



BISHOP'S
April 16 **POST** May 16



We live in stormy times. The heat around the local government elections is building up. This happens during a time of general political unrest in South Africa, an alarmingly high unemployment rate, an economic crisis, falling Rand and one of the worst droughts in memory.

How do we as Christians react to this situation? I suppose the correct answer should be: Pray! But the real reaction often is anger, complaining, lamenting, fear, despondency, even apathy.

1 Timothy 2,1-7 is a helpful instruction to Christians. At the time of its writing they were facing even more challenging times than us. As Christian minority they were at best tolerated, at worst persecuted and killed.

They are challenged: “I urge, then, first of all, that *requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving* be made for everyone” (Verse 1). These four words give us a better understanding as to what is meant by prayer. Prayer is not just a wish list to God, or a list of complaints. Nor is it a spiritual exercise that turns a blind eye to the realities we have to face. No, praying means to engage in conversation with the Lord about the situation we are in. There are some things that we can be thankful for, others that worry us. There are people that need our prayer and intercession - amongst them the rulers in society. (V2). Since prayer is not a monologue, we also listen to what the Lord has to say. His concerns go far beyond ours. He wants more than “that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” (V2) He wants all people (ALL!) to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth, to discover full life in Christ. (V3)

The South African Council of Churches has started a campaign worth noting: “The South Africa we pray for” (more info at sacc.org.za). Behind this is more than just the realisation that South Africa is in a crisis. It is launched with the awareness that Christians can play a major role in our times. Just think about it: the biggest political party has a branch in almost every voting district in South Africa. The Church of Christ on average has 24 congregations in each of these districts! Although we belong to a myriad of denominations, we all confess to one God and one mediator, Jesus Christ. (V5) Imagine now the impact, when we Christians together discuss the situation with our Lord AND listen to what he wishes us to do! We do not need to wait for election results to see which party wins. Jesus Christ HAS won the victory! This is what we celebrated at Easter!

I hope that, together with all Christians in our neighbourhood we can make this victory known - especially in the way we address the pressing issues of our time. May the Lord help us to do so!

Horst Müller

News from the Church

1. **Pastor Dr. Detlev Tönsing** was inducted on 31 January 2016 into the shared post of pastor at St Peters Pretoria and Program Facilitator of ELCSA (N-T). May he be filled with joy, strength and many creative ideas for this task!

2. After the ending of his Coll-time **Pastor Frank Schütte** was elected by the Augsburg congregation and inducted as their pastor on 14 February 2016.

3. In the same way **Pastor Rolf Schmidt** was elected by Harburg and inducted as pastor there on 3 March 2016.

We are grateful that these young pastors have settled in well, and wish them Gods blessing and many years of serving in his Church.

4. **Bishop Horst Müller** will be on study leave from 5 May to 2 August 2016 - partly in Germany and partly in South Africa.

5. **Talks with the Cape Church:** Bishops Gilbert Filter and Horst Müller as well as their deputies, Felix Meylahn and Theo Jaeckel have met, once also under guidance of an external consultant, to find ways of how to best lead this discussion to the benefit of all, especially the congregations.

6. The **Combined General Pastors's convention** of both Churches will take place from 19-23 September 2016 in Red Acres, Pietermaritzburg.

7. On 11 April 2016 a delegation from ELCSA (N-T) Church Council will meet with the **Church Council of FELSISA** for further talks. May the Lord bless this meeting!

8. On 1 May 2016 the **ELCSA (N-T) Brass festival** takes place in Piet Retief. May the musicians experience a blessed weekend, and may many members of our Church make an effort to gather and to share in this wonderful occasion!