

Lutheran Church of Australia

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‘I’m simply following Jesus, to reveal the person God made me to be.’

These are the inspirational words of Kathy Matuschka, Graduate Diploma in Theology student at Australian Lutheran College (ALC) and the 2016 recipient of the Margaret Pech Memorial Scholarship.

The scholarship is awarded annually to a female theology student at ALC, with the aim of empowering women in the church. It was first given in 1995 and was established by the late Pastor Herman Pech and his wife Elizabeth, in memory of their daughter Margaret. Margaret died on Palm Sunday 1990 at the age of 40, having lived her life with cerebral palsy but never having let disability and disadvantage deter her.

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ALC Dean Dr Stephen Haar presented the scholarship to Kathy, the award’s 21st recipient, in front of delegates from her home state at the Queensland District Convention at Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast last month.

Kathy says while she knew of the award’s existence, she was surprised to be chosen to receive it.

‘The best thing for me has been celebrating with and being encouraged by the wider Lutheran community, including people I don’t know’, she says. ‘While much of my study is done alone, it is always within the context of using my unique gifts to build up our Christian community, and so sharing this joy with others has been a real boost.’

According to the criteria for the scholarship, the recipient needs to have ‘given active service in the life and mission of the church, rendered this service in a humble and selfless spirit’ and ‘sought to bear witness to the gospel in word and conduct’.

Kathy is studying through ALC online and part-time, while continuing her voluntary roles of small group leader, church council member and musician within her home congregation of Good News, Middle Park. She says the flexibility of studying online allows her to reflect on her learning within her existing supportive community, as well continuing her work as a physiotherapist in a Brisbane hospital and running an IT business with her husband.

Kathy says the structured online units in her course is the perfect self-paced option for her and, with responsive ALC lecturers, she finds herself encouraged and extended to get the most out of the learning options.

‘The study brings me much joy and I love studying from home’, she says. ‘I receive wonderful support from the lecturers. I find all the theology study I do to be very “real world, real life” and so would recommend it to anyone, at any stage in their life.’ And how would she like to use her qualifications when she finishes study? ‘As my Lord leads’, Kathy says.

Australian Lutheran College is the training institution of the Lutheran Church of Australia and a college of the University of Divinity. Learn more about what ALC offers in Saints Alive periodical, delivered with this issue of [The Lutheran](#), or at [Australian Lutheran College](#).

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This feature story comes from *The Lutheran* July 2016. [Visit the website](#) to find out more about *The Lutheran* or to subscribe.