

Bishops Post April/May 2024

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1. Peter 2,9)

Being addressed in this manner is undoubtedly an honour. However, could Peter say the same about us? Do we even want to be referred to as the chosen people, as kings and queens who serve God as priests, as a holy people belonging to God Himself?

Peter declares: But you are the chosen people. The "but" places us in contrast to others - those who seemingly do not belong to this lineage. What is this "other" to which Christians are chosen?

An image that appears not only here but often in the New Testament is the contrast between light and darkness. People who live in darkness are entirely self-reliant. They do not recognize where they come from or where they are going. God plays no role in their lives. They live without meaning or direction, from day to day. They live in darkness.

And the light? The light comes from God, who is the light. To live in the light means to know that I have a heavenly Father who guides me through life. To live in the light means to know where I come from and where I am going. I know God, who stands behind all that is visible and invisible. This God has a personal relationship with me. I respond in faith and am privileged to live with Him.

The people to whom Peter writes his letter are by no means perfect. A few verses earlier, they are warned against wickedness and deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. Yet, the honorary titles are bestowed upon them! This can only be understood through the word that Paul once said about himself: By God's grace, I am what I am!

Christians are not better than non-Christians, but they are better off because they live from the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

News from the NELCSA

Karen Harms, the wife of Pastor Dieter Harms, a pastor who served in our church for many years passed away on the 6th of February in Germany. May God comfort Dieter and his family.

Retired Pastor Charles Paine, who has served the East Rand Congregations, has accepted a calling from another church. We express our gratitude for his service in the NELCSA and wish him God's blessings for the journey ahead.

Heartfelt congratulations to the theology students, Hans-Christoph Lange, Tristan Krüger, and Petrus-Johannes Hanekom, for passing their theological exams. We wish them success during their two-year internship in congregations of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa. We also extend our thanks to all congregations for their contributions to theological education. In 2024, there are 4 UELCSA students enrolled at Stellenbosch University.

NELCSA has appointed Nicky Wenhold as the social media coordinator. Nicky has written to all congregations to explain her role. Please feel free to contact her at media@nelcsa.net. You are invited to send her information about events in your congregation.

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For contributions to the NELCSA website - www.nelcsa.net - please continue to contact Liselotte Knöcklein at webmaster@nelcsa.net. For content specific to your congregation, we encourage you to continue using your congregation's website

