

LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA



BISHOP'S REPORT 2011
LUTHERANS LIVING TOGETHER
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

ARCADIA 790
PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

+ Lutherans living together in love, trust + fear of the living God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit +

Dear friends of our Lord Jesus Christ, dear members of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa and of this diocese [nn], deans, pastors, missionaries, evangelists, elders, friends, partners and visitors: *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

“LOVE, TRUST & FEAR THE TRIUNE GOD ABOVE ALL ELSE”

Again we have all reason to be thankful towards the triune God for his loving kindness by which he daily and richly provides our bodies and souls with all that we need to support this body and life. *“All this he does only out fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true.”* [Martin Luther’s explanation of the 1st Article of the Apostolic Creed]¹ We thank the Lord of the Church Jesus Christ for having kept us throughout the year with his grace and mercy, especially with his most precious means of grace: Word and Sacrament . *“Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when he wills, in those who hear the gospel. It teaches that we have a gracious God, not through our merit but through Christ’s merit, when we so believe.”* [CA V]²

Throughout the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, in all five dioceses Church services were held, God’s word was preached purely in law and gospel, babies were baptised in the name of the triune God and thus incorporated into Christ and his one, holy Christian Church; teen-agers were confirmed by the Holy Spirit in the saving baptismal grace and their holy calling from on high to lead pure, sanctified and God-pleasing lives all the days of their lives wherever God has placed them; sinners confessed their sins in public and in private confession: *“I a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto you all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended you and justly deserved your temporal and eternal punishment ... I am sorry for all this and ask for grace.”* [Corporate and individual confession]³; these contrite sinners were absolved by the pastor with the words: *“In the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I as a called and ordained servant of the Church, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of*

¹ Luther’s Small Catechism 2005: CPH, St.Louis. Pg.16

² Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). *The Book of Concord : The confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (40). Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

³ Lutheran Service Book 2006: CPH, St.Louis. Pg. 291f

*the Holy Spirit. Depart in peace +*⁴; forgiven sinners praised the triune God in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, praying together and in solitude for all people especially for those in authority, but also for those in need, suffering and in bondage, for the pastors, deans and bishops of the Church, the Seminary and all who teach and all who learn, for unbelievers, heathens and those no longer going to church or the sacraments, for the conversion of Jews, Muslims and other idolaters/blasphemers, for the upkeep and support of orphans and widows, foreigners, travellers, the unemployed and ill, the poor and ill, the outcast and dying; for good weather, peace and prosperity - the delivery from all evil – just as Jesus has taught us and all his followers to pray in the “Our Father”. 52 written sermons in isiZulu/seTswana were distributed by hard-copy, but also in the internet so that everybody would be blessed by God’s word – and that even those congregations without a pastor, could have an elder reading these for edification in the true faith as congregations far and wide.

Sick people were visited and taken care of. Pastors celebrate the Lord’s Supper with their congregations Sunday for Sunday and they bring these most holy and divine gifts to the shut-ins thus providing the most precious offerings of our Lord and saviour in the true Body and Blood given/shed for us and for the forgiveness of all our sins, so that we may be in him and he in us and nothing can ever separate us from him just as we thankfully sing: “*I have eaten Jesus’ body, I have drunk his blood; now he cannot forget me, I remain in him and he in me. My God, I pray through Christ’s blood, make sure my end is good.*”⁵ This is in the Kopelo Hymn Nr. 316: “*Jesu, Jesu, Montshwedi s’japaanong, a ke swe ka kagiso, Mong*”. Everywhere we believe and confess that this is “*the true treasure of the Church – namely the Most Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God.*” [Luther’s 62nd Thesis, 1517]⁶ That is why everywhere in our Church the people venerate the Lord’s supper with fervour and adoration, respect and thanksgiving towards God. We kneel at the Lord’s prayer and especially at the recitation of the words of institution and during the distribution, we don’t photograph and refrain from other distractions as we are dedicated to listen carefully to God’s holiest institution and Christ’s last testament – that demands all our attention and most focused celebration. We as pastors

⁴ ebd.

