

Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, distinguished guests, and fellow graduates, thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening.

My name is Tracie and I teach chemistry at UniSA. I've worked at UniSA for over ten years now, teaching first year chemistry across several degree courses, but it has been a long-term goal of mine to retrain as a high school teacher. To that end, in 2020 I enrolled to study for a master's degree in secondary teaching, also at UniSA.

When you enrol for a teaching degree you must nominate both a major and a minor subject to specialise in. For me, my major subject was chemistry, but selecting a minor subject proved to be difficult. I planned to choose either physics or maths, as I had taught aspects of both previously, but that wasn't possible as officially, the paperwork for my degree and PhD said 'chemistry'. So, I had to consider other courses. I was particularly interested to see "Lutheran Studies" as an option, offered via the Australian Lutheran College.

The idea of Lutheran Studies held great appeal to me, because at that time I was a new convert to Christianity. This in turn had occurred because both my children attended Lutheran schools and over time, I had become interested in what they were learning and wanted to know more for myself. I was attending my local church regularly, but this unexpected opportunity to go further - to study theology - was truly a gift.

I found the Graduate Certificate in Teaching Religious Education both challenging and immensely rewarding. Lutheran schools are special places. I have experienced for myself how a Lutheran school education can reach far beyond the classroom, and into the lives of the students, their families, and the wider community. I graduate from my teaching degree next year and my hope is to teach at a Lutheran school in the future. It is truly a privilege and a blessing to be part of this community. Thank you.

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**Tracie Jane Whittle, Graduate Certificate in Teaching Religious Education 2022**

