

1                                    **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Cape Church)**

2  
3                                    1<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the XV<sup>th</sup> Synod  
4                                    St Andrews Lutheran Church, Park Avenue, East London  
5                                    6-8 September 2019

6  
7                                    **Listening and discerning on being church here and now.**

8                                    Refection and report by Bishop  
9

10 Honourable Synod Delegates and Guests, dear Sisters and Brothers  
11 gathering for a synod meeting is an expression of unity and the willingness to seek  
12 answers together to the ever-important question: what does it mean to be church here and  
13 now?

14 By looking back, asking what usable past there is for the future of the Cape Church, helps  
15 us with this process. Looking back is not just to take note of what has happened, but to  
16 be encouraged and challenged by it. Looking back is vital when looking forward, while  
17 asking what God is up to.

18 There are encouraging signs, which might seem to be small at first glance, but they are  
19 significant. I hear more and more that Church Committees are dealing with membership  
20 lists with the question: who are our members? Church after all is about people. Being  
21 church with and for the people means to know the people. Linked closely to this is the  
22 increasing awareness that church is happening in a changed context, and therefore we  
23 cannot continue in the way we have been church for decades. This insight needs boldness  
24 and trust that God is guiding us in His wisdom and by His Holy Spirit into a new way of  
25 being church. After all it is His church; it is His gift to us. Let us boldly be who we are: His  
26 body to the benefit to many, by serving with love and care!

27 May this synod meeting have many moments to reflect with gratitude on what God has  
28 given us by being church with and for the people. Church is about people, God's people!

29  
30 1. **Being Church in the Circuit Conference East (CCE)**

31 In the CCE region there is a greater awareness of the need to support each other as  
32 congregations. This has been aided by the way the new parishes have been aligned, by  
33 asking the key question on how they could be better at being church in the region, instead  
34 of how they could survive financially as congregations.

35 Many joint services and activities have taken place throughout the year, as highlighted in  
36 the CCE report.

37 Due to the vacancy at St Crucis and the parishes consisting of three congregations each,  
38 the preachers stepped in regularly serving with dedication and purpose to encourage and  
39 empower the members by spreading the Gospel. The mutual support not only encourages  
40 but reminds us that we are not there to serve only our own needs, but to be faithful  
41 servants in the vineyard.

42 The economic and socio-political challenges in the Eastern Cape region have become an  
43 increasing burden on the viability and sustainability of some congregations. This brings  
44 with it many uncertainties and results in many young adults leaving the region due to a  
45 lack of job opportunities.

46 Despite of and in midst of these circumstances we keep asking: what is God up to? What  
47 does God want us to do here and now to be His body present, serving and reaching out  
48 to the people? The journey of listening, discerning and seeking God's will continues. We  
49 need to be bold and engage the newly revealed possibilities.

50 I recall many discussions in which it is said: 'we ought to become: 'more ecumenical in  
51 our being church'; 'multi-cultural'; "more community focussed"; .... . But often we lack the  
52 courage to take steps in these new directions.

53 In the rural context the prevailing question is not: how many denominations are there  
54 space for in the town, but rather, how can we be church together with the people here and  
55 now? There seems to be a move in this direction as the realisation and understanding  
56 grows that church is about people and is not just an institution. The names on membership  
57 lists are people, God's gift to the community of believers. How can we engage them more  
58 actively?

59 There are new people who come and often go again. How can we 'listen to the strangers'  
60 free speech' so that we discover the gifts which God gives to His church through them?  
61 How can we give them their place and space in the body of Christ by celebrating their gifts  
62 with them? Embracing strangers disrupts our old ways and takes us out of our comfort  
63 zone, but when we begin to build trust, we bring in the harvest. By welcoming them and  
64 giving them a spiritual home, we restore their dignity and self-esteem and they too become  
65 workers in the vineyard.

66 New members bring their own gifts to serve with and passion to encourage and inspire.  
67 Their gifts build us up and encourage us to use our own gifts more abundantly. Then we  
68 discover the value of the hidden treasure. I have observed this happening in many  
69 instances as I visited congregations. It is good to see different members stepping up,  
70 leading and serving with their gifts. Hidden treasures are of little value, but if our gifts are  
71 used, they become a blessing to many.

72 For a few minutes, turn to your neighbour and share where this has happened and is  
73 happening in your congregation?

