



BISHOP'S
Oct 15 **POST** Nov 15



“You have one master - Christ” Mt 23,8

The performance is about to start. It is a huge orchestra. The lead violist stands up, plays a note or two. Suddenly a noise erupts as each instrument starts playing, tuning into the note given by the violist. It sounds as if they are competing against each other. Then the noise dies down. Silence. The conductor enters the stage. The audience applauds. He turns to the orchestra, lifts his hands. Complete silence. And then, just with the smallest indication from his hands, the orchestra starts playing. Beautiful. Harmony. It gives me goose pimps to see music happening right in front of my eyes. Beautiful music.

Diversity in unity - our synod topic for 2015. Each one of us is unique in our gifting, our talents. We differ like instruments in an orchestra. They can be grouped together into “similar instruments” - strings, wood wind, brass, percussion - but even within each of these similar groups there is a large variety of instruments. In the same way we might be grouped according to language, culture, age, education. But no matter with which group I associate - even within the group we are not all the same.

We gather in congregations, which are grouped into a Church. The Churches are divided into denominations - Lutheran, Methodist, etc. It is necessary for us to be aware of our denomination, our tradition. It can be compared to the note given by the lead violist. We need to tune into its pitch.

But now comes the crucial point, were the diversity and unity come together: When the conductor enters, and all eyes turn to him. He indicates what is to be played. The musicians ensure that they are on the right page. He gives the sign. The music starts.

This is also the point where things all to often go wrong in the Church. Our conductor is Jesus Christ. But too often we as Christians are busy with our own agenda, our own favourite music. We acknowledge our Lord standing in front of us, and assume that He will convince every one else to play what I have selected. But that is not how it works. Of course I can say to Him what I would like to see happening in His Church. But ultimately it is His call - He decides, He is the master who directs! In an orchestra even the most talented musician has to submit to the director - otherwise there will be chaos. But when the musicians submit, focus their eyes on the conductor, follow his conducting, the result can be overwhelming - and the better the musicians, the more beautiful the result.

Each congregation has very talented members. If each one submits to the Lord, is willing to be directed by him, wonderful things can happen.

In our Church, our congregations, we have a huge diversity. Much more than in a symphony orchestra. But that is wonderful! We just need to tune into our Church, our congregation. And then we need to fix our eyes on our Lord, and enjoy serving Him together. Others will then be blessed through us!

Host Müller

News from the Church

On 13 and 14 August 2015 the **First Theological Examination of UELCSA** candidates took place in Bonaero Park. Three candidates had registered. We congratulate **Martha Weich** and **Martin Büttner** who passed very well. Martha has commenced her internship in the Strand Street congregation in Cape Town. Martin has started his internship in Dessau, Germany. **Matome Sadiki** is to re-submit the written assignment and sermon. After successful completion he will do his internship in Stelle, in the Regional Church of Hannover.

Thank you for your prayers and support to these candidates. To all who participated in their training, especially to Rev Dr Volker Keding, who did the bulk of the teaching, thank you very much! Thanks also to Bishop Dithale of the Western Diocese of ELCSA for making him available, and the ELM (Hermannsburg Mission) that sponsored most of his travelling.

Synod 2015

From 15 to 18 October 2015 between 80 and 90 delegates and guests will meet in Kroondal for our synod. Please remember this synod in your prayers. Important agenda points are the merger with the Cape Church and the election of bishop and deputy. See also www.elcsant.org.za

eQuip 2016

“Growing through challenges - eQuipped for 2016!” You are heartily invited to participate in this retreat taking place from 2 to 7 January 2016 in Red Acres Retreat Centre, Cedara, KZN.

This is an event for all ages. A child minder will take care of the young children, and anybody from 15 years onwards can participate in the programme.

How do we deal with challenging times, issues and circumstances? Do we run away or hide our head in the sand? Withdraw into our comfort zone? Pretend that everything is OK? Old and New Testament as well as history in general has shown how people grow by facing these challenges and dealing with them.

2016 will bring with it many challenges. The purpose of this retreat is to eEquip you to deal with them, and hopefully grow through them! More information as well as registration forms will soon be available on our web page: www.elcsant.org.za

Situation of ELCSA

Some newspapers reported on a financial crisis in our sister Church ELCSA. In December 2014 all the reserves of its Head Office were invested into an organisation which has not delivered on its promises. As a result, ELCSA is without any reserves, which impacts heavily on all areas that were funded by the investment returns. This includes the Theological Training in Pietermaritzburg and the Lutheran Conference Centre in Bonaero Park. In both instances it has a direct impact on us, since we are Partners in these. The full implications are yet unclear. Hopefully we will be able to report more at synod in October.