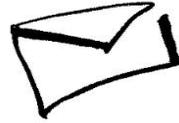




BISHOP'S  
Feb 15 POST March 15



**I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes! Romans 1,16**

Why does Paul even consider that one can be ashamed of the gospel? Well, it proclaims a weak God, a loser! Remember - he is writing to the Christians in Rome, the city of the mightiest ruler of that time. Caesar is proclaimed as god. With might and power he conquers one country after the other. Brutally he removes other mighty kings. The temples of other religions are plundered, the gods dragged along triumphantly by the conquering Roman legions: We are strong, we are mighty! Caesar is Lord!

How can one dare to claim that the crucified Jesus, crucified by these Romans, is the King of Kings? That is ridiculous!

Paul knows better. He met this Jesus Christ, while he was on his way to brutally extinguish these weak Christians. But then the crucified Christ stopped him in his tracks - not with power and might, but with kindness, grace and forgiveness! O yes, he has experienced this power of God that set him free and changed him completely.

During his many stays in prison he time and again experienced this power, when ruthless soldiers and wardens were transformed by the gospel, when beastly criminals repented and became new human beings. People for whom there was no hope were changed and started afresh.

This is not a gospel to be ashamed of! That is why Paul longs to come to Rome, and there, under the nose of Ceasar, proclaim this gospel of Jesus Christ! Nothing to be ashamed of!

At the beginning of this year 25 adult participants at eEquip retreat in Hermannsburg reflected on what it means to be a disciple, a Christian, a follower of Jesus.

We do not have to be ashamed that we are Christians. We serve a Lord, who might seem to be

without power, yet he is mightily at work throughout the world. We serve Christ, who died on the cross, yet through that conquered the power of sin. We proclaim the crucified, who has risen and overcome death!

We have the wonderful privilege to see how Christ is at work, silently, but with power! We need not be ashamed of him and his gospel!



*Host Müller*

## News from the ELCSA (NT)

1. After careful consideration, **Ulrich Johl** has decided to resign from his position as **Programm facilitator** of ELCSA NT for the end of January 2015. We thank him for his involvement and dedication to the Church and the work of the Church. May God bless him and his family on the way forward, and may he continue to be a blessing.

2. With the move of **Pastor Burgert Brand** to Namibia, **Dean Theo Jaeckel** is now the **deputy to the bishop**. I express my thanks to Pastor Brand for his support and assistance to me. We wish him God's blessing and wisdom, as he now takes on the responsibility as Church leader. His **induction as Bishop** of the ELCIN GELC took place on 18 January 2015 in Windhoek.

3. With the relocation of Dean Dirk Köstlin to Bethanien, his deputy, **Pastor Hugo Filter, became Dean of the Eastern Circuit** on 1. January 2015. Thank you, Dirk, for your involvement. To Hugo: May your role as Dean bring you fulfilment, and may you be a blessing and be blessed together with the Eastern Circuit.

4. **Pastor Werner Harms** served the Hillcrest congregation for 2014. We are very thankful to him and Ilse for the commitment and involvement. Werner was willing to serve in Nelspruit for a few months after the retirement of Pastor Dieter Lilje end of March 2015. Unfortunately the sale of his farm at Elandskraal did not go through, and he had to change his plans.

5. The following inductions took place or are planned:

- On 18 January **Pastor Rene Risch** was inducted as pastor in Hermannsburg Congregation and school. On the same day, the new principal, **Martin Marx** was inducted in his office. May God bless the community, school and all the people working there, especially with this big change happening.
- On 25 January **Pastor Reiner Focke** was inducted in Empgangani as new pastor in Trinity Zuluand. May the family and the congregation experience a fruitful journey together!
- On 1 February **Pastor Manfred Müller-Nedebock** is to be inducted as pastor in Hillcrest. May the young congregation experience a good next phase in it's development together with this family.
- On 8 February **Pastor Dirk Köstlin** is to be inducted as pastor in Bethany, Izotsha. The congregation has embarked on a general overhaul of its manse, and Köstlins are staying on House Kandaze for the time. May God bless the work of Köstlins and the congregation!
- On 1 March **Pastor Rüdiger Lutz** is to be inducted as pastor in Vryheid. May the couple quickly feel at home in the new congregation and Church, and experience the guidance of the Holy Spirit on the journey with the congregation.
- **Pastor Coll. Rolf Schmidt** has moved to Harburg, where he continues his service as pastor coll. May it be a good experience for the family and the congregation.

6. On 31 March **Pastor Dieter Lilje** is retiring. After his ordination on 11.5.1980 he served Piet Retief (-1984), Pietermaritzburg (-1991) and then 18 years as bishop of ELCSA (NT) (1991-2009), before he served Nelspruit (2010-2015). As Church leader he guided the Church through the turbulent times from the old to the new South Africa, represented us abroad and locally, and guided many congregations and pastors through challenging times. We thank God for the wonderful work that Dieter and Senta could do in our Church and beyond. The couple is retiring to live in Pretoria. May they take a good break before the desire to serve leads them to another challenge!

7. On **22 March 2015 the Northern Parish** (with Polokwane as centre) is having its closing service. For many years the Parish was taken care of from Nelspruit. Due to the small numbers they decided to dissolve the parish. May the Lord guide them, into new congregations or towards new possibilities.

8. 15-18 October 2015 sees the last **Synod session of this synodal period**. For most representatives it is the third synod they attend. This session also **elects the bishop and deputy** to the bishop. According to the rules of our Church the election is for 6 years. The congregations are invited to nominate a candidate at their AGM's. Although Bishop Müller can be nominated for a second term, it is important not to simply treat it as a re-election, but to prayerfully consider who should be nominated. Any Lutheran Pastor in active service can be nominated. May the Lord of the Church guide the process!