74  
75 Let us be bold in our being church and we will be astounded when God speaks to us  
76 through the strangers and grows His body to be relevant in our communities, as we are  
77 the Body of Christ with and for the people.

78  
79 With the arrival of Pastor em Oziel de Oliveira as interim pastor at **St Crucis** opportunities  
80 arise for the congregation in this region to look beyond the now and comfort we have in  
81 various traditions. He comes with vast experience and knowledge of starting and  
82 empowering congregations with a strong community focus. Are we prepared to learn from  
83 him and then become amazed of how ready the harvest is to be brought in? - We ought  
84 to become bolder in dwelling in the world, as it is there that we learn, how to live out our  
85 faith and reach out to strangers. – Pastor Oziel please challenge us!

86  
87 The **Friedenskirche** congregation in Port Elizabeth has taken bold steps in their focus on  
88 the community. Their membership is showing more of the cultural diversity that is evident  
89 in the city. It is encouraging to see that migrants from other parts of Africa have become  
90 an integral part of the worshipping community.

91 The financial challenges remain a concern, but the congregation is seeking ways to grow  
92 in their stewardship responsibility with initiatives such as the 'Tower Project'.

93  
94 The **Coastal Parish** which consists of **St Andrews (East London), Luther Brakfontein**  
95 **and St. Peter's (Komga)**. The cooperation between the three congregations is  
96 encouraging. St Andrews is the largest congregation, and in many ways the driving force  
97 in the parish. Steady growth in membership at St Andrews and a growing awareness of  
98 the community in which the church building stands, has led to numerous ministries being

99 established to serve the needs of the community. The congregation will share what they  
100 are doing, in another session.

101 **Luther Brakfontein** finds itself in the middle of a growing community that lives on  
102 communal land. This brings with it many challenges, but also possibilities of sharing the  
103 Gospel. At the same time the uncertainties around the future accessibility of agricultural  
104 land and long-term ownership security makes this community vulnerable and brings with  
105 it many questions regarding the future of the congregation in that specific location.

106 **St Peter's in Komga** has a small but very committed membership. They play an important  
107 role in the town and regularly host the members of other denominations for a joint service  
108 and other fellowship meetings. This rural town seems to have limited prospect of growth  
109 in residents. Could St Paul's become a model where the different denominations express  
110 unity in midst of diversity? Maybe all could be served by one pastor based on a model like  
111 the one, the Church Unity Commission has established among the English-speaking  
112 churches?

113 The sale of **St John's in Dawn** has been concluded. The funds generated from the sale  
114 of the facilities have benefited the Coastal parish. A manse has been bought and the rest  
115 of the money has been invested and will continue to benefit the parish. We trust that these  
116 funds will be used wisely for ministry to advance the Kingdom of God as the members "*go  
117 and make disciples.*" (Mtt.28)

118  
119 The **St Paul's Congregation in Bloemfontein** is still vacant, but they are faithfully  
120 soldiering on. The strong and committed lay leadership have shared their increased  
121 awareness of the new community around them. They are asking: is God calling us to be  
122 church with this new and different community, compared to what the old focus was? They  
123 are asking themselves: should our calling still be so much on Lutherans from German  
124 background or this new and changed community?

125 At the visitation the Church Committee expressed the desire to start with services in  
126 English as an additional service to the weekly service in Afrikaans. Another motivational  
127 aspect to consider this bold step is, that three new churches, who have been using the St  
128 Paulus church building in the evenings, have outgrown the facility and had to move to  
129 bigger premises to be church in and with the community. Therefore, the question asked  
130 by the members is: what is God up to in this area?

131 At the last synod I reported that there was a discussion with the ELM regarding the  
132 possibility of a shared post with the ELCSA-COD. Unfortunately, it did not materialize as  
133 the possible candidate had to return to Germany and due to restructuring and changed  
134 priorities at the ELM.

135 The challenge to us as a church is: if that is what God is up to, how can we then fund such  
136 a missional project? What resources are available?

137  
138 The **Inland Parish** consist of **St Paul's in Stutterheim, St John's in King Williams  
139 Town and St Paul's in Macleantown**. As mentioned before, these congregations find  
140 themselves in a very complex and challenging political and socio-economic environment.  
141 Protests and violence often disrupt community life. Infrastructure in Stutterheim has been  
142 damaged, even the church hall was affected during a protest. Many uncertainties impact  
143 these communities. What role can the congregations play in such a situation? How can  
144 ecumenical relations strengthen this community?

