

REPORT BY THE CHOIR ASSOCIATION LEADER - MAY 2019

Dear fellow Christians and Choristers,

Seek peace and pursue it! Psalm 34, 14.

When this report is tabled at our Bi-annual General Meeting, the National and Provincial Elections will be over and a new government period will start. We all know the state of our country and we are aware of the turmoil in the world - the wars and the cry of war, whether in the sphere of economics, or with guns, rockets and bombs.

In this fiasco, we receive the watchword for the year from Psalm 34, 14, which orders us to seek peace and to pursue it. We, as Christians are ordered to seek peace and to pursue it! To me this means that we have to show the way to the rest of the world, to our fellow humans that we have to seek peace. We have to stop to quarrel and argue. To me this is no coincidence!

It was this watchword that guided us through the two years since our previous choir festival, where we celebrated the *Sola Gratia*, *Sola Vides* and the *Sola Scriptura*. Our previous choir festival showed us where our base is. Following on now, we have to apply what we have received in the Reformation. We have to seek and pursue peace - with God, with our fellow human beings and we have to pray to God to grant us peace wherever we live - in our families, our work places and our country. He is the only giver of peace! I hope sincerely that the choristers have taken this message from the program to heart while rehearsing. It is my prayer that we can deliver this message to our congregations wherever we sing as choirs - but more importantly that our lives will change that the world can see this peace through us. We have to be the messengers of the peace!

It was a real privilege and an honour for me to work with all choirs and singers. It is your hard work under the able guidance of the Regional Leaders that will come to fruition at our choir festival so that the congregation can hear the message of peace! I thank you for all support that you gave you Leaders, and especially to me.

I was privileged to attend and participate at all the regional choir festivals. All were memorable events that left a deep impression in me. Thank you to the Regional Leaders for arranging the festivals.

Our training program for conductors has started, and the first training session was completed on Friday, 3 May 2019. Next year, we hope to have 6 more qualified conductors in our ranks that will be able to help you and further the choir music in our church. I am very grateful to LKMD Markus Leidenberger and Kantorin Margrete Leidenberger for their inputs in this training program. Without them, we would not have been able to provide the excellent training.

In preparation of the festival, I was able to conduct 2 rehearsals sessions in the Central and Southern Circuit, and some more in the Northern Circuit - being closer to home. Each of the events was very special to me, and I left them with a warm feeling of thanks to our heavenly father. He has given us a lovely talent in music to praise and proclaim his name!

My tenure as Leader has reached an end, and I have reached the age where the younger generation has to take over. It came faster than I thought, although I tried to prepare myself for the day that it comes.

My time with the Choir Association was a very special time in my life! I have met and worked with very lovely people, and I have experienced their love and support for which I am truly grateful. On top of that, I have received so much blessings from our heavenly father, that put me in a position to work under his grace, without which, it would not have been possible to do.

It is now time for a younger person to take the reins and move on with the younger generation of choristers and singers. We, the older generation, are there to support whenever required and requested.

I wish the choir association the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our heavenly Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, now and for ever!

Walter Johannes

All-Lutheran Service 27 August 2017

Shortly before the previous Synod meeting, on Sunday the 27th August 2017, all Lutheran Churches in South Africa were gathered for the first time in history, to commemorate 500 years of the Reformation.

Arranging such a big event brings a couple of challenges. How many people will attend, what should be the format, how do we finance the event, etc., etc. We received answers to all these challenges - albeit after prayer and submission to our Lord.

The organizing committee consisted of members of all Lutheran Churches under the Chair of LUCSA Bishop Tswaedi. The finances were very ably handled and arranged by LUCSA. It was an unforgettable experience of togetherness and cooperation in the organizing committee!

If we consider that the Lutheran Church in South Africa counts some 700 000 confessing Christians, it was quite a challenge to agree on what the attendance at such a festival would be. In the end the organizing committee mutually agreed on an attendance of 10 000 people.

On the day of the Festival, a combined Lutheran Brass Band of about 180 members and a Choir with about 120 Singers gathered in the venue. After a short rehearsal under the able direction of Mr. Egmont Ottermann (Brass Band ELKSA N-T) and Mr. Manfred Johannes (Church Choir FELSISA) the Festival started, and the guests arrived while the Brass Band was playing music from the Harepa. What a wonderful moment when the Pastors entered the hall, followed by the Bishops of all South African Lutheran Churches!

The service was held with each Bishop performing a part of the Service. Bishop Müller gave the Sermon, stating that we need to pass the torch in the world, and we should see how we can help each other so that the light is spread in the darkness of this world. We should not fight or boast amongst each other regarding the size of our torches! Each torch brings light to the world. Through a bit of a calamity, the sizes of the candles with the emblems of the churches, on the Altar differed, thereby underlining the message of the Bishop.

The singing of the congregation with the brass band and the choir was so homogenous and in unity that you could hear that it came from the heart.

We did not receive 10 000 members from our churches, it was about 2 800 that attended. But all went home rejoicing! Maybe we should do such an event again!