⁵ “*Wer weiss wie nahe mir mein Ende ...*” by Ämilie Juliane von Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt and English translation by Francis Browne (February 2006). Evangelisches Gesangbuch 530.

⁶ Luther, M. (1999, c1957). *Vol. 31: Luther’s works, vol. 31 : Career of the Reformer I* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther’s Works (31:31). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

take care that we and our elders/altar guilds use proper vestments, special glass- and silverware, clean cloths and napkins - we also make sure that everything is done in a very dignified fashion and manner – and that the vestry, the sacristy and especially the altar area is clean and free of rubble. The pictures in the Church should be suited to uplift the congregation in faith and to encourage them to look up to Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith.

The LCSA proclaims the triune God to all people faithfully and caringly

There are some congregations in our church the LCSA that still play brass instruments [Kahlehong, Thandekukhanya, Umlazi, Ohlangeni], others have the Marimba [Serowe] and some use drums and cymbals. I don't know of any, where they have an organ or a piano. We as pastors need to watch out that all the music in our Church remains in service of the gospel and proclaiming Christ, the Lord and Saviour of all – and never degenerate into lip service or just worldly entertainment. The Church is the House of the Lord and therefore everything is subject to serve his holiness, his goodness and caring. The same holds true for the holy Liturgy. These are holy biblical orders and rites inspired by the Holy Spirit – and not free for us to do as we like. The Liturgy has as its main purpose to let God speak to his people in his holy word and let his people address him in divinely inspired language – that's not only in the Apostolic/Nicene creeds as we respond to the readings of the epistle and gospel – but also in the *Introit* [Psalms]; the *Kyrie* [Mk.10,47]; the *Gloria in excelsis* [Lk.2,14] or the *Agnus Dei* [Joh.1,29]; the Offertory [Ps.51]; *Sanctus* [Is.6,3; Mt.21,9]; Our Father [Mt.6,9-13]; Word's of Institution; the *Nunc dimittis* [Lk.2,29-32] and the Benediction [Nm.6,24ff]. All this is taken directly from the Bible and has been the language of the Church for more than 2 millennia. That is a very long and venerable tradition by any standard. That is why we should not deal lightly with that and should not just encourage any Tom, Dick and Harry to lead these most precious orders/rites, but should rather dedicate our pastoral expertise to them so that we sing, pray, read and speak in a God-pleasing way. That is our calling. That is what we were ordained to do. Therefore let us do it faithfully always praying: “*Lord, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise*” [LSB 219] as we do in Matins at LTS every morning.

There were no ordinations in the LCSA during 2011; in KwaZulu/Natal pastors Gule and Ndwane were officially retired; pastor Aaron Lenkwe serving in the North-West diocese passed away on Pentecost, the 12th June and was buried on Saturday the 18th in Ventersdorp. Some pastors got married, but I only heard about that along the grape-vine and they might consider this a private affair, therefore I cannot give accurate dates or names of those involved.

The Church Council gathered every Quarter at the Lutheran Theological Seminary. This is convenient, central and cheap, because the LTS accommodates and feeds us without extra-expenses. We are grateful to the LTS for this service to the Church. It has been challenging to get all diocesan representatives to the Church Council. This seriously hampers ongoing discussion, progress and corporate governance. For example from Botswana only Rev. Mosenogi was at LTS four times this year, but his deputy as well as the lay-delegate were absent throughout. This obviously obstructs effective management quite severely, and I would want to encourage you very strongly to send your delegates regularly to the Church Council and to present your reports professionally so that the diocesan issues can be addressed in the best possible way: efficiently, transparently and continuously.

