sacramental churches there is an added incentive to attend the physical space. The Lord's Supper is distributed there and some feel a connection not only to the host, Jesus Christ, but to others around them in a sacred moment of sharing the Sacrament.

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[1] Carey Nieuwhof, "Why Attending Church No Longer Makes Sense, CareyNieuwhof.Com," accessed October 21, 2019, https://careynieuwhof.com/why-attending-church-no-longer-makes-sense/?fbclid=IwAR2lpkGZFYpAvUJUYSTTOO-PEqf3m-I2DUCFbEa9acahX1psXIjD8ERit10.

As this researcher has continued to be a working preacher throughout the time of academic research, I have continued to visit those who are shut-in or hospitalized and to share the Lord's Supper with them. I have asked them what their response might be to a resource where our local worship services were available to them via streaming. Without fail they have all responded that such a resource would be a wonderful blessing to allow them to remain connected to their local worshiping community (during their recovery in hospital or long-term in aged care) and to see their friends and loved ones worshiping each week.

This kind of response highlights the need for online streaming and for further research into its effectiveness in building and/or maintaining both koinonia and ecclesia. One possibility would be the development of an app which would simplify access to a stream for those not familiar with technology. A simple one or two step process to gain access to streams of local worship on a simple wireless-enabled tablet would provide a stable and accessible means of connecting with the worshiping community.

The survey uncovered an added benefit of streamed worship—the ability to revisit what was preached or hear more fully what was said, even if they were in the church live at the location. Similarly, when streaming online there is an opportunity to rewind and listen again, which is not possible in live preaching.

As I have discussed the topic of my research with colleagues in the LCA and in the ecumenical circles I interact with regularly, there has been a high level of interest in this topic and its potential uses in the context of Australian churches. Many are keen to see the results of the research and read this project in order to better understand this emerging technology and how it might be used in their contexts. Some seek technical

solutions or ideas, which are beyond the scope of this research. With the rapid change in platforms, cameras, streaming tools and other technological equipment it is almost impossible to keep up and stay current. What is certain is that the ease of use and quality of equipment keeps evolving and perhaps makes the switch to streaming more accessible for smaller congregations. Brady Shearer from Pro Church Tools suggests that churches need to consider the return on investment before making the move to streamed worship of a reasonable quality and how many people would need to watch to make the investment worthwhile. He suggests it may be preferable to spend money on other emerging media such as a website, and social media and paid promotion.[2]

Weaknesses

This researcher would have preferred to have been able to access a larger, more diverse sample of users to add depth and balance to the survey results. While the minimum sample size was achieved, greater numbers would have been helpful and given a broader response across the nation. It would have also been advantageous to receive survey responses from users outside of the continent of Australia. These users are out there, as seen through the Facebook Insights analytics, however they did not respond to the online survey.

As mentioned in chapters four and five, I had some difficulty in accessing the www.livestream.com/luthworship analytics which left a gap in the data available for the ten Sundays the survey was open. This meant that even though the survey data stated clearly that the users were one hundred percent Australian and one hundred percent

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[2] Brady Shearer, *Why Live Streaming for Churches Is Overrated | Pro Church Daily Ep. #114*, accessed February 27, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GgHwO93Ssg.

Lutheran, I could not compare that result directly against the livestream analytics for the same period. I did receive data for a later period which was able to affirm that there are users in international locations, not merely confined to the continent of Australia.

On the positive side, I was able to access the matching analytics from the Facebook live feed during those same dates. The data received in my survey and through the analytics shows clearly that while my survey respondents were all Australian and Lutheran, there were users around the world who were accessing the streamed worship of the Lutheran Church of Australia during the time the survey for this thesis project was open for responses.[3]

I had also hoped to compare the data from a survey conducted by Lutheran Media in 2018 of the subscribers to the Lutheran Media Worship DVD service. Unfortunately, the completed forms were misplaced at some point prior to my thesis proposal being approved. Not having these results was disappointing as many of the questions asked were the same as those in the early part of my online survey. That survey was of the users of the same worship services that are streamed, which are then burned to DVD and distributed to more than one-hundred users around Australia.

In the online survey, the one user, who was accessing an alternate streaming service within the LCA rather than Lutheran Media's two current ones, stated that it was difficult to answer all of the questions in the survey. For someone who had stated yes, they have used the streaming service of the LCA but now access a different stream, some of the subsequent questions became obsolete or irrelevant. The survey design could have been improved by including skip logic to the survey as some questions were not

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[3] The international user category was highlighted in chapter five under Web Analytics through both Facebook Insights and www.livestream.com/luthworship analytics.

necessarily relevant when a given answer was not provided. I was trying to keep within a specific scope, including only streams that were currently being provided by the LCA through Lutheran Media and overlooked the extra possibilities in the LCA, of which at the time I was unaware.

There could have been a greater emphasis on the preaching aspect of the streamed worship within the survey instrument. This researcher was attempting to gain insight into all areas of worship with one survey in order to give a wide range of data for the use of both the LCA and Lutheran Media for their ongoing work in the area of streamed worship. In so doing there was some scope creep and less emphasis on the preaching moment in the survey instrument.

I considered the possibility of adding to the project by having a small focus group of people who had not previously been exposed to streamed worship and have them "attend" online during the survey period. I would have then conducted some appreciative enquiry methodology among them and compared these results against those of the survey respondents. I decided against adding this component as it was outside the scope of the concept of diaspora as they would have most likely been drawn from existing congregation members who are worshiping regularly. Perhaps research along these lines would be of benefit in the future to gauge how new users interact with the provided worship streams of the LCA when they are suddenly unable to worship for a time or season.

Suggestions for Future Research

It is my firm belief after conducting the research for this thesis, that with streaming worship we are just scratching the surface of what will become a more widely

accepted and utilized resource in the future. As technology develops quickly and the

hardware required to stream worship becomes more readily available, financially

accessible and user-friendly, I believe there will be more congregations seeking to

provide a resource similar to the offering provided by Lutheran Media on behalf of the

LCA. As new streams roll out, it will be pertinent to continually assess the effectiveness

of the "product" and how it is meeting the users' needs.

As is strongly suggested for any preacher, it would be beneficial for preachers

who are preaching to an online audience to seek feedback from those who are accessing

the online preaching and to close the loop between preacher and hearer.[4]

As Joel Wight Hoogheem suggested in his thesis on podcasting sermons, there

was room for researchers to investigate the use of "vodcasts"[5] as he termed them.[6] This

researcher's project fits into this category. In the future there will be other platforms

developed to further enhance the interactional aspect of worship which are currently only

in the imaginations of creative thinkers. For example, some churches have gone down the

path of developing apps for interaction in worship and throughout the week to increase

engagement and a sense of community. Companies such as Faithlife, through their

worship presentation software Proclaim, have interactivity built in through live surveys,

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[4] This concept was strongly endorsed by Professor Shauna Hannan in our *Preaching as the Word of God in Context* class at Luther Seminary in June 2019. I have found the process of both "feedforward" and feedback in the preaching cycle to be a fantastic tool in assessing how the preaching is meeting the hearer in any given context. While it may be a challenge to organize such a process in online preaching context, a feedforward process and feedback loop of some description would be helpful in exegeting the "congregation" and developing a relationship between preacher and hearer.

