

## Preacher training / Faith course

### Synod report 2023

In March 2022 a new preacher training / faith course has been launched. The aim of this course is threefold: Firstly, it aims at training church members to become official preachers within their own congregations. Secondly, it gives members who are already preachers the opportunity to expand their knowledge and to refresh important aspects regarding this invaluable ministry. Thirdly the course is designed in such a way that anyone who is interested in growing in their faith and learning more about God, the Bible and the Church of Christ, can also participate. We are happy to say that this concept seems to be working. Currently there are sixteen participants, who take part in this course. Of these, five are already active preachers, seven would like to become preachers and the rest are taking part simply for the benefit of learning more about God and faith.

A new topic is generally presented once per term, during a Saturday morning session (9h00-12h30) and then during further Tuesday evening sessions (19h00-20h30) as the need arises.

The aim is to get through the preacher training curriculum within a time span of two years. This however does not mean that participants will then automatically qualify as preachers. Before anyone is accepted as preacher by their local congregation and the church council every participant still needs to pass an exam sermon and hand in a paper on Lutheran theology.

The courses are all presented online, via Zoom and are thus accessible to anyone who has a computer and internet. The advantage of this is that you, no matter where you are, can join in and get to know others from different congregations across the vast expanse of the Cape Church. Another advantage is that this saves time and traveling costs. However, it also has its disadvantages, it is difficult to have real fellowship via virtual media, participants can't chat and share with one another during tea breaks and practical aspects regarding preaching, like reading and non-verbal communication exercises are difficult to train online. This means that the local pastor needs to play a more active role in the training of potential preachers, guiding them and mentoring them on the way and giving them the opportunity to practice within the church life of each participants local congregation.

Our hope is that in the near future more and more members will make use of this course and embrace this exciting ministry of preaching, proclaiming the good news of Jesus in word and sacrament; thereby growing the notion of the priesthood of all believers in a tangible manner within our church.

Finally, I want to use this opportunity to thank all the pastors from the ELCSA (Cape), who have presented a course and have made this whole endeavour possible, an endeavour that helps fellow believers to do what we are all called to do with these words from 1 Peter 3:15: *"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."*

May we together grow in faith and always continue to discover the great treasure that lies within the Gospel and may we become ever bolder and more courageous in our proclamation of Christ Jesus, through words and deeds.

Yours,

Frank Schütte  
(Coordinator)