



Bishop's Post

April May 2020

God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 2 Timothy 1,7 (ESV)

As I am writing this letter, a Dollar costs sixteen Rand. A week ago it was 15,32 and a month ago 14,80.

Oil costs 33 USD a barrel, a week ago 47, and three weeks ago 53USD.

All stock exchanges are under strain with immense losses. The whole world seems to be panic stricken. Just because of a virus, COVID 19, also called Corona Virus. The symptoms resemble flu, but it spreads much faster. Since it was first identified on 29 December 2019 in China, it has spread globally, and known infections double every four to five days. Up to now there is no antidote, and very little is known about the virus - especially how long it survives outside a human body.

Because of the unknown things, panic is spreading. This panic is causing much more mayhem than the virus itself. People withdraw into isolation, companies collapse, the economy suffers immensely, leading to many jobs being lost. Tourism and air travel decrease dramatically.

Into this situation we hear a word from 2 Timothy:

God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

The message is not: Don't be afraid, but: In this time of panic and fear, you, through the Spirit of God, can act differently. You can act with power, love and self-discipline or self-control.

That means: As Christian, guided by this Spirit, I can control how I act. I will not pass on fake news or every message of gloom that lands in my inbox or on my Whatsapp. Rather, I will inform myself and act responsibly.

Self-discipline includes that I ask myself: How do I react? What helpful information do I pass on? How do I lead by good example, rather than in panic? But where do I get the "power and love" so that I can act with self-control?

In the previous Bishop's Post I quoted the words of Jesus: Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. Prayer indeed is an immense source of power.

Apart from praying, make a point of daily reading in the Bible. You will be amazed how often you will then receive a word from the Lord, that will give you direction and a clear mind for challenges of that day! The daily watchword, and, even more significantly, the continuous daily readings, are an immense source of power and love, helping you with self-discipline.

At this stage we have no idea where and when the current global chaos will end.

But we do have a Lord, who has guided his people through crises much more severe than these. He has promised us his Spirit, and he will not abandon us!

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Horst Müller". The script is cursive and somewhat informal.

News from the Church

The **Brass Band Festival** is hosted this year on the weekend of 15, 16 May in Wartburg by the United Evangelical Lutheran Congregation. Many musicians are already practising diligently. On that day, however, I hope that many non-brass players will join the service and the celebration.

Pastor Frank Schütte has been elected by the Beacon Bay, East London, congregation as their new pastor as from December 2020. Thus Augsburg Congregation's pastor's post will become vacant at the end of 2020. We pray that God will guide the process of filling the post.

On Sunday, 9 February, **Pastor Em. Dieter Schütte** passed away in Germany after an operation.

Growing up in Comondale, he studied theology at the Mission Seminary in Hermannsburg, Germany.

After his first theological examination in 1969 he returned to South Africa and served as intern in Kroondal. After his ordination he helped out in Vryheid, before being appointed as Pastor in Eshowe. In 1976 he received a "dual calling" to Pietermaritzburg. The Hermannsburg Church appointed him to Bishopstowe, whilst at the same time, and jointly, the Transvaal Church appointed him to Pietermaritzburg. Thus he became a forerunner for the "ELCSA (Natal-Transvaal)".

In 1984 he was elected as Pastor in Windhoek. From there he accepted a call to the ELM in Hermannsburg, Germany, where he became their representative for Africa. He served in that position up to his retirement.

Those who knew him will remember him for his lively sermons, storytelling and love for sports - and, of course, his one glass eye that never seemed to distract him from any sporting activity.

We thank the Lord for all the blessings that flowed through him. May the Lord comfort his wife Gudrun and sons Nils and Ulf with families!

The **Corona virus** is causing much uncertainty. A set of guidelines for church context have been sent to pastors and congregations.