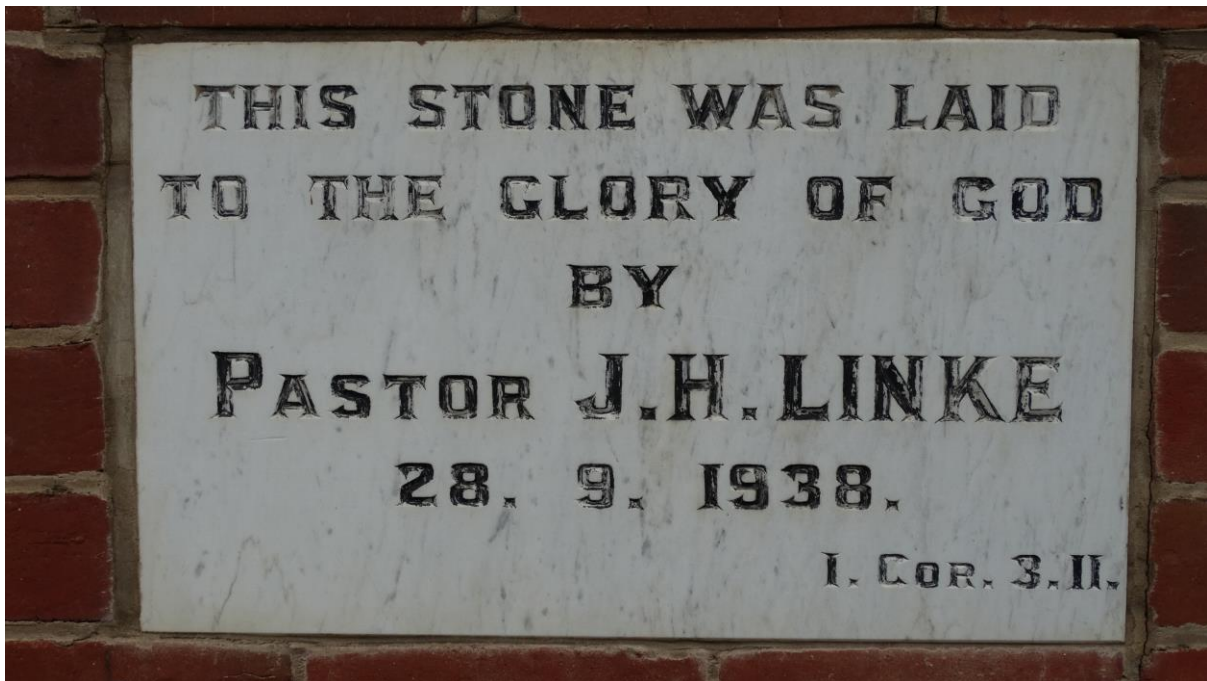


## The St Luke's Story



### *Early Days*

After World War 1 there were many Lutherans in the Albury township of approximately 10,000 and its surrounds. As such, just prior to Christmas 1926, the first worship service was held leading to the establishment of St Luke's on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1927. Worship services were held in various locations over the coming years, including places like a hall near the Hoyts Theatre, The Church of England Sunday School Hall (both in Olive St.) and the Presbyterian Church for special occasions. The first mention of building a church was at a meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 1928, but with the onset of the great depression the project came to an end.

### *Establishing St Luke's as a congregation*

In 1935 a building fund was established, and in early 1938 donations were received from N.S.W. Lutheran congregations. Despite the great depression the decision was made to build the church, with the foundation stone laid on 28<sup>th</sup> September and the dedication service held 3 months later on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 1938.

### *Expanding the church plant*

In 1945 steps were taken to build a hall at the rear of the church, but the job was delayed due to material shortages as a result of the World War 2, nevertheless, by the 6<sup>th</sup> November 1948 the Hall was dedicated. On the 11<sup>th</sup> September 1963 extensions to the hall were commenced with much of the work being done on a voluntary basis.

### *Constructing the Manse*

In 1949 the Albury Parish Council decided to provide a manse for the pastor. Consequently, the block of land adjacent to the church was purchased and construction commenced on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1954, but

again, due to the shortage of materials the manse was completed in April 1955. Today the manse is the residence for FRONTIER participants.

