



Bishop's Post

December 2019 January 2020

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.”

Soon we will be hearing these words again, when the Luke 2 is read at Christmas. I can only imagine the anger that this imperial decree caused all over the Roman empire. Just because Caesar wants to boast about the size of his empire, people must stop all their work, and at their own expense, travel to their ancestral homes. No consideration is shown, not even for people like the highly pregnant Mary.

Luke tells us in a fascinating way how God is making use of this powerful emperor to start his salvation drive. The mighty Roman Empire is put into motion to get the Messiah born in Bethlehem! Wonderful!

“Go- with purpose!” - this was the theme of our Synod in October. We shared our thoughts, our visions. Many participated in the 10-year challenge.

But, just like with Mary and Joseph, things happen that seem to derail us - things beyond our control. The economy battles, resulting in people losing their jobs, or in salaries not growing with inflation. Crime and corruption make us feel helpless, angry, frustrated. A growing number of congregations battle, or even fail, to make ends meet.

Reflecting on this gospel, I ask myself: Are we indeed helpless victims of mighty powers, pawns of politicians and powerful bosses? Or can it be that God is actively using these circumstances to lead us to his goals?

Jesus had said: I will build my Church, and not even the gates of hell will overcome it. Can it be that the current crises are not derailing us, but rather leading us into directions and destinations that we otherwise would not have chosen? Can it be that He is going - with purpose?

For Mary and Joseph, the journey to Bethlehem could not have come at a worse time - but Luke shows: God was at work!

This makes me ask with anticipation: Where is the Lord going with us? How is he going to let us grow and move forward, despite - or through? - the political and economic turmoil?

May we, in this Christmas period, discover that we are not hapless pawns of mighty people, but that God is at work - in us, through us, with us. All too often we only realise it in hindsight.

Christmas reminds us: Our Saviour is at work. Not even Caesar could change that!

Glory be to God in the highest!

Host Müller

News from the Church

On 1 December the Name Change of our Church will become official. ELCSA (N-T) will then be **NELCSA - Northeastern Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa**.

On 10 November **Martin Büttner** was inducted as Pastor of the **New Germany Congregation**. The congregation elected him when his coll-time came to an end. We wish the Büttners and the congregation many blessed years on the road together!

On 1 December the **Dolphin Coast Lutheran Congregation** will celebrate the inauguration of their new place of worship that they are now renting. May it be a place of blessing for many!

The next **eQuip** Retreat is from 1 to 5 January 2020 in Hermannsburg. It will build on the synod theme. **“20/20 vision. Go- with purpose!”** The intention is to reflect on how God purposefully led people in history, and for us to gain direction and hope for the way forward.

More information as well as the registration form is available on www.elcsant.org.za.

The web page also contains a lot of other useful information. Go and check it out!