



Bishop's Post April-May

“This I have written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20,31)

Why now? Here, amidst thick traffic, my GPS shuts down. I've never been here before and have no idea where to go from here. Normally I study a map before I leave, so that I have a general idea of where I am going. But today I was in a rush and totally relied on my GPS to guide me. I am totally lost!

A situation like this can happen, figuratively speaking, in life as such. A crisis strikes, and suddenly I lose all direction. I have no idea how to move forward, or which direction to take. My “GPS” (God-Positioning-System) is silent. I pray, read the watchword ... but there is nothing. What is true for Road traffic is true for life: It helps to study the map, so that in times like these you have at least an idea of direction.

What is this “map” that I am supposed to study? For me it is the Bible. By reading from it on a daily basis, I get a sense of direction, even when there is chaos. I do not know the exact route to follow, but at least know the direction, to keep me going.

For this reason I encourage you to make it a habit to read in the Bible on a daily basis. You will find that it helps you finding direction. You can download a Bible reading plan from <http://www.elcsant.org.za>. Over a period of four years it guides you through the whole New Testament, Psalms and large portions of the Old Testament.

The Gospel of John accompanied us through the time of Lent. On Wednesday after Easter you will read in John 20,31: “This I have written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” What a wonderful direction for life as a whole!

In April we are then reading from Ephesians. It is a letter of a different kind - rather a circular, addressed to congregations in the region of Asia minor. It does not deal with specific problems or questions of a particular congregation, but gives general, but important guidelines for all Christians. The first three chapters deal with Christ and his relationship to the Church. This then is followed with specific guidelines what it means to live as a follower of Christ. Indeed, it does give you a sense of direction!

After Ephesians we move on to Hebrews. Although it is called “letter”, in fact it is rather a course on Christianity, aimed at those coming from an Old Testament upbringing (An ancient Alpha Course!) It tells how Christ surpasses everything and every important Old Testament figure. It encourages the readers to hold on to Christ, no matter what. Through Him they will not lose direction, even in difficult times.

I therefore invite you again: Join me in reading the daily Bible passages. It is worth it!

Yours in Christ,
Horst Müller

News from the Church

Pastor Dr Christian Nottmeier from the **Johannesgemeinde** Pretoria East is returning to Germany in April 2018, to take up the position of Superintendent in Berlin-Neukölln. We thank him and his wife Lilli for their work, involvement and dedication to congregation and church during the last six years. Their son Jonas remains behind to complete is Abitur in Pretoria.

May the returning Family settle in well, especially the school children Johanna and Jakob. May the Lord bless the Family and continue to let them be a blessing!

The Johannesgemeinde elected **Pastor Nicole Otte-Kempf** as successor. She serves as Pastor in Maulburg, the regional Church of Baden. According to plan the family (husband Carsten and children Justus and Jonna-Lisbeth) will arrive in South Africa to commence service in September 2018. May God bless them in the closing phase in Germany and with all the arrangements that are to be made.

On 3 June 2018 the **Brass festival of ELCSA (N-T) is celebrated at the Deutsche Internationale Schule Johannesburg**. Northrand congregation is hosting it. May the musicians have a good time of preparation, and may, on that day, many worshippers attend and experience a blessed day!

From 6-8 March 2018 eleven delegates of the **Council of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland - EKD** visited our Church under the leadership of their chairman, Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm. During their short visit they interacted with the Friedenskirche and Outreach Foundation in Hillbrow, St Peters Pretoria, Johannesgemeinde Pretoria, Representatives from the Central and Northern Circuit and had a meeting with ELCSA (N-T) Church Council. Apart from that they visited the SACC, Deutsche Internationale Schule Pretoria, the German Ambassador and LUCSA (Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa). The purpose of the visit was for them to get an impression of our church, some ministries, and the environment that we work in. Bishop Müller will be representing our church at a **Partner meeting of the Hermannsburg Mission (ELM)** in Porto Allegre, Brazil, from 21 to 28 April 2018. This meeting serves to strengthen the network of partner churches globally.

From 14 to 18 May 2018 Bishop Müller will then attend the **Lutheran Council of Africa** meeting in Accra, Ghana. Here he represents 15 Lutheran Churches from Southern Africa.