[5] The term "vodcasts" was used in the context of a thesis discussing the effectiveness of preaching using the podcast as a method of sermon delivery. Podcasts use voice recordings only often delivered by an app on a mobile device or downloaded from a website. A vodcast is therefore an extension of the podcast utilizing video and audio rather than just audio. Today we simply use the term "streamed video".

[6] Wight Hoogheem, "Cyber Sermons", 89.

quizzes and Bible reading tools which connect to users in the building via their enabled devices such as their phone or tablet. This is a new approach and has risks involved such as users become distracted by other notifications that appear when they take out their phone or tablet to participate in a quiz or survey.

There are opportunities for further research on other models of delivery of online preaching. I chose to conduct research on a resource that was already being provided as I had been unable to locate any research done by others, especially in the Australian context. However, there are many different churches around the world which are utilizing streaming for the sermon or preaching component of worship only.

This researcher would love to conduct research into the way community and connection is built between preacher and worshipper when worship services are led in multiple locations in a multi-point parish with the preaching being streamed and common. This researcher has, in the past, pre-recorded sermons for my congregation and used them on site while I was absent on study leave. These were well received, and worshippers commented later that "it was as though you were here in the church with us." Another LCA parish in Ipswich, Queensland has been using a similar method for a number of years. Their pastors pre-record sermons for use in the congregations they will not be present in and use green screen technology to overlay the sanctuary of the church that it will be screened in, to give the sense of the preacher being in the room. It would be great to be able to conduct research into the effectiveness of this mode of live streaming.[7]

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[7] In 2017, prior to commencing the Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Preaching at Luther Seminary I visited Cross Point Church (crosspoint.tv) in Nashville, Tennessee. They are a multi-point church with several campuses which have live worship leaders at each campus and centralized preaching streamed to each campus on a slight delay. I met with their production manager and discussed some of the intricacies of this process and the challenges they face. This model is one I feel would be possible to replicate in the Australian context.

Perhaps the most challenging and potentially controversial[8] area which will need to be researched if streamed worship continues to grow in popularity is the consecration of elements in the Lord's Supper. There were three of thirty-two respondents to question twenty-five in the survey who said they participate at home with bread and wine during the Holy Communion section of the stream. There were three who did not access the Communion section and so replied as not applicable. One can only assume that this participation is with bread and wine in front of whatever electronic device they are using to stream the service and that they believe the pastor is consecrating these physical elements with the words of institution across the internet. This might be a matter for the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations (CTICR) of the LCA to discuss in the near future if streaming is to become an established and accepted mode of worship attendance. As noted in chapter three, the thought of this practice being efficacious is ruled out by the Roman Catholic church and other denominations.[9] Sometimes praxis informs theology, or at least brings to a head a need for urgent consideration to give guidance when an emerging practice comes to light.

In Summary

Streamed worship is a relatively new phenomenon and has its challenges for those providing it and those experiencing it remotely. This project has highlighted the challenge for sacramental churches like the LCA to fully connect to the faith life of online worshipers through streamed worship. There were some challenges from the

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[8] George D Chryssides and Margaret Z Wilkins, *Christians in the Twenty-First Century*, 2014, http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1782418.

[9] Pontifical Council for Social Communications, "The Church and Internet."

perspective of the research in gathering enough data and in a manner conducive to exhaustive research. What was gathered has been helpful and informative. As streamed worship is rolled out in churches around the world there is room for further research into different modes of delivery and to discover ways for emerging media such as social media platforms to further engage users and connect them to the physical worshiping community and each other online.

CHAPTER 7

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Project Value

The practical theologian in me cannot help but wonder, "What value is research without some form of positive outcome?" It is my heartfelt desire that this thesis will be of value not only to the Lutheran Church of Australia, but to other denominations or faiths who are looking to expand their reach and further serve their people who are widely dispersed. Regardless of whether dispersion is due to geography or inability to attend a physical church for a period of time (such as illness or disability), there is great potential in the ability of streaming worship to both connect and to keep people connected to a worshiping community. People are becoming increasingly used to connecting online and to streaming technology for entertainment. Therefore, I believe that our general acceptance of streamed worship services as a valid form of worship will only increase as time goes by. As discussed in chapter six, there have been many clergy who have expressed an interest in the outcome of this research and who are keen to cast an eye over it and learn what has been discovered in the experience of the LCA.

The "networked community" that exists in our world today, both within and outside of the church catholic, is continuing to grow. People are increasingly connecting in networks rather than in groups and the ability of streamed worship to be a spoke in that network makes it attractive to potential users. It is important, therefore, to engage with the users of streamed worship and find ways of building them into the koinonia (or

community) that needs to exist in order to fulfil the call to be in communion with other Christians.

The Communications Department of the LCA recently conducted a review of emerging media as a means of connecting with the members of the church more effectively and efficiently. This report[1] looks at the ways the LCA are currently utilizing social media platforms to engage the wider community. There are opportunities to value-add to the streaming product currently provided by dove-tailing content and themes to enhance connection and community building and in turn to connect people to the ecclesia, the church.

While we will never truly replace the incarnational nature of worship with the online community, there is much merit in persisting with the technology for the next-best-thing for those who are part of the Diaspora. The ideal goal for all Christians should be that they are physically present in worship as part of the body of Christ, yet this is not always possible as previously discussed. Pastors and church leaders do not want to give worshipers an excuse to stay at home or elsewhere by providing an easy way for them to be physically removed from their regular place of worship. Yet for first-time visitors one of the best ways to find a new church is to visit their website and watch their streamed worship. What better way to assess the style, content and feel of a worship service at a particular locale than to "attend" online before turning up in person. When those people do show up, they also need to find an authentic community that parallels what they experienced online and now in face-to-face interaction through a genuine welcome by members of the community gathered in worship. There also needs to be ways for these

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[1] Rikki Lambert, "Emerging Media Report: Lutheran Church of Australia," September 2019.

people, and those who solely access the worship at a distance, to become part of the

community beyond Sunday morning.

Creating Online Communities

In August 2019 I was alerted through a Facebook post that an acquaintance, a

Facebook "friend", Jenny "T Bird" Gabriel, had begun a new role as the organizer of a

new Facebook community that was to be built around a podcast called "The Upside –

with Callie and Jeff." This podcast was in its infancy and was seeking to double the

numbers of listeners by the end of the year. One tool that Callie and Jeff chose to utilize

was a Facebook group with the same title as the podcast. They contacted my Facebook

"friend" who had been the fan club coordinator of one of the most successful country

bands in the world for almost ten years and who is somewhat of an expert at bringing

people together around the globe with a common interest as the starting point. From there

people have met online and become friends, and then further built relationships at pre-

concert gatherings and events. I met "T Bird" through the country band's fan club as I

was a member and she came with the band to Australia for their concert tour. She

arranged a "meet and greet" for me and all of my family who were attending the concert.