145 The demographics of King Williams Town has changed drastically. This brings with it many  
146 challenges and opportunities that require boldness and patience in pursuing the question:  
147 what God is up to for His body here and now. We need to keep asking this question despite

148 the uncertainties. Let us keep asking 'what useable past is there for the future', and we  
149 might be surprised of what God is up to!

150 The settlers found in the church a home away from home. Will others who seek a home  
151 away from home and find a home with us? To do this we would have to get vulnerable by  
152 speaking to strangers and listening to them with an open ear, open mind and caring heart  
153 to hear what God is up to. To understand how He calls us to be His body here and now.  
154 Macleantown is the smallest of the three congregations and finds itself in a rural setting.  
155 There is a positiveness amongst the members attending worship. The visitation showed  
156 a desire amongst the members to be more church with and for the people in that  
157 community especially through teaching music. - Be bold. Just do it. Follow the NIKE  
158 slogan: Just do it. - You might be surprised in what God is up to with you and for you.

159  
160 Again, and again I become aware of how different the church culture is in the two  
161 circuits although both have deep German roots. Culture and church culture do have  
162 an impact on how we are church and with whom we are church. But that should not  
163 become a comfort zone to withdraw into but seen as a motivation to share the Christian  
164 values with the broader community.

165  
166 2. Let us look at what we celebrated and faced in being church in the **Circuit Conference**  
167 **West (CCW)**.

168 I am glad to report that after some struggle the CCW now has a committee to deal with  
169 the administrative matters.

170 On the question of how the congregations can find ways to work closer together,  
171 encourage one another and share the joys and challenges of being church, the following  
172 was agreed upon: "The CCW is a forum through which the congregations engage with each  
173 other and support one another. The CCW provides opportunities for the different  
174 congregations to enter into dialogue with one another on issues of common and national  
175 concern, and to learn with and from one another how to "be church" in our context."

176  
177 The **ELC Strand Street, Cape Town** purposefully listens and discerns what God is up to  
178 with his church both in the city and in Vasco. Sharing of faith stories in a safe environment  
179 has been very encouraging und uplifting in building the community. A workshop with Ms.  
180 Chene Swart on "Telling your faith story" created an excitement and a sense of gratitude  
181 for how God has been present in the life of individuals and in congregational life. Looking  
182 back and by sharing the stories creates an excitement for what is still lying ahead. For  
183 many members this has not only affirmed their faith, but it gave them boldness to actively  
184 be involved in congregational life. It creates a desire to grow in faith and in the knowledge  
185 of what faith is all about. The Faith Course presented by Pastor Anja Spiske is of great  
186 importance in this regard. The focus on teaching Christian principles and Lutheran  
187 doctrine is uplifting and crucial in building up the body of Christ. We need to find more  
188 ways to increase knowledge and thus build confidence to boldly share the Gospel.

189 It is noticeable how the understanding of the priesthood of all believers has grown. More  
190 members have become actively involved in being church with and for one another. A  
191 passion and vision to reach out into the area is growing.

192 The membership ELC Strand has changed, and it is becoming a home for more Lutherans  
193 from all over Africa. We are slowly learning how to be hosted by a stranger and how to  
194 host strangers. Being hosted by a stranger is to ask whom has God sent and what gifts  
195 has He given to the congregation with those who come in.

196 Change is often associated with loss, but it in fact is rewarding as new habits can be  
197 formed which are important in being church with and for the people.

198

199 **St Martini, Cape Town** faithfully continues to serve the German community in and around  
200 Cape Town. The small groups are a great network of caring and sharing in faith. Yet the  
201 challenge remains on how the next generation, young and old, can come in and share  
202 their gifts to benefit of the whole Body of Christ, even if it is in a different way to that which  
203 was traditional and is the current church culture. The congregation is continuously seeking  
204 new ways to embrace both the language and the generational needs. They have taken a  
205 bold step by introducing two contemporary services a month with a band leading worship.  
206 One of these services is bi-lingual, a small way of addressing the increasing need for other  
207 languages spoken by members, and due to the increased awareness of changed  
208 demographics in the inner-city. For how long can the focus remain mainly on a German  
209 middle-upper class community? It is a privilege to serve in the German language and gives  
210 us an opportunity to be church with a minority group.

211 Sebastian Haas has been employed as Youth Worker at St Martini. This ministry is  
212 important in order to reach out to the children at the Kindergarten and the 'Internationale  
213 Deutsche Schule Kapstadt', the teenagers, students and young adults in the city.