The following diocesan statistics were reported in the past year. Regrettably both the dioceses in Mpumalanga and North-West did not report any figures. This is a very depressing picture, because already in 1968 the LCSA had nearly 22, 000 members of which 8, 457 were communicant members. Now we are looking at an estimated total of only approximately 6, 348 members reported by the deans in 2011. That is very sobering and reason for serious soul searching, remorse and repentance.

| DIOCESE | CONGREGATIONS | MEMBERS |
|----------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Botswana | 9 | 757 |
| Gauteng | 8 (+1) | 1, 856 |
| KwaZulu/Natal | 12 | 735 |
| Mpumalanga | 12 | nn (approx 1,500) |
| North-West | 11 | nn (approx 1,500) |
| LCSA | 53 | 3,348 (approx 6, 348) |

We as a Lutheran Church in Southern Africa are now 44 years old – and the Botswana diocese is 30 years old this year i.e. in human terms coming to maturity. 1972 moruti Fritz-Adolf Häfner started to visit Botswana and September of 1981 this diocese was officially

inaugurated as fifth diocese of the LCSA. In six years from now – God willing – the LCSA will celebrate its 50th birthday – again in human terms the best years are ahead of us. This 50th birthday coincides with the 500th birthday of the Lutheran Church. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

MINISTRIES, INSTITUTES+PARTNERSHIPS: “... YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF”

LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN TSHWANE [LTS IN TSHWANE]:

TRAINING LUTHERAN PASTORS FOR AFRICA

On the 8th June an agreement was signed by the University of Pretoria [UP] and the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane [LTS] that enables the LTS to enrol its qualified students at the University for a Bachelor of Theology [BTh] degree. This degree is to be awarded by the university for the theological course taught at the Seminary by the Lutheran staff to its students. This theological course will incorporate the beginners course at LTS with Introductions into Hebrew and Greek grammar, Old and New Testament, English literacy and Computer competency as the initial stage, which will be supplemented by another three years of theological instruction before the degree is attained. This is an exciting prospect, because for the first time in our history our Seminary will be able to award an accredited degree. This is a noteworthy milestone in our history.

This year there are only 2 graduates from LTS – Enoch McBen and Frank Kainerugaba. Both are from Uganda. We have nobody from Botswana in the courses at LTS presently – and only one Tswana speaking student: Boitumelo Magosinyana. This is serious indeed and we need to address this much more proactively. Please continue to pray for workers in the harvest! The Lord has promised to answer our prayers. Therefore don't give up praying – and do encourage young men to take up this truly great calling. God willing the next ordination course including vicar Pheny Mokgaimena will take place in the first quarter of 2012 at the LTS. We are looking forward to the ordination of several vicars – hopefully around the Holiday of Easter i.e. 2nd week of April 2012. The work at the LTS is going splendidly – and the volunteers go a long way to make it that way. I am not only talking about the administration, upkeep and food-making, but also about the library, cleaning, housekeeping, maintenance and many other daily chores. We are grateful that many serious friends of the LTS address this work physically and help us to cope.

MISSION OF LUTHERAN CHURCHES [MLC]:

PROMOTING LUTHERAN CHURCHES WORLDWIDE

As Lutheran Church in Southern Africa we are a recipient and also fruit of Lutheran Churches doing Lutheran Missions. However since our inception as Lutheran Church in Southern Africa in 1967 – and even long before - we have also been an active agent of Lutheran Missions too. In my view the LCSA diocese in Botswana is a direct result of our beloved Lutheran Church in Southern Africa being involved in Lutheran missions beyond our national, cultural and familiar borders among the people like the San, but also amongst refugees in Dukwi. This mission work continues the work beyond the racial boundaries of our Church members, which initially was carried out amongst Indians in Durban/Glencoe, but also in cooperation with Germans and N. Americans from the very inception.

Today the LCSA is an active member of the Mission of Lutheran Churches, which is its official mission agency. We in Botswana are especially indebted to this mission organization with strong traditional ties to the LKM in Bleckmar, Germany [SELK], because this institution dedicated to the promotion of Lutheran missions worldwide has taken up all seven of the local pastors in Botswana into their personnel ranks to enable sustainable financing, support and supervision and in this way promote Lutheran mission endeavours in Botswana from Tutume up north to the Barolong area in the south. We will hear more of this work from the MLC representative Rev. Christoph Weber.

Being an active member of MLC together with our sister-church the FELSISA we are looking beyond our immediate confines and together support works of Lutheran mission in Southern Africa and hopefully globally too. People interested to bring the gospel to those, who don't believe in him yet and are in Church fellowship with us are encouraged by us to cooperate with us in the MLC so that we will evangelize, practice gospel outreach, strengthen the Lutheran faith and build Lutheran Churches in unity and harmony, but not disparately as sectarian enthusiasts tend to do.

