

Bishops Post June/July 2025

Test them all; hold on to what is good" 1 Thessalonians 5:21 (NIV)

Imagine a strong, healthy tree. Its branches may stretch in different directions and its leaves may change with the seasons—but it stands firm because of its deep, steady roots. This is a powerful image for the Church today.

We live in a world that is constantly shifting. New ideas, new challenges, and new ways of communicating seem to pop up daily. And yet, the Church does not stay strong by chasing every trend. Like the tree, we stay strong by being deeply rooted—in the unchanging love and grace of Jesus Christ.

Those roots are the message of salvation, God's never-ending love through Jesus Christ, His Word, and the gift of grace. These truths do not change with the times. They are what nourish us, guide us, and keep us standing firm when the winds of change blow hard.

At the same time, like branches growing outward, the Church must find new ways to proclaim the gospel. Whether through new models of church, online services, acts of compassion, or standing for justice—these are expressions of our faith. But the heart of the Church remains the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

Just like a tree provides shade, shelter, and fruit, the Church is called to be a place of hope, healing, and truth. When we love others as Christ loves us, care for the vulnerable, and proclaim the Good News, we reflect the deep relevance of Christ's love in today's world.

Let us stay grounded in God's truth while reaching out with open arms. The Church will remain a light in the darkness—as long as we stay rooted in Christ and boldly live out His love.

Theodor Jäckel

News from NELCSA

Church Synod 2025

The Church Synod, held every two years, is a vital moment of shared reflection, decision-making, and direction-setting for our church. It brings together pastors and lay representatives to discern God's will for our life and mission together. Through prayerful discussion and responsible planning, Synod helps us grow in unity and respond faithfully to the needs of our time. To help everyone prepare well, we'll be holding Synod Preparation Days in each region:

- 26 July – Southern Circuit
- 02 August – Eastern Circuit
- 16 August – Northern & Central Circuits

These gatherings give us a chance to talk through Synod topics—like finances and motions to synod—and ask questions in smaller groups. It's an important step to make sure we're ready for the big decisions ahead. Let's come prepared—together!

Church Council Meetings – Coming to Congregations.

In May, the Church Council met at the Izotsha Congregation—and it was wonderful to connect with the local community! To build closer ties with our congregations. Two years ago Church Council decided that every second meeting will now be hosted by one of our NELCSA congregations. If your congregation would like to invite the Church Council in 2026, please get in touch with the church office—we'd love to hear from you!

Online Course: Upholding Integrity – Proper Conduct in Matters of Sexual Behaviour 3–5 June.

As leaders and co-workers in the church, we are called to live with integrity and be examples of Christ-like behaviour—especially when it comes to relationships and matters of sexual conduct. Our actions, both public and private, affect not only our own credibility, but also the trust that others place in the church. Even seemingly small missteps can cause deep harm—to individuals, to congregations, and to the reputation of the church as a whole. To help us all reflect, learn, and stay grounded in ethical and responsible behaviour, a compulsory online course will be offered from 3–5 June for all pastors and youth workers. This is an



opportunity to strengthen trust, grow in accountability, and ensure that our ministry spaces are safe and life-giving for all.

Building Closer ties with Other Churches

As part of our commitment to deeper unity and stronger communication with fellow churches, NELCSA is taking active steps toward closer cooperation. Two meetings are coming up:

2 June – A joint meeting of the FELSISA Synodal Council and NELCSA Church Council in Lüneburg
22–23 July – A gathering of the bishops of ELCSA, NELCSA, and ELCSA (Cape Church)

These meetings are important opportunities to share, listen, and work together as part of the wider Lutheran family in Southern Africa. We look forward to what God will do through these conversations!

Music Events Coming Up

We've got some wonderful music events on the horizon, and we'd love for you to join in:

- 11 May – The NELCSA Choir Festival in Hermannsburg took place, happening alongside the Hermannsburg School Schulfest. Over 170 choir members from various congregations took part in the event.
- 15 June – The Circuit Brass Band Festival will take place at the Hayfields congregation in Pietermaritzburg.
- 22 June - A circuit Brass Band festival in the Piet Retief congregation.:
- 27 July – Another Circuit Brass Band Festival will be held, this time at the Johannesgemeinde in Pretoria.

Brass Band Introductory Conductor's Course

Two Introductory Conductor's Courses are coming up:

23–25 May at Elandsheim
8–10 August at North Rand

Sale of Dundee Church Building

It's with of sadness that we share the news that the church building in Dundee has been sold. While it's always hard to say goodbye to a space filled with memories, we are grateful that the members who worshipped there are now receiving God's Word and sharing in fellowship at Elandskraal and other nearby congregations. We give thanks for the past and look forward in hope as God continues to lead and guide us.

Sharing Online Services and Sermons

If your congregation has live-streamed or recorded services or sermons, we'd love to include them on the NELCSA website! Please send the links to Liselotte Gunning (AdminPA@nelcsa.net) so others can also be blessed by what you're sharing. Let's help make God's Word more accessible to everyone across our church!