214

215 The **Philippi congregation** finds itself in a geographical area which brings with it many  
216 uncertainties due to the political and socio-economic challenges. Farmland is in demand  
217 for housing and development. The effects of crime are of concern and make life in a rural  
218 setting difficult. Yet the positive attitude and lives deeply rooted in faith brings hope and  
219 the courage not to give up. Keep asking: Lord, what is it you want us to do in order to be  
220 church here and now which cares and shares your love?

221 The congregation is blessed by many children regularly attending Sunday School. In this  
222 way young families attend and become involved. The desire has been expressed to no  
223 longer be in a parish, as they need the pastor to equip this generation to be disciples. This  
224 idea has currently been put on halt due to financial constraints and due to other  
225 uncertainties, which are associated with socio-political challenges.

226 A strong music ministry plays an important role in congregational life. The choir  
227 participates actively in the Sunday service. The 3 organists lead the congregation in joyful  
228 singing. – I am sure that many congregations envy the blessing of having 3 organists!

229 The **St. Johannis congregation, Wynberg** faithfully serves in three languages  
230 alternating between English, Afrikaans and German. Located in a key area of the Southern  
231 suburbs and hosting a branch of the St Martini Kindergarten, the question arises again  
232 and again: what is God's preferred future for this congregation? Looking beyond the  
233 traditional group of people we give a spiritual home to, who is God calling to be church  
234 here and now?

235

236 The **Church of the Cross, Bellville** is serving in 3 languages, with a new focus on  
237 English. This focus is starting to bear fruit in that people from the community and other  
238 cultural groups attend. The numbers are still small, but it does make the current members  
239 aware of the changing community of Bellville. Boldness to host the stranger and being  
240 hosted by the strangers is needed, and the willingness to go into the community and share  
241 the Gospel.

242 Listening carefully and discerning what God is up to here and now is a process and needs  
243 endurance. The Church Committee has initiated a group discussion on the missional

244 principles and how the Church of the Cross can benefit from these. In this way a clearer  
245 picture is being formed on where God might take his church in Bellville to from here.

246 The St Johannisheim is an important ministry and plays a key role in reaching out to the  
247 German community. It is here that German services are celebrated, and everyone is  
248 welcome to join the celebration. A small group of students and young adults meet on a  
249 regular basis. There is a good relationship with the Kindergarten. These all are important  
250 outreach ministries.

251  
252 The **Friedenskirche, Stellenbosch/Somerset West** congregation puts much emphasis  
253 on equipping the saints through purposeful teaching and a focus on implementing  
254 missional habits. This is important foundational work as the congregation is a home base  
255 in which the learning community grows its capacity to live out it's Christian values.

256 The Student Ministry has become an integral part of congregational life and has created  
257 an awareness of the Lutheran church on campus.

258 The UELCSA has three students of theology studying in Stellenbosch. After consultation  
259 with the Church Committee, Pastor Felix Meylahn has been tasked to be the mentor of  
260 the students. This means that he is no longer able to dedicate his fulltime attention on  
261 congregational work. The UELCSA is compensating the Cape Church financially for this.  
262 This income is being used by the congregation to engage Pastor Beate Bidoli-Willard on  
263 a part-time basis. A win-win arrangement for all.

264  
265 The **Southern Cape** Congregation, **Rondevelehoogte**, has a shared post with the  
266 ELCSA-COD parish of Oudtshoorn. Previously it was with the congregations of  
267 Pacaltsdorp and Hornlee. A good partnership has developed between the congregations  
268 and between the two churches. We are indebted to the ELM for their generosity.

269 The Church Committee has expressed a desire to form a Lutheran Hub in the Garden  
270 Route. The purpose of such a hub would not only be to work together as the two churches,  
271 but to join hands and reach out into the community with its different social and cultural  
272 groups. They have expressed the wish to have a full-time pastor to help them to grow  
273 beyond the original purpose for which the congregation was founded, namely, to give a  
274 spiritual home to German speakers living on the Garden route.

275 A focus on the German language will remain, but the needs of other people also need to  
276 be addressed. The potential to grow is there, as George is a growing urban city.

277 The challenge to synod is: are we willing to see this as a missional opportunity and invest  
278 resources in this area? Are we bold enough to reach out and not only reach in?