She signs her email "Professional Best Friend" and that is how she operates. She was the

perfect person to head up a new group to support a podcast and build a community (dare I

say koinonia) around it. The group description states; "The Upside means living in

gratitude, finding the positive in every experience and helping other people do the

same!"[2] I was one of the first members to join the group on August 12, 2019, the day that

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[2] Jeff Dauler and Callie Dauler, "THE UPSIDE with Callie and Jeff," August 2019, https://www.facebook.com/groups/callieandjeff/about/.

the group was formed, as I wanted to see first-hand what would happen. I was amazed. Within the first day the group had gone from me and a couple of others to hundreds. Now as of January 2020 there are 15000 members.[3] There have been physical gatherings in Georgia, where the podcast is recorded, and in other places around the United States of America.

The show also utilizes a voicemail system which allows the hosts to listen and then use excerpts of those recordings on the show. The service is available 24/7 and is accessible from anywhere in the world. I even used it to leave a thank you message which was used on the show on episode eighty-seven of the podcast. I have been amazed at the way complete strangers are eager to share within the community of this group their gratitude for happenings in their lives and seek the help of others to find an upside in a difficult situation. There are prayer requests in difficult times, and shouts of thanksgiving in times of joy. It is possible to build a community around a web-based production like a podcast or streamed video if there are the right people who are motivated and friendly to put in the effort.

As mentioned in chapter two, Herring and Elton's research into the way networks are changing the manner in which churches connect with their members, reiterates my findings that community is being built and can exist via social media platforms. We are slowly learning to do things differently:

> The primary difference between social networks from last century and this century is that they exist in two domains: physical and digital. They may be very active in one or both spheres, but just as the telephone eventually became an essential form of interaction that accelerated decision-making in the last century,

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[3] Jeff Dauler and Callie Dauler, "THE UPSIDE with Callie and Jeff," August 2019, https://www.facebook.com/groups/callieandjeff/.

virtual platforms are having a similar but exponentially greater effect on Millennials, Gen Xers, and increasingly those who are Boomers and older.[4]

Andrew Root in *The Relational Pastor: Sharing in Christ by Sharing Ourselves*, describes the loneliness that a person may experience:

> Loneliness reveals personhood because loneliness is the confession of lost relationship; it is clutching to find your personhood. And it can be so radical that some psychologists actually say that the hardest thing to get clients to discuss is loneliness; they hypothesize that this is so because the feeling of loneliness is the closest experience that we have to death. It is to be dead to all others; it is to be alone. There is simply no life in being alone, no such thing as a singular person. God's very command in Genesis states as much, "It is not good that the *adam* should be alone" (Gen 2:18). To be alone, we could even stretch it to say hyperindividualism, is the very judgment of God.[5]

This kind of loneliness may manifest itself when finding oneself in the midst of the wilderness of Diaspora. Loneliness exacerbates the sense of disconnectedness from the body of Christ in physical worship. This sense increases the urgency to build koinonia with those who are isolated from worship.

There is opportunity to utilize emerging media to enhance the connection and community that the users of Lutheran Media's streaming worship are currently experiencing. We will most likely never replace the experience of being in communion with one another in the physical worship space; however, when the Diaspora need to connect, how can we facilitate a closer connection than just being a fly on the wall watching others worship? (as Brady Shearer describes).[6]

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[4] Herring and Elton, *Leading Congregations and Nonprofits in a Connected World*, 7.

[5] Andrew Root, *The Relational Pastor: Sharing in Christ by Sharing Ourselves* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), loc. 686-689 of 3279, Kindle.

[6] Shearer, *Why Live Streaming for Churches is Overrated | Pro Church Daily Ep. #114*.

The Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) has had a service called Project

Reconnect for a number of years. This began as a means of distributing pre-recorded,

lectionary based worship materials that were prepared in the Hunter Presbytery in the

Hunter Valley in New South Wales, and distributed to remote communities to assist in

their worship where resources were limited. There is now a group on Facebook called

Saltbush – Uniting the Scattered Community. Their "about" information says they are:

> Working as a whole church to encourage and affirm the place of all our Uniting
> Christian communities irrespective of size or location.
> In particular, Saltbush is about connecting hundreds of smaller, mostly rural,
> Christian communities and encouraging them in their place within their local
> communities.
> Saltbush is about encouraging grounded Christian community in the 21st century.
> Saltbush affirms that each Uniting congregation already has everything they need
> to gather and live out their faith and that together it is our role to encourage,
> connect and support each other.
> Saltbush might challenge comfort, tradition, practice and the values we place on
> aspects of our church life, but as Easter people there is always the opportunity for
> new life through Christ.[7]

It is great to see that other Christian denominations in Australia are also finding

ways to reach the Diaspora and to help cultivate koinonia and the sense of ecclesia. In the

case of the UCA, they are focusing on remote congregations rather than individuals not

leaving them to fend for themselves, but supplying support and care over distance and in

gatherings that bring people together.

Shane Hipps has a slightly different approach to the use of emerging media,

although he was writing in 2009 when Facebook was new and MySpace still existed.

"When we realize, for example, that digital space has the extraordinary ability to create

vast superficial social networks, but is ill-suited for generating intimate and meaningful

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[7] Saltbush Community, "Saltbush - Uniting the Scattered Community - About," accessed March 5, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/pg/Saltbushcommunity/about/?ref=page_internal.

human connection, we may treat it more like dessert than the main course."[8] Here is a

warning to not treat emerging media as the be all and end all, but to use it to the best of

its ability. I would be interested to hear if his thinking has shifted in the decade or so

since this was written.

In the preaching conducted in streamed worship services, there is currently a

conscious effort among the pastor-preachers leading these worship services to consider

the online community who may be watching or attending via their electronic devices. The

challenge is that these pastors are called to Word and Sacrament ministry in their current

location. There is no mention in their call documents of the online attenders, nor are these

people always members of the congregation. In what way, then, can the LCA make closer

connections and build relationships with these online users? Perhaps emerging media is

one method of doing so. Maybe through online forums such as Facebook groups there

could be a discussion on the preaching text in the lead-up to allow a conversation to take

place, asking questions of the text in relation to the person's context, their dispersion

from the church, or the reason they are unable to be present physically? Could this

conversation then inform the preaching done online? Perhaps online Bible study using

Skype, Zoom or Microsoft Teams could be used to connect beyond the standard hour or

so on a Sunday morning where traditional worship opportunities take place? Paul Alan

Clifford in a guide for establishing video streaming for worship agrees that while it is

easy for us to hide when we are interacting remotely, there is opportunity to add

interactivity to streaming in order to build community through the use of hashtags in

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[8] Shane Hipps, *Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 183.

social media such as Twitter and Facebook in order to create discussion online. There is

also the chance to add chat functionality to get people interacting.[9]

As far back as 2010 David Lose was suggesting this interactive approach may be

a possibility, at least for preaching:

> I am intrigued by the possibility Web 2.0 holds as a metaphor for an approach to bridging the gap between the identity and meaning making that we experience on Sunday and that of the rest of the week. For instance, what if we imagined that the purpose of Sunday worship, and in particular of the sermon, was not to present "screenfuls of text"—a finished message, an artful interpretation of the biblical text—but instead "a transport mechanism, the ether through which interactivity happens." What if the sermon provided not simply the content of the biblical narrative as a source for religious identity—either in the "strict" prescriptive form of conservative preaching or in the "lenient" suggestive form of mainline preaching—but also promoted lively interaction with that story? Is there room in our homiletical imagination, to put it another way, for an interactive sermon?[10]

This researcher has tried some interactive sermons in one of the congregations I

serve. They have been well received in the physical worship space—face to face. It

would be interesting to trial an interactive sermon using devices and the internet during

streamed worship to test the theory and whether it might build a sense of koinonia for the

users.

