

December 2022

**LEA SERVICE AWARD**

*Sandra Thiele*

**For service to Lutheran education  
1995 – 2022**

The Lutheran Church of Australia thankfully acknowledges the faithful and committed service of Sandra Thiele to Lutheran education for 28 years.

Sandra Thiele commenced her service in Lutheran schools in 1995 at St John's Lutheran Primary School, Highgate. She stepped into a full-time role in a Year 5 class and brought with her a balance of enthusiasm and expertise enriched by her previous eight years of experience gained in the Adelaide Hills at another Christian school.

After two years at St John's, Sandra moved to a part-time role at Calvary, Morphett Vale, where she held a variety of teaching roles. This included the challenge of coordinating their Special Education program, which she fulfilled with passion and advocacy for all learners. Sandra worked collaboratively with new peers and formed strong relationships with staff, students and families between 1997 and 2000.

In 2001 Sandra became one of the founding staff members at Encounter Lutheran School, Victor Harbor, beginning in a role that included sharing a Year 3/4 class with the Principal, Neil Borgas, as well as coordinating Special Education. Sandra quickly established the confidence and trust of this new community of students and their families. Together with her core teaching responsibilities, Sandra's flair for Music and the Arts was evident in a school that was doing so much for the first time. She facilitated a competent and passionate choir, which was a surprise to no one given her love of energetically leading worship time in the makeshift library. Sandra also led Encounter's inaugural school musical, sewing and sourcing dozens of costumes and generously providing catering for the many after hours efforts to prepare for the local town hall spectacular. Throughout her time at Encounter, Sandra has been synonymous with generosity, having provided coffee, snacks and other gestures of love to many of her beloved colleagues over the journey.

As Encounter grew from a school to a college, Sandra's loyalty and heart for young people and their families have been consistent threads. Her love for God and her willingness to express her faith to her students has been a hallmark of her character and a passion which has helped to ensure Encounter has always remained true to its Lutheran mission and ministry.

Sandra's faithful and conscientious service to our Lord and the Lutheran Church of Australia, through her service in Lutheran education, has been outstanding and is humbly recognised through this Award.

**Assoc Prof Lisa Schmidt  
Executive Director  
Lutheran Education Australia**

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