

Short history and background of the congregation, Lutheran Church, Hayfields

The Lutheran Church, Hayfields in Pietermaritzburg has its roots in the missionary thrust of the 19th century of the Hermannsburg and Berlin Mission Societies as well as the extension work of the Union Lutheran Church in Durban in the middle of the 20th century. The mother congregations of Bishopstowe and Pietermaritzburg were both constituted in 1912. They merged into a single congregation on 1 January 1983. The Congregation's primary place of worship is the Church of the Cross at the Lutheran Centre in Hayfields, Pietermaritzburg. It has now expanded its services to include three services in the Amber Valley Retirement Village chapel in Howick. The geographical area of the Congregation reaches from Mooi River in the north to Cato Ridge and Eston in the south, Richmond in the west and Bishopstowe in the east.

The Congregation stands under the spiritual guidance of an ordained pastor who is assisted by an elected congregational council. The pastor is assisted in the Sunday services by a number of trained lay preachers, lay readers, and when necessary, other pastors who are members of the Congregation. A youth team is assisting in aspects of guiding the young people (age groups in the range 8 - ± 25 years of age) in the Congregation and is also involved regularly during normal Sunday services and family or special youth services. The Congregation aims to

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- proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ to those in whose area it is located
- help others to follow Jesus Christ
- pray for those in need and suffering and supporting them
- invite visitors, friends, outsiders to hear the good message of Christ and experience Christian fellowship and care.

It is constantly reminded to do so by its mission statement "Called to impact, called to care and called to share".

Spiritual life in the Congregation is multifaceted and many opportunities are offered in order to share in the fellowship and outreach work. It takes care of its young and old members through the dedicated initiatives of its other members. It offers a home to Christians from all walks of

life and is influenced by the demographics of the society in which it ministers. It communicates in German and English.

Through its structured make-up, a large number of members is involved in leadership positions. It gives credence to the concept of the priesthood of all believers.

It works as a Christian congregation side by side with congregations of other denominations in Pietermaritzburg and forms part of the Hayfields Churches Network (Anglican, Baptist, Dutch Reformed, Methodist and Lutheran). At the same time it nurtures its traditional and new links with other Lutheran neighbours. It is represented on the All Lutheran Committee which regulates Lutheran co-operation within the greater Pietermaritzburg region. Through the close proximity of the Lutheran Theological Institute at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on the Pietermaritzburg campus the Congregation comes into contact with Lutheran students from a multitude of countries outside the boundaries of South Africa with different traditions and customs. This enriches congregational life and is a safeguard against being an introverted congregation. The congregation nurtures a partnership between itself, the Lutheran parish in Machibisa (Edendale), The Kenosis Community at Bishopstowe and the Pinneberg Kirchenkreis (church circuit) in Germany.

The Congregation created and constituted the **Kenosis Community Trust** in 1989. It is represented on the Trust by an elected trustee. The objectives of the Trust are to –

- promote, foster and advance the Christian religion on a public basis;
- acquire immovable property exclusively for religious purposes and use;
- improve the skills of lay people who are called to the Christian lay ministry; and
- conduct religious retreats for the spiritual and educational edification of Christian religious congregants.

The **Church of the Cross Retirement Village Trust** which was established at the initiative of the Congregation in 1994, has developed the Lutheran Gardens Retirement Village across the road from the Church of the Cross in Hayfields. It houses about a hundred people. The majority of the residents are members of the Congregation.

A monthly newsletter, *Impulse*, serves as a communication medium between the Congregation and its members, friends and other congregations and bodies. It

contains details of congregational life and activities and is distributed free of charge. It is supplemented on a weekly basis by an "Announcement" bulletin. The monthly newsletter and the weekly bulletin are also available from the church office via e-mail.

Activities in the congregation

- Worship services in English and German in traditional and contemporary forms.
 - Religious guidance for the young – Kids Club and Children's Church (±5 – 13 years of age)
 - Confirmation classes
 - Lutheran Youth Fellowship (13 to 18 years of age)
 - Youth group
 - Group for young adults
 - Seniors' group
 - Women's guild consisting of a collection of women's groups
 - Men's guild
 - House groups
 - Prayer groups and a prayer chain
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- Choir
 - Brass band
 - Worship team
 - Opportunities to play various musical instruments including piano and church organ
 - Courses to assist people in their spiritual life
 - Visiting service to the sick
 - Caring for the old

Projects of and Special services offered by the congregation

- The Congregation has its Easter Evening, Advent Evening and a Spring Fest as its main fundraising events. A percentage of the net profit from these events is donated to a designated charity organization.
- The Congregation has a music ministry under the banner "Music under the Cross". The aim is to advance good music that does not contradict the message of the Cross of Christ.
- The bi-monthly communion services during the week for the elderly at the Church of the Cross, private homes, Jan Richter Centre and the NCVV home for the aged has developed into a very important ministry of the Congregation serving the needs of the elderly and frail. At the same time it also serves as an outreach tool for old people who are not served in

this way by other churches. During the alternate months a communion service during the week at the Church of the Cross is well supported.

- Within its midst are a number of hospitals. These offer members of the Congregation the opportunity of visiting Lutherans from other congregations as well as its own and to tend to their physical and spiritual needs.
- The Congregation supports Kids' Week of the Kenosis Community at Bishopstowe by providing funds to help feed those children who attend this outreach.
- As a large number of members live in the area between Hilton and Mooi River, the Congregation offers three church services per month and a weekly bible study in that area.