Lambert's report on Emerging Media included survey findings that Facebook,

YouTube and Instagram are the most commonly used platforms by respondents, of which

eighty-seven percent were Lutheran.[11] This being the case, they are the recommended

focus platforms for the future of content creation. The scope of the emerging media

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[9] Paul Alan Clifford, *Live-Streaming Church: A Guide for Establishing Video Streaming* (CMAG Press, n.d.), 115.

[10] David Lose, "Preaching 2.0," *Word & World*, July 1, 2010, 306.

[11] Rikki Lambert, "Emerging Media Report: Lutheran Church of Australia."(Adelaide: Lambert Creative, 2019), 5.

review did not include the worship streams. However, this researcher sees the potential

for value-adding and cross promotion, as does Lambert.

Recently, Australian Lutheran College, (the tertiary training institution for the

LCA) in their advertising for the opening conversation event held on February 24, 2020,

provided an opportunity for engagement via Twitter. The format of the opening

conversation was a question and answer session rather than the usual opening lecture.

This format gave an opportunity for engagement throughout the event as a panel provided

information about the way forward for the institution. Only one person submitted a

question via Twitter. The stream of the event was well advertised and, although a small

hitch with sound impacted the opening, the event provided an opportunity for

engagement outside the walls of the college in Adelaide.[12] There is room for more of this

kind of engagement in the LCA and no doubt for other denominations also.

Andrew Root is speaking about a different challenge in the church, that of faith

formation, as he states:

> We talked about faith absent any language of transcendence or divine action. Here
> we were talking about "faith," and yet we had made no assertions about faith
> having anything to do with a realm beyond us, with a God who comes to us in
> death and resurrection, Spirit and transformation. These were much deeper
> realities than just finding a way to keep people affiliated and an institution
> pertinent.[13]

Yet this thinking often seems to reflect the way we speak about building koinonia

(or community) online. We tend to think of the tangible, the visible, yet overlook God at

work who comes to us wherever we are in whatever situation we are experiencing and

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[12] Australian Lutheran College, *ALC Opening Conversation - YouTube* (Adelaide), accessed March 1, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kgj9ARo37lE.

[13] Andrew Root, *Faith Formation in a Secular Age: Volume 1 (Ministry in a Secular Age)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), loc. 226 of 5901, Kindle.

creates faith, indeed creates the church through the power of the Holy Spirit. If we rule out the possibilities God has made available to us through digital technology, we may well be letting the medium get in the way of the message.[14]

Personal Growth Through This Research

Entering graduate theological education was a large step for me. I have never considered myself a scholar and lacked confidence as a scholar and theologian when around my peers. While I was studying in my two semesters of under-graduate preaching classes in seminary (now Australian Lutheran College), I felt as though a light had gone on in my head and I found where the "rubber hits the road" for me in my theological journey. That lightbulb moment was that in preaching we have a window of opportunity to proclaim God's word in a unique context each week for those who gather for worship. I wanted to continue to learn and challenge myself to be the best that I could be, with God's help, at preparing and delivering of preaching. Yet I struggled with poor self-esteem and had become "stuck in a rut" with my sermon preparation and delivery in the early years of pastoral ministry. The Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Preaching experience, through course work, intensive academic study and this project has moved me out of that rut and given me a new sense of who I am as a preacher. The whole process has been empowering, uplifting and encouraging. Something I had longed for. I am now keen to share my learning and experience with other preachers who may be challenged by a similar experience in their preaching journey.[15]

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[14] Hipps, *Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith*, 183.

[15] I have engaged with a couple of preachers who had heard of my academic study and asked for assistance. I was blessed to be able to coach them in areas where they felt stuck and offer some insights. This was in addition to a couple of Masters of Divinity students from Luther Seminary who approached me

My experiences with video streaming of events and the sense of community around them had led me to wonder about this platform's potential to reach the Diaspora. This project has allowed me the opportunity to engage with users and providers of streamed worship in the LCA. It has been a voyage of discovery, from the perspective of real data for the LCA and for me, as I have learned more about the rigors of research. My own self-esteem and confidence has grown through engaging with others and the research task. I am keen to do further practical research in the future in the area of streaming worship. I would like to trial some form of streaming to the elderly in aged care facilities or in their homes as I discovered was happening during a study tour of Germany in November 2017. In that case it was closed-circuit television from the local church to nearby facilities.[16]

Mueller and Kraus affirm the need to maintain a connection to the homebound and the institutionalized as a person's life circumstances change over time. The church has an aging population and there is a risk, (where quality provision of pastoral care or access to good streamed worship is not available), that they will seek out whatever is available on television or elsewhere and be led astray.[17]

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while on campus and one who was stuck on a sermon during his intern period and asked for some guidance. I truly hope to be able to continue this type of coaching in the future.

[16] This service was described to me during a tour of a local church in Neuendettelsau, Germany. The congregation stream their worship via closed-circuit television to nearby affiliated facilities run by Diakonie Neuendettelsau.

[17] Norbert H. Mueller and George Kraus, eds., *Pastoral Theology* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Pub. House, 1990), 115.

My own congregation at Calvary, Greensborough is also considering the possibility at present of streaming worship with Auslan[18] translation for the hearing-impaired. We hold one or two Sunday services per month which include a translator for a member family. I have realized that while I would not personally be keen to be the preacher of a streamed worship service, the possibility of utilizing what we already have in place to benefit potential users of a worship service accessible to the hearing-impaired makes a lot of sense. Having done this research project, I am more confident in myself and I am keen to trial streaming for the hearing impaired and other projects for the benefit of the church and especially the Diaspora, with whom I feel a strong affinity. I recently learned that the Adelaide Deaf Community Church and its pastor Michael Prenzler are scoping a project to provide streaming of their services, partly motivated by the possibility of Calvary's members having access to Auslan services more often.