279 Let us all seek guidance in prayer and discernment.

280  
281 **Visitations** play an important role in the process of listening and discernment. I appreciate  
282 that you are willing to set a weekend aside to gather, to share, to listen and discern what  
283 God is up to. To spend time in sharing and seeking answers to the crucial question of  
284 what it means to be church here and now.

285 Much of what I have reflected on above is related to the sharing at visitations and during  
286 the many visits and meetings with congregations.

287 Let us not lose the momentum of having a visitation at least every four years so that we  
288 become more sensitive to the voice of the Lord in our listening and discerning.

289  
290 4. Church is about people, God's people. How can we be better equipped to fulfil our  
291 calling? What is needed to strengthen the foundation of our faith so that we can go out  
292 into communities with joy and boldness? How can the 'Priesthood of all believers' grow,

293 so that we still will be learning communities in which Christian values form a stronger  
294 community, which impacts society and brings hope and peace to a nation that so  
295 desperately longs for these values?

296 Nurturing and strengthening our faith through teaching sound doctrine, biblical knowledge  
297 and truth is vital and is happening with the 'Faith Course and Preacher Training'. It is  
298 happening in Sunday school, confirmation classes, small groups and Bible study groups.  
299 But, more can and should be done in this regard.

300 It is for this reason that Church Council had decided to create a 25% post for Pastor Anja  
301 Spiske, who is currently employed on a 25% post to do this training. Synod will have to  
302 ratify this decision. She will step down from this 25% post at the end of 2019. We need to  
303 critically discern if this is the best and most effective way to fulfil this task through a 25%  
304 paid post. Teaching and equipping needs to be driven by the desire to grow in faith and  
305 to be equipped as kingdom builders.

306  
307 I am confident that by pursuing three key aspects of the Partnership of Missional  
308 Churches, we can grow in ministry, seeking to be church with and for the people.

309 'Being a Learning Community' – what have you learned on congregational level that  
310 helped you to be more missional in being church? Which areas have you identified where  
311 more learning is needed and where growth needs to take place?

312 'Being a Christian Community' – what are the key elements in being a Christian  
313 community? Do people in the neighbourhood identify the congregation as such, through  
314 what they see, hear and how they perceive the church?

315 'Being a hosting Community' (hosting the stranger and being hosted by the stranger) –  
316 when was the last time a stranger came to church and then became a new member who  
317 brought his or her gifts to build up the body of Christ? When was the last time you  
318 witnessed an adult baptism in your congregation?

319 These are key elements needed for creating new habits in being church with the people.  
320 A persistent focus on these elements takes us out of our comfort zone of living with existing  
321 habits that have been passed on for decades, through us being church with our main focus  
322 on the descendants of German Settlers. It is a valid focus; it was for this group that the  
323 Lutheran church played a crucial role in forming a home away from home. But as a result,  
324 we still are regarded as an exclusive group while others struggle to find a home away from  
325 home. This understanding of what our calling is, has limited us from seeing who the  
326 neighbours are whom God sends us to give a home.

327  
328

329 5. The church is also an organization, which cannot do without dedicated people like you.  
330 Leadership structures play an important role in governance and in giving guidance so that  
331 the structures remain functional, fulfilling their purpose. I would like to thank all those who  
332 take leadership responsibility, be it in small groups, committees, church committees,  
333 church council and the pastors. I thank you for your dedication and commitment. Let us  
334 remain to be servant leaders where we have been called or tasked to lead.

335  
336 Let us spend a moment of silence and prayer, remembering those who have passed away  
337 since our last synod.

338 We remember our brother in Christ Pastor Torsten Marienhagen. He was the pastor of St  
339 Paul's in Stutterheim from October 1997 until February 2009. May the Lord comfort his  
340 family and fill all with the hope of the resurrection of the dead.

341

342 **Pastoral posts**

343 i) New appointments and Ordinations

344 a. Pastor coll. Martha Weich was ordained at St. Paul's in Stutterheim, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of  
345 December 2017. She continues to serve the Inland Parish.

346 b. Pastor coll. Matome Sadiki successfully completed his second Theological exam in the  
347 regional church of Hanover, Germany, in April 2018. We thank the Regional Church of  
348 Hanover for granting him the opportunity to be trained as vicar. He was ordained on the  
349 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2018 at the Church of the Cross, in Bellville. He was placed as Pastor coll., to  
350 serve the congregation.