In the Church Council of the LCSA we are looking at the following areas for Lutheran mission outreach:

Mpumalanga: Salem and Swaziland

Gauteng: Student ministry at UP and church planting at Cosmo city

North-West: Church planting in Rustenburg

Botswana: Outreach in the Barolong area & consolidation existing congregations

On Rogate Sunday, the 29th May, our Church celebrated God's wonderful mission in this world at our joint-Mission festival in Salem, Mpumalanga. This was a very joyous occasion as even some visitors from Botswana were present. Hopefully we can organize regular Mission festivals in our Church and motivate all our members to be even more faithful missionaries than before, proclaiming the goodness of the triune God in creation, salvation and sanctification.

DIACONIA: WORKS OF MERCY

This unity in faithful practice holds true in Diaconia too. Not only in Ntshongweni [KZN]; but also in Salem [Mpumalanga] and in Ramathea [Botswana] do we as confessional Lutherans work together in unity to promote works of mercy amongst those, who need it most: Orphans, HIV/Aids patients and unemployed Youth.

To address this serious need for professional help, we are glad that the first deaconess course finished its first leg of training at the LTS in October. 6 deaconesses were blessed for service – amongst them Sheila Letlhoale from Kanye – after successfully participating in the intensive courses offered by deaconess Grace Rao from LCMS World Relief & Human Care. We are looking forward to that day, when these deaconesses will play a significant role in addressing educational, health, administrative and financial relief needs in our church and in the society at large. Presently the 6 deaconesses are now deployed in the various dioceses to work together with the respective pastors under the supervision of the deans to investigate better and more helpful ways to address the challenges facing our Church in the area of Human care and works of mercy.

We are hopeful that next year the first full-time course under the guidance of deaconess Deborah Rockrohr will start at the LTS. This will mainly target younger women, who are eager to serve as helpers in the Church and mission addressing issues of diaconic ministry i.e. works of mercy or “serving at tables”. Just as pastors, who are ministers of the word i.e. servants of the word – these deaconesses are ministering in the area of works of mercy i.e. servants at tables. Only people with a passion to serve will do well in this ministry/service.

If I am not mistaken, there are a number of candidates from Botswana, who want to start next year. I am looking forward to seeing you there.

I was in Moschi, Tanzania during October and I visited the Lutheran Sisters there. I was very impressed by their set-up, which started in 1984 with the help of Lutheran sisters in Würzburg, Germany. They are about 70 full-time sisters, who work, support and maintain their complex by running not only a school for over 800 children, but also a dairy, a pork factory and a chicken enterprise. They are self-sustaining and live without government support. They work in various fields of education, administration and finance, but also in poverty relief and health care. Even if not every diocese can do this on its own, I am sure that together we could do something similar. I hear that the *Koinonia* project in Pietermaritzburg has copied these Lutheran Sisters and doing a remarkable work too.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

In 2004 our Church leadership of that time had addressed 9 questions to the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church [SELK] in Germany. In 2009 the Lutheran Church Missions [LKM, Bleckmar] responded after a series of workshops, questionnaires and discussions in their ranks with detailed answers. These are now being looked at carefully in our Church at all levels. In the past week both Rev. David Tswaedi DD and also Rev. Radikobo Ntsimane were guests hosted at the workshop on “Apartheid and Mission” at the Lutheran Theological Highschool Oberursel i.T. I hope that every diocese will get a chance to discuss these issues and that we will be able to come to better terms with our past as we look to the future our God has in store for us. May he grant the necessary insight, forgiveness, peace, reconciliation and healing!

CHURCH RELATIONS AND FELLOWSHIP: FELSISA

Gratefully we acknowledge that our two Churches have come a long way together. Over the past decades our Churches have cooperated in more or less close partnership in the Lutheran mission, in confessional Seminary training of future pastors and in the various aspects of pastoral ministry. Here and there, now and again our unity in the joint Lutheran conviction and practice has been brought to bear – most significantly from shared pulpits and at the Lord’s table, but also in day to day church life. For many years the realization of

this Church fellowship has been the goal of pastors and missionaries, of congregations and individual members of the Lutheran Church on both sides.

