

## **Bishops Post October/November 2023**

Hope. Live it. With this last bishop's post before the upcoming synod, I greet you with words from the first letter of Peter.

*Through Jesus Christ you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, so your faith and hope are in God. (1 Peter 1, 21)*

The Bible doesn't encourage us to be unrealistic about life. We shouldn't pretend that we do not have difficult times and disappointments. What we are encouraged to do, is to have a hope that is based on something real and much more than our emotions and experiences in this life.

The new birth into a living hope is not something that we plan or do as Christians. It is a gift that is given to us. Many people approach Christianity as if it's a way to make a new effort in life. "I'm going to do better than I've done before. I'm going to turn over a new leaf. I'm going to stop doing the bad things that I did, and I'm going to resolve to do better." These convictions are of course good, but the letter of Peter is talking about something far more profound than that. The new birth into a living hope is not something that we do or achieve. It is something that is given to us by God. At our baptism this hope is proclaimed to us. We do not make it. We receive it in faith. John Blanchard states it as follows: "*Christianity is not making a new start in life. It's receiving a new life to start with.*"

Our new life and our hope are not something that we make through our own power or the decisions that we take. That would make our hope uncertain and dependent on the frail basis of our own strength. Our hope is in something that has happened and will never change. Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead and will return triumphant one day. Nobody can take this knowledge from us. It is a foundation that remains solid in the good times and in times of disappointment and pain. Christ has been raised from the dead. He has defeated all that is against God and His plan. Nothing can change that regardless of our circumstances. This is the hope that motivates us to act in our world. Or with the words of John Maxwell: "Where there is no hope in the future, there is no power in the present." It is those who were able to find hope for the future that had the strength and empowerment to succeed in the present."

## **News from NELCSA**

The following Church synods will be taking place in the coming months. May each one of them be guided and led through the Spirit of God.

- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN-GELC) will hold its Church Synod from the 28<sup>th</sup> of September to the 1<sup>st</sup> of October in Windhoek under the theme "Am Anfang war das Ehrenamt." (1. Petrus 2,9) A new bishop for the church will be elected at this synod.
- From the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of October the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa (Cape Church) takes place under the topic: "God sees!"
- The Northeastern Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa will hold its synod from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October under the theme "Hope- live it."

We thank God and celebrate with the following congregations who are celebrating a jubilee:

- The Verden congregation celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of its church building on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September.
- On the 29<sup>th</sup> of October the New Germany Lutheran Church will celebrate its 175<sup>th</sup> year jubilee
- The Augsburg Congregation will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> year of existence on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December.

The yearly eEquip camp of the NELCSA with the topic "eEquip in LOVE- Let all that you do be done in love. (1 Corinthians 16,14) will be taking place from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2024. A hearty invitation to take part in this retreat of the NELCSA.

Theo Jäckel

