



**Lutheran Youth Mission, ELCSA (N-T)**  
**KZN Youth Council**  
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**Lutherische Jugendmission, ELKSA (N-T)**  
**KZN Jugendrat**

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**ELCSA (N-T) Youth Report 2019 – KZN Circuits**

**1. Introduction**

The KZN Youth Ministry of the ELCSA (N-T) is responsible for the Southern and Eastern Circuits. The congregations maintain and finance a regional youth structure. They employ a youth pastor in a 25% post to lead and supervise this regional structure. The youth pastor is supported by an elected youth council. This leadership is responsible for regional youth activities including camps, events, training, planning and administration. The greater region is divided into three hubs (or sub-regions), which offer activities and events in a smaller region. Currently these hubs are served by one 50% youth worker/pastor in Pietermaritzburg. The Eastern Circuit Hub is led by a committee of volunteers that co-ordinates the ministry in their sub-region. In addition to this, congregations work with volunteers that help with the youth ministry in local structures.

**2. The Ministry**

As in previous years, one main focus of the regional ministries in the last two years is the camps, through which the KZN Youth Ministry, according to their mission statement, aims to equip and inspire young people for life and to be witnesses to Christ and his love:

- **Kailager Children's Camp (Ages 8-12)** – this camp takes place at the Kailager site in the winter holidays. It is led by a competent group of leaders. In the last two years the structure has been substantially adjusted and now includes camp parents, 2-3 pastors, two admin people – one for registrations and one for camp admin, a trained first aider and then a big group of volunteer helpers. This camp has grown significantly over the last four years and attendance is now more than double what it was prior to this period. This is something the youth council is very pleased about since this camp is the gateway into our regional ministry. This camp is also one at which there is good co-operation beyond the KZN circuits with a large group of participants from Kroondal and some from Johannesburg and Pretoria.
- **KT Camp (Ages 12-16)** – this camp takes place at the Kailager site in the winter holidays. It is led by the youth pastor together with a team of volunteers. We are also looking to adjust the leadership structure for this camp and will be introducing an expanded group next year. Other than improving our ability to meet our leadership responsibilities on camp such an expanded structure has the advantage of attracting more participants to camps since we can pull in more adult leaders from the various sub-regions. Existing relationships between leaders and participants are great asset for our camps. This camp had also shown significant growth over three years, but this year attendance was well down again. The lack of participation from the Eastern Circuit was concerning and this matter has been directly addressed with the circuit.
- **Rüstwoche (High School and Young Adult)** – this camp takes place in December and has developed over the years and now includes theme-focused sessions and discussion, workshops (to equip young people in the areas of music, art, drama and much more) and outreach. The outreach sees the whole group of participants visiting one of our congregations and planning outreach activities with them. This camp places a lot of responsibility on older participants to take over leadership of various aspects of the camp. This is an important approach that equips young people for leadership.
- **GO Camp (Ages 18+)** – this camp is specifically aimed at our students and young adults and takes

place on long weekends. It has been an important addition to the regional ministry. Since last year this camp has been run in collaboration with a young adults group from Pretoria. This collaboration has been very successful and will continue this year.

- **Church Festival Youth Camps** – these camps at our Church Festivals (Choir and Brass Band Festivals) have gained in popularity in recent years and give youth the opportunity to enjoy wonderful fellowship for a whole weekend when they attend these festivals.

Overall the camps have been well attended over the last two years. Some of the concerns that were reported in our regional conferences have been addressed and this has resulted in some very positive developments. Improvements in the area of regional communication using modern technology and social media are pleasing. There are still, however, some areas that need to be addressed. A more detailed camp policy that meets today's legal and other requirements is necessary. We have made good progress in this regard, but are still not completely compliant. We have put good policies in place but still require better solutions regarding our compliance to the regulations of the sexual offenders act. We have put temporary measures in place, but are investigating further options. The youth council advises the church as a whole to take note of these developments to ensure that all circuits and congregations meet their responsibilities regarding camps. We are happy to share our policies with everyone.

As mentioned there were a few concerns regarding attendance from the eastern circuit. We are thankful to this circuit for the discussions that have taken place in recent weeks and are confident the matter can be addressed constructively going forward.

Leadership planning and training conferences take place at least 1-2 times a year. The youth pastor and council are also a resource to help Congregations at a local level. Other regional events serve to promote fellowship amongst youth beyond the local Congregation.

### **3. The Structure**

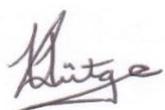
Pastor Udo Lütge has been the youth pastor since 2009 and has indicated to the youth council and congregations that his term will come to an end in December 2020. Since then the youth council has discussed the way forward. Proposals have already been discussed with the Eastern Circuit at their recent conferences and will be discussed with the Southern Circuit at their conference on 7 September. All discussions so far have made clear that the congregations want to continue with a post that is responsible for leading this ministry. Decisions will be made about precisely how to structure this post and the regional ministry. Currently three options are on the table and we are confident of identifying a good way forward.

### **4. The Finances**

The finances of the KZN Youth Ministry are very healthy, with strong reserves in both the youth fund and the youth hub fund. Congregations have kept to their financial commitments well and the youth council would like to express its thanks for this wonderful support.

### **5. Conclusion**

Our thanks go to everyone who has been involved with the activities of our youth ministry over the last two years, whether they be volunteers or full-time employees. There are many challenges to this ministry – youth leaders and workers, as well as pastors again reported of struggles with commitment issues (including over-commitment in other aspects of life), finding ways to remain relevant, achieving sustainable participation, and more. We encourage our Church at every level – Church, Circuits, Congregations, parents and individuals – to take an active interest in our young people and to invest time the time and effort that is needed to develop our ministry towards them. I encourage us all to continue our efforts under God's guidance and in his Spirit.



Pastor Udo Lütge (KZN Youth Pastor)