Throughout this research I have been reminded that one person cannot take on everything. In producing streamed worship there are technology experts, camera and computer operators, sound technicians, musicians and presenters and the list goes on. As much as I might feel I could give these things a try, I am the one called and ordained to be standing in the pulpit preaching. As with other pastors, I cannot be and do all things, even though I have an interest and some skills in the other areas. The task of streaming is a community effort and there must be both a need and a benefit, with a positive return on investment for all involved to make streaming a worthwhile endeavor.

Those pastors who have been and are now involved in the production of the streamed worship of the LCA have commented on the high cost of the equipment and the

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[18] "Auslan" is Australian Sign Language, developed for the hearing impaired or deaf and is used only within Australia.

impact on volunteers, as many are required to establish and keep the system running and updated. However, the benefits of having the infrastructure available are clear for those who connect for regular worship or the streaming of funerals, baptisms and other special events. There are indeed individuals of the Diaspora who have connected to the church and have been involved in the koinonia and ecclesia as a result.

The parable of the lost sheep (Matthew 18:12-14 and Luke 15:3-7) describes a shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to go and seek out the one who is lost, alone, and in need of being connected or reconnected to the flock. In the case of streamed worship, the shepherd does not have to leave the ninety-nine, but continues to serve in place, and yet is also out there in the world via the internet connecting to the Diaspora through a new means of reaching out with open arms. In the early days of streaming at St Michael's, Hahndorf, the pastor and members were unaware that there were people in remote areas who considered St Michael's to be their home congregation, yet this was what was happening.

Closing Comments

Koinonia (or community) is the place where the church acts as the many parts of the one body. In preaching and in worship we are joined as one throughout time and space. We are caught up in the biggest change in the way communication takes place since the invention of the printing press. Whether we see the internet and its various platforms as tools for us to utilize or as weapons that have the potential to destroy community, being aware and taking steps to leverage the benefits puts us in a position of

preparedness for what lies ahead.[19] Engaging with and researching the ways emerging media are affecting God's church helps to curb the problems and head us in a better direction as we all learn and grow in this rapidly changing and challenging global network known as the internet.

In the midst of the uncertain times the world is experiencing in the first quarter of 2020,[20] the people are already craving koinonia—community. Those people who are forced to quarantine themselves for their own health or for the safety of others are craving human contact. Others who are not yet forced to self-isolate fear isolation and are concerned about the future loss of community. All around us people are expressing their heartfelt desire to continue to gather together for corporate worship in the way we all know and love. Yet these times and health and hygiene regulations imposed for our protection have created a "New Diaspora" which did not exist just a few weeks ago. This "New Diaspora" is not just those who are incapacitated or ill or have a disability or live too far from a church. There are entire cities, counties and even countries currently in lockdown. Thousands upon thousands of people are in quarantine, lockdown or restricted from receiving visitors or going out themselves. What do they seek in this time of enforced dispersion? Koinonia and ecclesia. How is the church responding? Through streamed worship, not just in Australia, but around the world. The rise in the number of congregations providing streamed worship has grown exponentially.

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[19] In my final days of editing this thesis the world plunged into the depths of the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. The world and the church could not have predicted the way it would shift how we live life and experience church and we still do not know how long the world will be in lockdown. The Church is scrambling to continue to be church for the Church, to provide ongoing koinonia for the people who suddenly find themselves unable to attend regular physical worship.

[20] These circumstances are described briefly in chapter three (page twenty-seven) and in footnote 19 above.

In the midst of this the LCA streaming congregations of St Michael's, Hahndorf and Good Shepherd, Toowoomba are seeking to continue to stream for the benefit of all, even though they may not be conducting their regular worship services. As this research project has discovered, the desire of Christians is to gather for physical worship, yet streaming provides a wonderful alternative and allows those who are dispersed to continue to participate in the life of the church and worship our loving and ever-present God.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Welcome

Thank you for using the Lutheran Church Streamed Worship ministry.

My name is Pastor Tim Stringer and I am a pastor of the Lutheran Church of Australia. Lutheran Media has given me approval to conduct a survey on the streamed worship ministry.

As a user of Lutheran Media's Streamed Worship, you are invited to participate in a study of how, why and when you access it. I hope to learn in what ways online worship creates or builds community and the church for you in your time and place, wherever you may be accessing it from.

If you decide to participate, please complete the following survey. Your completion of this survey is implied consent. The survey is designed to explore the impact of the streamed worship on your faith life and connection with the wider church. I will use the information as part of the research for my thesis for the Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Preaching through Luther Seminary, St Paul, Minnesota. The survey will take about 20 minutes. No benefits accrue to you for answering the survey, but your responses will be used to discern which aspects of this resource are being accessed and how it may be developed in the future.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed. If you are under 18 years of age please do not participate in this survey.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relationships with Lutheran Media or Luther Seminary. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please ask. If you have additional questions later, contact Pastor Tim Stringer, Calvary Lutheran Church, Greensborough 3088, phone 0438809117, email tim.stringer@lca.org.au. My advisor is Richard Rehfeldt, rrehfeldt001@luthersem.edu.

Thank you for your time.
Sincerely,

Pastor Tim Stringer

* 1. Do you agree to the terms above and wish to continue with the survey?

◯ Yes

◯ No

1

95

Streamed Worship in the LCA

2. Do you use the Lutheran Media Streamed Worship online?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. Which streaming site do you access?

☐ Livestream.com

☐ Facebook

4. Which country do you access the stream from?

[   ]

5. What postcode do you access the stream from?

[   ]

6. Do you usually watch the stream:

○ Alone

○ With family

○ With a small group

○ As a congregation

Other (please specify)

[   ]

7. Do you usually access the stream:

○ At home   ○ In an aged care facility

○ In a school   ○ While travelling

○ In a church building

Other (please specify)

[   ]

8. What is your current age?

( ) 18-24   ( ) 45-54

( ) 25-34   ( ) 55-64

( ) 35-44   ( ) 65+

9. What is your gender?

( ) Male

( ) Female

( ) Other

10. Which worship service do you usually access?

( ) St Michael's, Hahndorf

( ) Good Shepherd, Toowoomba

( ) Both

11. Why do you prefer this one or both?

```
[                                              ]
[                                              ]
[                                              ]
```

12. Do you use the streamed service because...

[ ] Personal issues

[ ] Can't get to a physical church

[ ] Additional to my regular worship

[ ] Working on Sunday

[ ] Sport on Sunday

[ ] Illness

[ ] Disability

[ ] To share with others

[ ] Travelling

[ ] Other (please specify)

```
[                                              ]
```

13. When do you usually access the stream?

○ Live

○ Sunday afternoon

○ Sunday night

○ During the week

Other (please specify)

[   ]

14. How often do you access the stream?

○ Occasionally

○ Weekly

○ Monthly

○ More than once per month

15. How long have you been accessing the stream?

○ One week

○ More than one week but less than one month

○ One month to a year

○ One year or more

16. Which parts of the service do you access?

☐ Entire service

☐ Service but skip Holy Communion

☐ Bible readings

☐ Kid's talk

☐ Sermon

☐ Songs

17. Why do you choose these parts of the service?

[   ]