351 c. Pastor em Oziel Campos de Oliveira Junior from the Evangelical Lutheran Confession  
352 in Brazil (ELCIB) has been appointed as interim pastor for one year to serve the St Crucis  
353 congregation in Beacon Bay. We welcome him and his wife Cheryl. We are grateful for  
354 the ELCIB for their willingness to assist us in this way. We trust that the South-South  
355 Partnership between the two churches will grow and more exposure and exchanges will  
356 be possible in future.

357 ii) End of service in the Cape Church.

358 a. Pastor Dieter Trümpelmann moved with his family to the St Peters by the Lake  
359 congregation of the ELCSA (N-T) in January 2018. May he continue to serve with joy.

360 b. Pastor Peter Molchin is serving the ELCSA (N-T) congregation in Germiston from the  
361 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2018. May he continue to serve with joy.

362 c. Pastor Wolf von Kilian-Philipp who served the Southern Cape congregation for the past  
363 three years will go on pension at the end of September 2019. We wish him a well-deserved  
364 retirement and a continued active involvement in the church.

365 d. Pastor coll. Matome Sadiki has resigned as pastor of the Cape Church and will return  
366 to Germany at the end of September 2019. We are sad to lose him as a pastor. We wish  
367 him and his family a blessed return to Germany.

368 iii) Extended contracts

369 a. Pastor Felix Meylahn's contract with the Stellenbosch-Somerset West congregation has  
370 been extended until 31.12.2020.

371 b. Pastor HP von Fintel's contract with the Costal Parish has been extended until  
372 30.6.2021.

373 c. Pastor Walter Schwär's contract with the Strandstreet congregation has been extended  
374 until 28.2.2022.

375 d. Pastor Anja Spiske's contract with the Friedenskirche congregation in Port Elizabeth  
376 has been extended until 31.10.2022.

377 e. Pastor Michael Denner has requested the EKD for another 3-year extension of his  
378 contract. A key question is: what would we as Cape Church want him to do other than  
379 serving the Philippi and Wynberg parish?

380

381 Pastor Claudia Nolte-Schamm is the incumbent at St Martini.

382 Vicar Tobias Kirschstein from Germany served at St Martini from August 2018 and will  
383 return to Germany in February 2020. We thank him for his dedicated service.

384

385 6. As ELCSA (Cape Church) we are part of a bigger body, a body from whom we can  
386 learn and benefit much. In engaging with them, they too learn from us as we witness  
387 together to God's glory.

388

389 The **Lutheran World Federation** is a world-wide body that represents more than 70  
390 million members who have communion of pulpit and altar. I have had the privilege to visit

391 the head office in Geneva in November 2018 for two days and meet with leaders of the  
392 different desks and organisations of worldwide services. From 13-17 May 2019 the All  
393 Africa Lutheran Church Leadership Consultation (ALCLC) met in Moshi in Tanzania under  
394 the theme: 'Rethinking holistic mission in Africa today'. A Report is available on our  
395 webpage.

396

397 We are grateful to have Rev. Dr Elieshi Mungure amongst us. She is the Area Secretary  
398 for Africa, Department for Mission and Development. She will address us with a word of  
399 greeting and preach during the closing service.

400

401 The **Lutheran Communion of Southern Africa (LUCSA)** is a sub-regional expression of  
402 the LWF. It serves 15 member churches in 10 southern African countries. Matters of  
403 reconciliation, transformation and empowerment are at the core of its service. LUCSA  
404 relies mainly on external funding for its programs related to poverty, malaria prevention,  
405 HIV Aids and others. How can we benefit from these programs and contribute to their  
406 sustainability?

407 Rev. Dr. David Tswaedi will retire as executive director in January 2020. A new executive  
408 director will be appointed.

409 The Assembly took place from 12-15 August 2019 in Gaborone, Botswana. It has elected  
410 a new council. The time of Bishop Horst Mueller, as President of LUCSA and of Mrs  
411 Lynette Burger as officers has come to an end. I have been re-elected onto the council as  
412 chairman of PETER (Program for Education, Theology and Ecumenism)

413

414 The **Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD)** is the body of Lutheran and United  
415 churches in Germany. On request by partner churches, they send pastors into the partner  
416 churches to serve for 6-9 years. We currently benefit by having Pastor Michael Denner  
417 and family amongst us. Through a program of the EKD, Vicar Tobias Kirschstein, is  
418 working at St Martini for 18 months. Both colleagues serve us well and are an enrichment  
419 as they bring a different perspective into the work we are called to do.