Due to circumstances this Church fellowship was never realized to the full. So much so, that at our last pastor's convention we were asked, whether this church fellowship still exists. We in the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa feel that the time is ripe and that our shared heritage, our common Lutheran confession and conviction, our mutual love, faith and hope as Lutherans in this country and on this continent encourages us to seek full church unity with our brothers and sisters in the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa. We therefore have invited them to join with us in one united Lutheran Church in Southern Africa.

CONCLUSION

Dear friends of our Lord Jesus Christ, dear members of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa and of this diocese [....], deans, pastors, missionaries, evangelists, elders, friends, partners and visitors: There are five priorities, which I want to hold up as guidelines for the coming year 2012. May the living God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – grant his grace and mercy to his holy Christian Church – and also to us as the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa – that we will faithfully think, say and do, what he has called us to think, say and do!

1. Faithful Lutheran worship [*Leitourgia*/Life together in the Church]
 - 1.1. preaching and teaching God's word and Luther's teaching
 - 1.2. administration of the Lord's sacraments according to the Lutheran Agenda
 - 1.3. Confessing and absolving sins
 - 1.4. Using the Lutheran liturgy with psalms [introit], hymns [hymnal] and spiritual songs
 - 1.5. Praying the church prayers in collects, general prayer of the Agenda and using "Rapelang/Khulekani"
2. Evangelization, mission and outreach
 - 2.1. Cooperating with the MLC and their missionaries
 - 2.2. reaching out with Luther's teaching to the unchurched in the community
 - 2.3. gathering and instructing people with God's word and Luther's teaching
 - 2.4. preparing people for baptism using Luther's Catechism
 - 2.5. planting new churches using the Lutheran Church order as an introduction

+ *Lutherans living together in love, trust + fear of the living God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit* +

3. Pastoral care

- 3.1. Taking care of shut-ins in hospitals, prisons and at home with God's word & sacrament
- 3.2. Catechising Sunday School children, confirmands and Youth with Luther's Catechism
- 3.3. Marriage counselling before and after weddings
- 3.4. Truth & Reconciliation: Addressing the past and looking at the future through God's word
- 3.5. Participating in co-workers meetings, pastor's conventions, ongoing education and practice
Lutheran spirituality

4. Diaconia

- 4.1. Orphans & widows: housing, food-programs at schools, day-care centres, support/training
- 4.2. Poverty relief: Taking care of unemployed and jobless - cattle project
- 4.3. HIV/Aids & basic health care: Helping to get to hospital and professional health care
- 4.4. Administration & fund-raising : public relations, secretarial work, reporting and accounting
- 4.5. Education at all levels: Schooling, English proficiency, computer literacy

5. Training Lutheran pastors and deaconesses for Africa

- 5.1. Support LTS in Tshwane with personnel, finance and with prayers
- 5.2. Lutheran Chair of theology at UP: Postgraduate studies in Lutheran Theology
- 5.3. Ongoing training for pastors, deaconesses and laity: Conferences, workshops, programs
- 5.4. Recruitment, support and retention of suitable students, staff, volunteers and co-workers
- 5.5. Providing suitable, relevant and effective training programs to equip and empower future pastors, evangelists, deaconesses, missionaries for the Lutheran Church in Africa

+ ANOTHER BLESSED YEAR OF GOD'S GRACE, MERCY + GOODNESS + HE HAS KEPT US IN THE TRUE FAITH EVEN IN THE SIGHT OF MUCH SIN AND EVIL IN THE WORLD AROUND US, IN OUR CHURCH AND DAILY LIVES. THEREFORE WE THANK HIM, THE ONE TRUE GOD, THE FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT FOR PRESERVING US THROUGHOUT AND WE PLEAD THAT HE MAY CONTINUE TO SUSTAIN US CONTINUOUSLY IN HIS WAYS OF LOVE, TRUTH AND PEACE NOW AND FOREVER +

"NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD ..." [KOPELO 14]