#### *Australian Lutheran World Service*

In 1947, St Luke's became involved with the European migrants coming into Bonegilla. Lutheran World Federation established Lutheran World Service – Australia, with the St Luke's Pastor as its first representative. By 1955 over 2,350 refugees had been settled. Over the years LWS-A began providing financial support both internally and externally, receiving Federal government funds for overseas aid, and eventually became Australian Lutheran World Service in the mid 1980's. Today ALWS manages in excess of \$8.5 million dollars in foreign aid.

#### *St Peter's Lutheran Church, Lavington*

St Luke's first church planting ministry began in early 1950's, when movement began around Lavington to establish a new church. In 1957, St Luke's acquired land and in 1959 began the construction of the church facility on Urana Rd. In 1963, St Peter's took ownership of their new building and congregation.

In 2012 conversations begun about realigning St Peter's with St Luke's, but by 2014, the decision was made not to pursue this realignment. Instead, St Luke's, St Peter's and St Andrew's, Corowa, entered into a missional partnership. By the end of 2017, this partnership agreed to separate journeys, and saw St Luke's refocus on church planting.

#### *Lutheran Aged Care Albury*

In 1959 St Luke's, in partnership with the NSW Lutheran Women's' League agreed to invest in a much needed 'Rest Home' in Albury as they identified a need for care services in the community. A suitable property was purchased in 1960 at Riverview Terrace, and opened on 14 February 1960 with 20 staff providing care for 17 residents. Over the years LACA has expanded to include residential facilities, home care services and independent living options across the region - making Lutheran Aged Care the recognised high-quality provider we are today. St Luke's remains a prominent supporter providing volunteer support to LACA.

#### *Coming together of the E.L.C.A. & U.E.L.C.A.*

Prior to 1966, two major Lutheran synods existed in Australia. In 1966 they agreed to come together and form the Lutheran Church of Australia. With the coming together of these two Lutheran synods in 1966, extensions to St. Lukes commenced in October 1966 to cater for the expanded community. In the interim most services were held in Trinity Lutheran Church in Swift St, with special services like Christmas held in the Red Cross Hall in Dean St. The extensions were dedicated on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 1967.

#### *Further updates at St Luke's*

During the following years St Luke's purchased the house on the corner of Macauley and Guinea St, and established St. Luke's House as the church offices. Following this the house next door in Macauley St. was purchased with the view of further expansion. This property was sold in 2018 and the money used to support the mission focus of the congregation, along with some necessary repairs on the buildings.

## *FRONTIER*

In 2015, St Luke's began to explore what it would look like if it was to become a sending church intentional about planting new churches. As part of this journey, it realised the shortage of capable church planting leaders within the Lutheran Church of Australia, and the limitations that placed upon its own missional focus. St Luke's partnered with Melbourne School of Theology, to establish FRONTIER, a missional leadership program. In 2018 the first intake of 6 participants began. The program continues to be a premier aspect of St Luke's missional heart to be a blessing to the wider church.

## *Church Planting*

In 2014, after deciding not to realign with St Peter's, St Luke's began to explore a missional future. In this, they realised that church planting was something they needed to engage if they were to be a growing community within Albury. In 2015, St Luke's became a part of the Lutheran Church of Australia's church planting initiative. The momentum for this took off, and despite creating FRONTIER to fill the leadership gap, realised it needed to step up and call a church planter to lead this important development. In 2018 a church planter was called, and now leads the church planting ministry of St Luke's as it continues to grow and establish new communities.

## *St Andrew's Lutheran Church, Corowa*

As a result of the missional partnership with St Peter's and St Andrew's, a group of St Luke's members began to come alongside St Andrew's, encouraging and supporting them as they explored what their future could be. In 2019, the decision was made to realign St Andrew's from St Peter's to St Luke's, with the intent of repotting a church at Corowa, and called a FRONTIER graduate as the church planting team leader – Corowa.

## *Conclusion*

St. Luke's Congregation gives thanks to God for the abundant blessings it has received since its inception. The members have lived through tough times yet remained faithful in serving the church and wider community with their time, talents and resources. They have been led by Pastors who have supported, encouraged, challenged, and corrected them throughout this time. They look to the future with hope and faith in what God can do through them for His glory.