420 Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber is the bishop responsible relationship to the congregations and  
421 partner churches outside Germany.

422 OKR Rev. Klaus Burckhardt led the desk for Africa up to his retirement earlier this year.  
423 We thank him for his commitment and support. OKR Rev Marc Reusch is the new  
424 incumbent. He will visit us in January 2020.

425 The Board of the EKD (Rat der EKD) under the leadership of Bishop Heinrich Bedford-  
426 Strohm visited us in March 2018. The purpose of the visit was to experience first-hand  
427 what is happening in our church and country. They were able to visit some congregations,  
428 the Faculties of Theology in Stellenbosch and the University of Western Cape, iThemba  
429 Labantu and other institutions. They returned encouraged and with a better understanding  
430 of what our challenges and opportunities for the church are. We thank them for their  
431 support. May the relationship keep on growing and be of mutual benefit.

432

433 The **United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD)** has been a reliable  
434 and supportive partner for many decades. They are now linked to the German National  
435 Committee (Deutsches National Komitee, the German sub-region of the LWF).

436 They develop liturgical material for worship and related theological reflection on these.  
437 They are always willing to supply material at a reduced cost.

438 Rev Dr. Christine Keim is the representative for Africa.

439

440 We have a partnership with the **Regional Church of Hanover**. Their leadership always  
441 shows a sincere interest in what is happening in the congregations and in our region. They  
442 continue to give financial support to four projects in the CCW. We are indeed grateful for  
443 this gift!

444 Pastor Matome Sadiki was able to do his internship as vicar in one of their congregations  
445 and fully participated in the training and the second theological examination. Vicar Tobias  
446 Kirschstein is from this church.

447 OKR Rev Reiner Kiefer who has been responsible for the partnership with our church will  
448 take up a position at the Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland e.V. (EMW) in  
449 January 2020. We wish him well and thank him for his support over the years.

450

451 The „**Evangelisch-Lutherisches Missionswerk in Niedersachsen**“ (**ELM**) has been a  
452 longstanding partner

453 We have benefitted especially from the following two programmes:

454 i. The Garden route project where Pastor Wolf von Kilian-Philipp is serving both our  
455 Southern Cape congregation and the Oudtshoorn Parish of the ELCSA-COD.  
456 Unfortunately, with his retirement at the end of September 2019 this project will come to  
457 an end. But the relationships that have grown over the years will continue and the desire  
458 to form a Lutheran Hub is a testimony of that.

459 ii. A new program is an exchange for pastors for one month. This is to give them exposure  
460 to different context in which congregations work. Pastor Martha Weich and the Inland  
461 Parish hosted Pastor Corinna Diestelkamp from Loccum in Germany in February 2019.  
462 Martha Weich visited them in August/September 2018. Although the visit is too short, it  
463 enables a valuable experience.

464 I have been invited to two conferences in November 2019 where I am requested to share  
465 on how the Partnership of Missional Churches principles help us in creating new habits  
466 and discovering what it means to be church here and now.

467

468 The **Conventus of Reformational Churches**. Unfortunately, this forum has not met in  
469 2018 nor in 2019. It is an important forum through which we are involved on an ecumenical  
470 level.

471

472 The **South African Council of Churches (SACC)** of whom we are a member since 2017.  
473 The SACC has embarked on various programs to highlight socio-political and socio-  
474 economic needs in society. The document, “#The South Africa we pray4”, expresses the  
475 core of what the challenges are we must deal with as a society and church. It is available  
476 on our webpage. The National Convention of South Africa @ConveningSA dealt with  
477 these matters in a systematic and reflective way. A disaster relief program was  
478 coordinated after the devastating floods had caused havoc in neighbouring countries such  
479 as Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

480 A challenge for the organisation remains staffing of the office due to a lack of funds.

481

482 A close cooperation with the **National Church Leaders Forum (NCLF)** helps us to have  
483 a good insight and overview of vital matters church and society are concerned with.

484

485 The **Western Cape Ecumenical Network (WCEN)** is another a group through which we  
486 can share our gifts and resources in being church. Challenges we are faced with in and  
487 around Cape Town, which need our attention as church are the challenges around

488 Restitution; Violence on the Cape Flats; Moral fibre of society; challenges the agricultural  
489 sector is facing – to name a few.

