

## Bishops Post October/November 2024

*“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” (2 Corinthians 3:17)*

The Holy Spirit frees the captive heart, but it is a freedom *for* God, not just *from* bondage. This freedom does not come through legalism, coercion, or fear. It comes through love. No one can be forced into faith—not by rules, fear, or pressure. When faith is imposed in such ways, hypocrisy often follows. True freedom for God is rooted in love, and it is love that calls us to Him.

The Holy Spirit frees us, not so that we walk through life alone, but so that we walk *with* God. We are freed by His love and accompanied by His grace. As the theologian Karl Rahner describes, *“Dependence on God and human autonomy and freedom grow in the same measure, not in opposite directions. In a loving relationship with God, the Spirit of God sets us on our own two feet. We are called to believe, to love, and to hope. But all of this happens spiritually, in connection with the living Christ through the Holy Spirit.”*

Paul reminds us that where we walk with God and follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit, there is freedom. Through the Spirit, Jesus desires to free us—promising to carry us in our burdens, offering His grace, and leading us by His Spirit. Faith receives this invitation and says *yes* to Jesus. In doing so, we become free—free to entrust our whole lives to God. We are free to live in service to the world we inhabit, with hearts full of love and hands willing to act.

This freedom is not just a release from the past, but a freedom to live a new life in Christ. A life where the Spirit leads, where love drives out fear, and where grace accompanies every step.

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### News from NELCSA

On the 24th of August, Pastor Elke Carrihill was elected as the pastor of the Michaelis congregation in Vryheid. We wish her and the congregation all the best and God’s blessings. This also means that the Winterton congregation will be vacant from early 2025.

Pastor Kornelia Schauf began her service in the Johannesgemeinde on the 1st of September. The official induction will take place on the 27th of October. We extend our best wishes to her and the congregation and pray for God’s blessings on their journey together.

In the last Bishop’s Post, I wrote about the mission societies that historically formed the NELCSA, namely the Berlin and Hermannsburg Mission Societies. From the 28th of August to the 5th of September, the eMseni Centre in Kempton Park hosted a significant event—the Partner Church Consultation. Nineteen Lutheran churches from 15 countries across Africa, Asia, South America, Europe, and Russia gathered at the invitation of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Lower Saxony, Hermannsburg (ELM), to explore what it means to be the church in today’s world.

The consultation provided an opportunity for these churches to reconnect, restore, and renew their relationships. They shared their diverse experiences of proclaiming the gospel within their unique contexts, recognizing both the opportunities and challenges they face. The gathering acknowledged the rich diversity of witness to Christ’s message present in various cultural and societal realities. Through this consultation, participants renewed their commitment to being a united, global body of Christ, despite the many differences that shape their individual journeys.

From the 12th to the 15th of September, the 22nd Synod of the Evangelical City Mission in Southern Africa (ESSA) will take place in Johannesburg. This year’s theme is: “From Pastor to Dominus - From Shepherd to Ruler - The Great Temptation of Power and Prestige!” We wish them God’s blessings for their synod and for the way forward as a church.

The NELCSA KZN Youth has invited all young people who already play in a brass band or would like to learn to play a brass instrument to join their camp from the 21st to the 25th of September



2024 in Elandskraal. We thank the KZN Youth for their initiative and wish all participants a wonderful time of fellowship together.

The Triennial National Conference of the South African Council of Churches, of which we are a member, is scheduled for the 15th to the 17th of October. May God guide all deliberations, decisions, and elections.

The eQuip 2025 camp will take place from the 2nd to the 5th of January 2025, with the theme: "Good Choice!" based on 1 Thessalonians 5:21: "Test everything; hold fast to what is good." The camp will be held in Hermannsburg, KZN. For those interested in attending, please register by the 5th of December, if possible.