

# **Report of St. Peter's by the Lake Youth Ministry**

To the Mission Committee of the ELCSA(NT)

## 1. Introduction

With the help of the Mission Committee we were able to employ a Youth Pastor during 2012. This has made it possible to continue to grow the Youth Ministries of St. Peter's by the Lake during 2012 and for me to have more time for the work as dean. We look back at a very blessed year in which the Youth Ministries grew, had contact with other youth groups in the area and took part in all youth events of our circuit.

Any Youth Ministry in the city is a great challenge. We are faced with youths who have many possibilities and much distraction. Our philosophy at St. Peter's by the Lake is to concentrate on what the other worldly programs do not offer and that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All our Youth Work focuses on the relationship to our Lord and the program and everything else revolves around this. When a Friday Evening or any event is prepared we look at the text and what it says and then the activities and all other aspects of the evening are planned around it. Our challenge at St. Peter's is that we attract mainly youths from disadvantaged backgrounds who face moral and social problems that are often overwhelming. We see our work as a possibility for these people to find direction in life, to grow in faith and to realise that our Lord is there for us always. In the last year we have also managed to include youths from privileged backgrounds and have tried to bring these groups of South Africans together. This has however not been an easy task.

## 2. Youth Pastor

In April we employed Andrew Falkson as the Youth Pastor of our congregation. He has taken over the responsibility for the Youth Team and the Youth events. He works together with volunteers in a Youth Leadership Team and his task is to teach these leaders, to give the direction of the ministry and to motivate this team. He then also leads and manages the Friday evening meetings and gets involved in other activities in the congregation that have to do with the youth. He also attends our Congregational Council meetings and with that has direct contact with the leadership of St. Peter's by the Lake.

He also meets with me once per week to discuss the Youth Ministry and to align it with the direction of the church. I as pastor work closely with the Youth Pastor and discuss many theological issues with Andrew. He does not come from a Lutheran background and the work with him has shown me how deep and beautiful our Lutheran theology is. I am encouraging him to read and we have meaningful and deep discussions that are making me appreciate my studies and our church.

## 3. Youth Ministry

### a. Friday Evening

The Youth Ministry has grown from a Friday night evening event to a ministry in which the church is a home to the youths. The Friday night event is led by a team under the leadership of the Youth Pastor and is prepared during the week. The volunteers of our congregation (one from ELM Germany and one South African) do much of the preparation work and are given responsibilities in these evenings. The other members of the team are also incorporated and

help with the management and running of the evenings.

b. St. Peters a home to many of the youth.

We have a youth room and a complete worship team setup in the hall. On most afternoons youths come to use the computer at the church to do homework and print their assignments, to play soccer and other games and to practice on the musical instruments. This is managed by the volunteers and the youth pastor. This has made our church into a vibrant and dynamic place where the youths feel welcome and enjoy just meeting their friends.

c. Sunday Ministry

On Sundays many of the youths come to our services and then stay until 5pm at the church. They prepare a light lunch for themselves and play soccer, pool, cards and practice their dancing and singing.

#### 4. Confirmation Ministry

The Youth Ministry Team is tasked with trying to draw the Confirmands into our ministries. Our confirmation classes are held on Friday just before the Youth Events. This makes it possible for parents to bring their teenagers to confirmation and then to fetch them after our youth program. We also try to include some of the Youth Leaders in our Confirmation Team. Confirmation is led by me and not by the Youth Pastor, but with a team. Last year we had 36 confirmands. We have been very successful in keeping our confirmands in the congregation by encouraging them to become a part of the Youth Group.

A challenge we face is that we see enormous growth in the youths that also attend confirmation, but once they only attend youth their seems to be to little teaching and this needs to be addressed. We have started a Wednesday evening teaching event for youths, but the transport issue makes it difficult.

#### 5. Camps

The Youth Pastor co-leads the camps with me. During 2012 we had one Youth Camp and the Kailager Camp. The Youth Camp was compulsory for the confirmands and the other youths that wanted to come along had to come as helpers. In that way we try to encourage our youths to take over responsibility and to learn and develop. This has brought about great growth in individuals.

The Kailager Camp is a Circuit Camp in which our congregation plays a central role. For the last 8 years our congregation has taken over the administration of it and carried the financial responsibility. A few years ago the camp ran at a loss of R18000 and our congregation carried that. For the 2012-2013 camp about 40% of participants came from backgrounds that made it impossible for them to pay. They tried to get sponsors and paid an average of R150 for the camp that cost us R1 150 per participant. We did fund raising and brought in about R40 000 from members of St. Peters. This not only for members of St. Peters congregation, but for the whole circuit. St. Peter's has supported this Kailager ministry enormously in the last few years. I mention this because we heard many voices claiming that we do not give enough for mission work beyond our congregation.

These camps have been a great blessing to many teenagers and have brought changes in their lives. They have given hope to people and brought enormous healing.

#### 6. Challenges

Youth Ministry in the city is not easy. Our youths are taught to lie and steal, often by the

adult role models around them. This has become evident in our work and we have noticed that the moral fibre of our society is very weak. It is a great challenge to lead these youths to accept our Lord as their saviour and then to take over the values that He teaches. We have noticed that we need to teach and guide. We have found that the teenagers need personal attention and counselling. This personal contact is a strength of our Youth Pastor. He has the ability to reach out to the teenagers and to be there for them. We have heard many testimonies during the last year about the role that our Youth Pastor has played in the lives of individuals. He is really there for the youths. Under his leadership the Youth Group has grown. Our challenge during 2013 is to grow the leadership team of the youth and to train them, because with a larger number of youths our Youth Pastor will not be able to be there for everyone on an individual level. We need to therefore have more people who support him in this.

## 7. Conclusion

The employing of a Youth Pastor was an important step in the growth of St. Peter's by the Lake. During 2012 we had to build another office on our premises for the Youth Pastor and therefore the support of the Mission Committee towards this ministry was of great help. St. Peter's is a congregation that is involved in many different ministries, both in the Lutheran Church and within the ecumenical community. Many resources and much effort goes into the Homeless ministry (an ecumenical project), the St. Peters Child Care Project (about R15 000 per month), the circuit work (esp. Kailager) and this made it necessary for us to ask for the support from the Mission Committee. We thank you for this and pray that God will continue to bless the mission work of our church.