18. Do you consider yourself a Christian?

( ) Yes

( ) No

19. Which denomination do you affiliate with?

( ) Lutheran   ( ) Uniting

( ) Catholic   ( ) Non-Denominational

( ) Anglican   ( ) None

Other (please specify)

[   ]

20. Do you currently attend a physical church?

( ) Yes

( ) No

21. Are you a member of St Michael's Hahndorf or Good Shepherd, Toowoomba

( ) Yes

( ) No

22. Are you a member of another congregation of the Lutheran Church of Australia?

( ) Yes

( ) No

23. If you watch the sermon, to what extent do they relate to your life/circumstance?

Not at all   A lot

24. What aspects of the sermon relate to you?

[   ]

25. Does the sermon assist you in feeling part of this worshiping community?

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Maybe

◯ Not applicable

26. Is there anything you would like to hear in the sermon that you are not hearing?

[   ]

27. What in the sermons is important for you to hear?

[   ]

28. If you access the Holy Communion section do you participate where you are with bread and wine?

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Not applicable

29. If you do not access the Holy Communion section could you share why?

[   ]

30. To what extent do you feel connected to the online worshiping community?

Not connected	Highly connected	

31. To what extent do you feel connected to to St Michael's, Hahndorf or Good Shepherd, Toowoomba?

Not connected	Highly connected	

32. To what extent do you feel connected to your local church?

Not connected	Highly connected	

33. To what extent do you feel connected to the Lutheran Church of Australia?

Not connected   Highly connected

34. To what extent do you feel connected to the pastor of the stream you access?

Not connected   Highly connected

35. Have you ever submitted prayer requests via the link provided in the stream?

○ Yes

○ No

36. Have you participated in any other way in the life of St Michael's, Hahndorf or Good Shepherd, Toowoomba?

○ Yes

○ No

37. If yes could you please explain how?

38. In general did the streamed service make you feel part of a Christian Church?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

○ Not applicable

39. Have you been in contact with the congregations or pastors in any way?

○ Yes

○ No

40. Do you feel as though you are participating in worship or watching?

○ Participating

○ Watching

Other (please specify)

[   ]

41. Do you prefer to attend worship in person or access online?

○ In person

○ Online

42. Could you please share why this is so?

[   ]

43. Are there any suggestions you would like to make that might help you feel more connected to the Lutheran Church of Australia, St Michael's, Good Shepherd, your local church or the wider church?

[   ]

APPENDIX B

Date: Feb 5, 2020
Account: Lutheran+Church+of+Australia, livestream.com/luthworship

Livestream

Filters

Time: from 11/24/2019, 08:00 AM to 02/02/2020, 08:00 AM
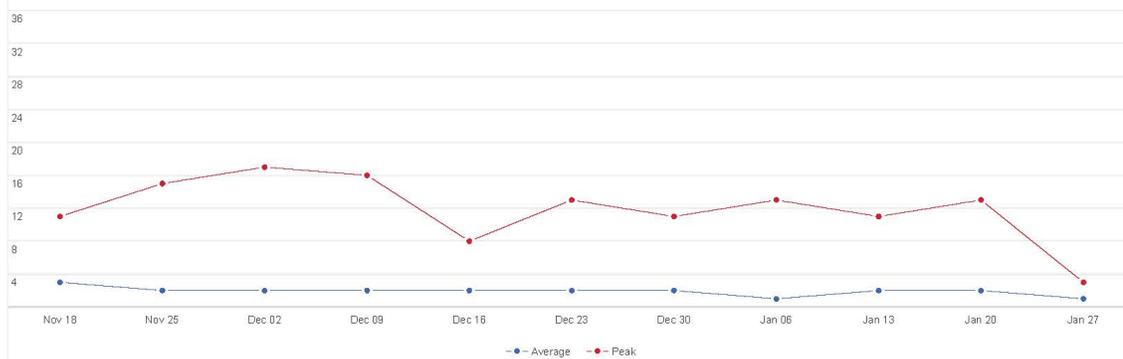
Timezone: (GMT+10:30) Central Time - Adelaide

Content: Live & Recorded

Event: Worship at Hahndorf

Media: All Media

Location: All Locations

☐ Exclude Impressions

Viewers

Total Views	Unique Views	Max. Concurrent Viewers	Total Minutes Viewed	Average Watch Time
1,072	725	17	18,097	00 : 19 : 50

Concurrent views

Total views

Legend: Total
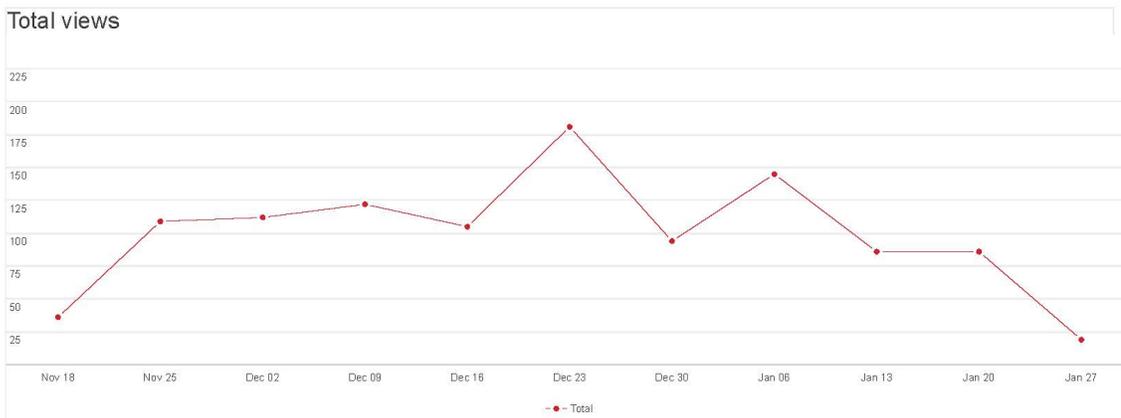
Devices

Device	%Views	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
Desktop	65.4%	701	476	13,082	00 : 20 : 49
Event Page	61.9%	664	454	12,762	00 : 21 : 16
Player Embed	3.5%	37	22	319	00 : 11 : 25
Mobile	20.5%	220	133	2,282	00 : 13 : 55
Android	14.1%	151	79	1,736	00 : 14 : 20
Event Page	9.1%	98	51	1,599	00 : 18 : 48
Livestream Android App	2.5%	27	20	81	00 : 05 : 47
Player Embed	2.4%	26	8	55	00 : 02 : 32
iOS	6.4%	69	54	546	00 : 12 : 43
Livestream iOS App	3.4%	36	25	161	00 : 06 : 44
Event Page	2.1%	22	18	281	00 : 15 : 38
Player Embed	1.0%	11	11	103	01 : 43 : 32
Tablet	13.5%	145	111	2,731	00 : 23 : 08
iOS	13.5%	145	111	2,731	00 : 23 : 08
Event Page	12.8%	137	104	2,549	00 : 22 : 21
Player Embed	0.7%	8	7	181	00 : 45 : 26
Connected TV	0.6%	6	5	0	00 : 00 : 15
Roku	0.4%	4	4	0	00 : 00 : 30
Other OS	0.2%	2	1	0	00 : 00 : 00