490

491 I will seek to foster good relationships with other church leaders where possible, so that  
492 in sharing, we discover what the needs of the people in our communities are and what we  
493 as church can do to share the love of Christ.

494

495 The **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA)**. The General Assembly  
496 of ELCSA met from the 27<sup>th</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2019 in Bonaero Park. **Bishop Ubane** from the  
497 North Western Diocese was elected as presiding bishop of ELCSA and Mr Thelo  
498 Wakefield from the Cape Orange Diocese as President of the General Assembly. We  
499 congratulate them on the elections and are looking forward to good cooperation, serving  
500 the people as the Body of Christ.

501

502 As ELCSA (Cape Church) we find ourselves in the same geographical area as **ELCSA-**  
503 **COD**. So, where can we work closer together on local level? Where is it possible to partner  
504 with another congregation so that we can be church with the people? Could the envisaged  
505 idea of a Lutheran Hub become a model in other areas too?

506

507 The **Moravian Church in South Africa** remains an important partner. We do not only  
508 learn from each other but keep on asking: 'What is God up to?' for his church here and  
509 now. I had the privilege to address the Gauteng Synod in 2018 on the Missional habits  
510 and how the focus on them guide us in our being church in a changed and ever-changing  
511 world.

512 The Moravian Brass band contributed significantly to music that was composed by Mr  
513 Hans Huysen for the 2017 Reformation celebrations.

514 We were greatly blessed at by Brass musicians on various all-Lutheran celebrations. A  
515 closer cooperation between the Moravians and St Martini has resulted in reviving joint  
516 services during the time of Advent.

517

518 The **Lutheran Co-ordinating Committee** is a body that unites us with the ELCSA-COD  
519 and the Moravian Church. The **iThemaba Labantu** Diaconic Project is a great project and  
520 one way in which we can jointly make a small contribution in a society that has great  
521 needs. We thank **Pastor Otto Kohlstock** for the dedication, love and care with which they  
522 serve in that community. We are grateful that the Berlin Mission Society have agreed that  
523 Otto Kohlstock can continue at iThemba Labantu for another 3 years after retirement. This  
524 means that we will have to fill the position at the end of 2021.

525 On 1st February 2019 the Philip Lahm Sports Grounds were opened. Many international  
526 guests joined in the festivities and media coverage reached people on many continents.  
527 We are in debt to the foundation and many sponsors for this great asset. May the facilities  
528 and the sport events contribute to uplift the community and serve to bring hope to the  
529 people of Philippi and beyond.

530 The school is growing and gives a good foundation to the scholars.

531 If you have not been there, then I encourage you to go and see what it is all about!

532

533 We are a member of the **United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa**  
534 **(UELCSA)**, together with the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCiN(GELC))**  
535 **and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (N-T) (ELCSA(N-T))**.  
536 Theological training remains a key focus. During the last two years we have made some

537 progress with the closing of the Lutheran Theological Institute (LTI) at the University of  
538 Kwazulu Natal. It is to be noted that the process has not been finalized due to outstanding  
539 financial statements as a result of the situation our sister church ELCSA finds itself. Our  
540 students now study at the University of Stellenbosch (see report)  
541 The synod will take place in May 2020 in Namibia.

542  
543 The **ELCiN(GELC)** is led by Bishop Burgert Brand. The Lutheran churches in Namibia are  
544 to be commended for hosting the Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in 2017. It  
545 was a wonderful opportunity to meet with brothers and sisters from all over the world. It  
546 was good to hear what God is up to with his church and how his kingdom is advancing. I  
547 was encouraged by the listening ears and the support expressed for the work we have to  
548 do here.

549 The ELCiN (GELC) will have their synod from 12-15 September 2019 in Windhoek. The  
550 theme is 'Peace'. Peace or the lack thereof affects us in many ways, thus different aspects  
551 will be debated. We wish them God's richest blessing for their synod.

552  
553 The **ELCSA(N-T)** is led by **Bishop Horst Müller**. Their synod takes place from 10-13  
554 October 2019 in Bonaero Park. The topic of the synod is "Go - with purpose". We wish  
555 them God's richest blessing for the synod.

556  
557 5. In conclusion I thank all of you for your contribution in being church with and for the  
558 people in the regions where the Lord has blessed us with wonderful facilities and many  
559 other resources. Let us continue to be good and faithful stewards of what has been  
560 intrusted to us.

561  
562 Yours in Christ  
563 Gilbert Filter