

Bishops' Post October/November 2025

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. (Romans 12:4–5)

Our Synod for 2025 has come to an end. We have listened, debated, prayed, and made decisions. The theme that guided our Synod was “Rooted and Re-forming.” These two words speak deeply to who we are as people of God. Rooted reminds us that our faith stands firm in Jesus Christ, in the Scriptures, in the promises of God that do not change. Reforming reminds us that God's Spirit is always at work, shaping us anew, challenging us to respond to the needs of today, and calling us to continual growth.



Paul's words in Romans 12 help us to see what this means for the life of the church. The church is not a collection of isolated individuals or congregations. We are members of one body – Christ's body. Each part of the body has its role, its calling, its gift. None can say to the other: “I have no need of you.”

When we gathered at Synod, we saw this truth lived out. Different voices, different concerns, different perspectives were present. Just as our physical bodies are alive when blood flows and nerves send signals, so too is the church alive when gifts and voices interact, challenge, and encourage one another.

Now that Synod is over, the real work continues. The delegates who represented your congregations will bring reports back, sharing the discussions, the decisions, and the way forward. This is an important moment for every congregation: to hear not only what was decided, but also to join in carrying out the vision and responsibilities we share as one body.

Paul does not end with calling us “one body.” He immediately adds: “Each member belongs to all the others.” (Romans 12:5) This is not only a beautiful thought – it is a demanding one. It means that we cannot live only for ourselves, our own congregation, or our own comfort. We belong to one another. The joys of one are joys for all; the struggles of one are struggles for all.

This belonging calls us into a way of life shaped by Christ's love:

- To pray for one another, even when we disagree.
- To carry one another's burdens, even when they feel far away from our daily lives.
- To seek unity, not uniformity, knowing that diversity of gifts is God's plan for His church.

The Synod has given us direction and tasks, but above all it has reminded us of our shared calling: to live as the body of Christ in this world – rooted in Him, and reforming in response to His Spirit.

May the God of peace, who has bound us together in Christ, give us strength for this journey. Let us go forward with courage, knowing that each one of us belongs – to Christ, and to each other.

Theodor Jäckel

News from NELCSA

All members of congregations are warmly invited to attend the Brass Band Festival and Church Service of the Evangelical Brass Band Association in Southern Africa (EBBASA) on **28 September** at the German International School, Johannesburg. EBBASA is the umbrella association of the brass bands of the Moravian Church, NELCSA, FELSISA, and the Brass Band Association of LUCISA in Namibia, established to support and promote the work of brass choirs within its member churches. Held every five years, the festival brings members together to praise the Lord in unity, transcending language and cultural differences, proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through brass music, nurture the faith of its members, and strengthen collaboration among the associations.

On 19 October, a joint service of the various denominations that are signatories and supporters of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) will be held at the North Rand Congregation of NELCSA in Bryanston. The JDDJ, originally signed in 1999 by the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), represents a historic affirmation of our shared faith in justification by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. All members of NELCSA congregations, as well as friends and members of other churches, are warmly invited to join this service, celebrating our unity in Christ and the gift of salvation that unites us across denominational boundaries.

This year the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) celebrates its Golden Jubilee. The Jubilee celebrations will take place from 18–21 December 2025 in Tlhabane, Rustenburg. As NELCSA, we join our sisters and brothers of ELCSA in giving thanks to God for 50 years of grace, unity, and faithful witness. We pray that this Jubilee may be a time of gratitude, remembrance, and renewal, not only for ELCSA, but for the whole Lutheran family in Southern Africa.

In the light of our close co-operation with ELCSA, members of NELCSA are heartily invited to attend these celebrations. Further details will follow as they are received.