Legend: Desktop, Mobile, Tablet, Conne
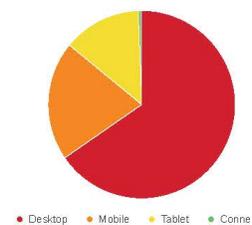
Media Type

Type	%Views	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
Recorded	66.5%	723	515	9,921	00 : 15 : 34
Live	33.1%	360	230	8,175	00 : 28 : 11
Status	0.5%	5	2	0	00 : 00 : 00
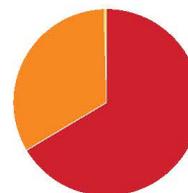
● Recorded   ● Live   ● Status

Events

Event	%Views	Start Date	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
Worship at Hahndorf	100.0%	Oct, 20 2013 11:30 AM ACDT	1,092	727	18,097	00 : 19 : 50

Posts

Post	%Views	Type	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
Sunday 8th December 2019	12.8%	Video	137	75	2,373	00 : 19 : 27
Sunday 12 January 2020	10.1%	Video	108	59	2,241	00 : 23 : 50
1 December 2019	9.2%	Video	99	54	2,128	00 : 24 : 27
Sunday 15 December 2019	8.7%	Video	93	61	1,648	00 : 19 : 23
29 December 2019	7.5%	Video	80	63	1,241	00 : 20 : 01
Christmas Day 25-12-2019	7.0%	Video	75	51	1,127	00 : 16 : 20
Sunday 19th January 2020	6.8%	Video	73	58	1,603	00 : 26 : 16
24 November 2019	6.4%	Video	69	47	1,462	00 : 25 : 12
Sunday 22.12.19 Part 1	5.9%	Video	63	43	798	00 : 14 : 15
Sunday 05-01-2020	5.7%	Video	61	46	1,189	00 : 23 : 47

Referrer Domains

Referrer Domain	%Views	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
Direct	38.2%	384	267	9,455	00 : 28 : 44
livestream.com	19.9%	200	145	3,601	00 : 19 : 53
www.google.com	10.9%	110	69	1,329	00 : 14 : 36
www.stmichaels.com.au	8.7%	87	63	1,205	00 : 14 : 31
Unknown	8.4%	84	49	661	00 : 11 : 48
www.google.com.au	5.8%	58	46	574	00 : 10 : 15
www.lca.org.au	3.5%	35	32	188	00 : 05 : 32
www.lutheranmedia.org.au	3.2%	32	29	543	00 : 18 : 45
www.bing.com	0.9%	9	7	107	00 : 11 : 58
www.google.co.za	0.3%	3	3	21	00 : 10 : 36

View Destination

Destination	%Views	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
Livestream	85.9%	921	627	17,192	00 : 21 : 02
www.stmichaels.com.au	5.3%	57	41	604	00 : 18 : 18
Livestream iOS App	3.4%	36	25	161	00 : 06 : 44
Unknown	2.5%	27	8	56	00 : 02 : 28
Livestream Android App	2.5%	27	20	81	00 : 05 : 47
Livestream Roku App	0.4%	4	4	0	00 : 00 : 30

Locations

Country	%Views	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
Australia	94.6%	1,014	658	17,881	00 : 20 : 24
United States	3.7%	40	35	82	00 : 03 : 45
Canada	0.5%	5	4	11	00 : 05 : 39
Singapore	0.2%	2	1	2	00 : 01 : 17
Japan	0.2%	2	1	21	00 : 10 : 55
Philippines	0.2%	2	2	3	00 : 01 : 49
Turkey	0.2%	2	1	9	00 : 04 : 33
Brazil	0.1%	1	1	0	00 : 00 : 30
Netherlands	0.1%	1	1	20	00 : 20 : 39
United Arab Emira…	0.1%	1	1	57	00 : 57 : 52

1 — 1,014

Glossary

Total Views
Text and image post views are counted when a visitor views them for 2-5 seconds. A video post view is counted when a viewer plays and then stops a video.

Unique Views
Views per browser opened of a given post. If someone opens multiple tabs in the same browser, that is 1 unique view. However, if that person opens your event in one browser (Google Chrome) and also opens it in another browser (Mozilla Firefox), that will count as 2 unique views.If a single post is viewed by 5 different viewers, then 5 unique views will be counted.If a single viewer views 5 different posts, then each of those posts will register 1 unique view.

Max Concurrent Viewers
The highest amount of concurrent viewers on your account or events in the chosen time frame. This is only available at the account and event level, so it cannot be filtered down in other sections.

Total Minutes Viewed
The total number of minutes your content was viewed.

Average Watch Time
The average length of time a viewer spent viewing your content within the selected time range. This is based on total minutes viewed and total video views.

%Views
What percentage of your viewers viewed the stream on a particular device (ex: desktop vs. tablet).

Exclude Impressions
This will exclude all instances where the content was loaded but the video was not played by the viewer (ex. an embedded recorded video loaded but was not played).

Date: Feb 5, 2020
Account: Lutheran+Church+of+Australia, livestream.com/luthworship

Livestream

Filters

Time: from 11/24/2019, 08:00 AM to 02/02/2020, 08:00 AM

Timezone: (GMT+10:30) Central Time - Adelaide

Content:　Live & Recorded

Event: Sunday Worship at Toowoomba Qld

Media: All Media
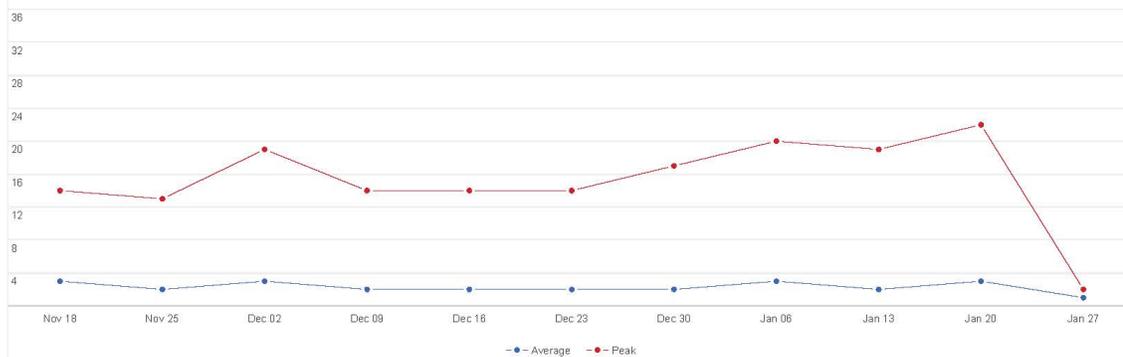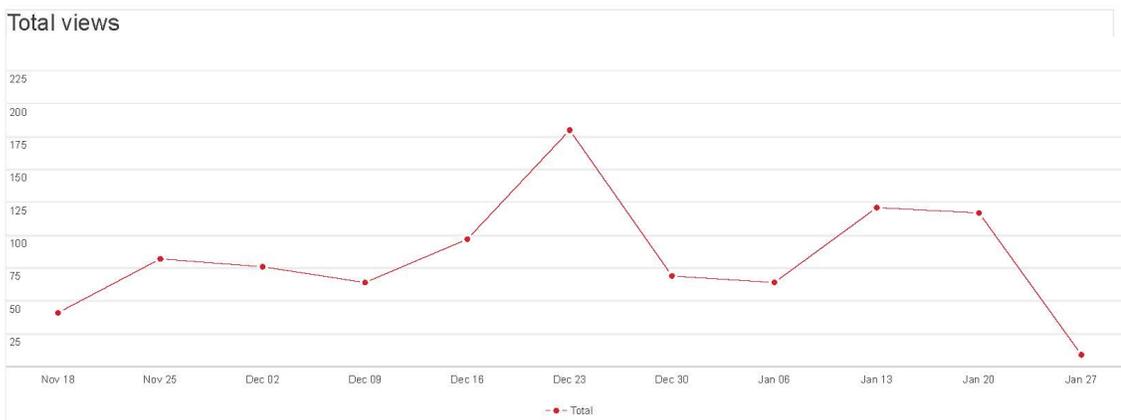
Location:　All Locations

☐　Exclude Impressions

Viewers

Total Views	Unique Views	Max. Concurrent Viewers	Total Minutes Viewed	Average Watch Time
914	617	22	18,283	00 : 23 : 33

Concurrent views

Total views

Devices

Device	%Views	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
Desktop	61.8%	565	414	13,387	00 : 26 : 56
Event Page	61.7%	564	413	13,386	00 : 26 : 59
Video Embed	0.1%	1	1	0	00 : 00 : 30
Mobile	27.5%	251	144	3,814	00 : 19 : 27
iOS	14.2%	130	79	2,448	00 : 23 : 05
Livestream iOS App	8.0%	73	39	824	00 : 13 : 44
Event Page	6.2%	57	40	1,623	00 : 35 : 17
Android	13.2%	121	65	1,366	00 : 15 : 11
Event Page	10.1%	92	47	1,183	00 : 17 : 24
Livestream Android App	3.2%	29	18	182	00 : 08 : 18
Tablet	10.7%	98	59	1,081	00 : 13 : 01
iOS	10.7%	98	59	1,081	00 : 13 : 01
Event Page	10.7%	98	59	1,081	00 : 13 : 01
Connected TV	0.0%	0	0	0	00 : 00 : 00
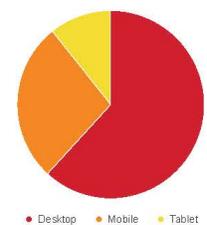
Media Type

Type	%Views	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
Recorded	62.5%	587	416	7,668	00 : 15 : 35
Live	37.5%	352	248	10,615	00 : 34 : 21
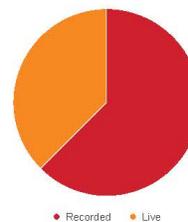
● Recorded ● Live

Events

Event	%Views	Start Date	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
Sunday Worship at Toowoomba Qld	100.0%	Dec, 3 2017 9:00 AM ACDT	920	622	18,283	00 : 23 : 33

Posts

Post	%Views	Type	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
01.12.2019	8.0%	Video	73	46	1,796	00 : 30 : 27
08.12.2019	7.8%	Video	71	45	1,757	00 : 28 : 21
12.01.2020	7.7%	Video	70	55	2,155	00 : 31 : 41
25.12.2019 (Christmas Day)	7.5%	Video	69	39	1,429	00 : 25 : 31
05.01.2020	7.3%	Video	67	44	1,757	00 : 28 : 20
29.12.2019	7.3%	Video	67	44	1,537	00 : 24 : 47
24/11/19	7.1%	Video	65	46	1,653	00 : 30 : 36
2019/12/22	7.0%	Video	64	45	1,525	00 : 28 : 46
19.01.2020	6.8%	Video	62	43	63	00 : 01 : 11
15.12.2019	6.6%	Video	60	43	1,300	00 : 25 : 29

Referrer Domains

Referrer Domain	%Views	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
Direct	35.0%	284	182	5,995	00 : 25 : 57
livestream.com	31.2%	253	181	5,098	00 : 22 : 45
www.google.com.au	13.2%	107	83	1,656	00 : 18 : 12
www.google.com	12.9%	105	89	2,659	00 : 28 : 36
www.bing.com	4.7%	38	30	1,536	00 : 48 : 00
duckduckgo.com	1.4%	11	8	266	00 : 26 : 38
www.lutheranmedia.org.au	1.2%	10	6	59	00 : 05 : 55
m.facebook.com	0.4%	3	2	2	00 : 01 : 28
Unknown	0.1%	1	1	0	00 : 00 : 30

View Destination

Destination	%Views	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
Livestream	88.8%	812	559	17,275	00 : 24 : 53
Livestream iOS App	8.0%	73	39	824	00 : 13 : 44
Livestream Android App	3.2%	29	18	182	00 : 08 : 18

Locations

Country	%Views	Total Views	Unique Views	Total Minutes	Avg. Watch Time
Australia	97.7%	893	596	18,274	00 : 23 : 53
United States	1.4%	13	12	4	00 : 00 : 58
Spain	0.1%	1	1	0	00 : 00 : 30
Canada	0.1%	1	1	0	00 : 00 : 25
Singapore	0.1%	1	1	1	00 : 01 : 35
Serbia	0.1%	1	1	0	00 : 00 : 51
Italy	0.1%	1	1	1	00 : 01 : 02
France	0.1%	1	1	0	00 : 00 : 00
Puerto Rico	0.1%	1	1	0	00 : 00 : 00
Lithuania	0.1%	1	1	0	00 : 00 : 00

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Glossary

Total Views
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Views per browser opened of a given post. If someone opens multiple tabs in the same browser, that is 1 unique view. However, if that person opens your event in one browser (Google Chrome) and also opens it in another browser (Mozilla Firefox), that will count as 2 unique views.If a single post is viewed by 5 different viewers, then 5 unique views will be counted.If a single viewer views 5 different posts, then each of those posts will register 1 unique view.

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The highest amount of concurrent viewers on your account or events in the chosen time frame. This is only available at the account and event level, so it cannot be filtered down in other sections.

Total Minutes Viewed
The total number of minutes your content was viewed.

Average Watch Time
The average length of time a viewer spent viewing your content within the selected time range. This is based on total minutes viewed and total video views.

%Views
What percentage of your viewers viewed the stream on a particular device (ex: desktop vs. tablet).

Exclude Impressions
This will exclude all instances where the content was loaded but the video was not played by the viewer (ex. an embedded recorded video loaded but was not played).

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