

NORTHEASTERN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

Minutes

of the 3rd session of the VII Church Synod
at the North Rand Congregation in Bryanston from 14 – 16 October 2022

“ALIVE”

The third ordinary Session of the seventh Church Synod was opened on Friday afternoon at 13h00 with a worship service in the North Rand Congregation. The liturgy was conducted by Pastor Remo Koehne. Pastor Petra Röhrs together with theology students, Rutendo Gora and Tristan Krüger conducted the sermon on the text in Luke 13:10-17. **(Appendix 1)**

1. Constitution of the Synod

1.1 Opening and Welcome

The President of Synod, Mr. Henning Springer, welcomed all present to the third session of the seventh synod which had to be postponed by a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

(Appendix 2)

1.2 Verification of Legitimacy

The Legitimacy of Synod is declared.

1.2.1 Attendance Register

Ms. Anna Kaduma-Gumbie performed the roll-call to confirm the attendance of delegates.

The delegates were requested to sign the attendance register.

(Appendix 3)

The following members were indicated as absent with an apology:

Mr. Heinz Dedekind (Verden-Dundee), Mr. Ulrich Johl (Kempton Park), Ms. Carmen Westermeyer (Circuit Council Southern Circuit), Dr. Jens von Delft (Hillcrest) arrived on Saturday morning.

1.2.2 Administering of Oaths

The following members were commissioned since they were not present at the first or second sessions of the VII Synod.

Ms. Heather Claase (replaces Eileen Piater, Trinity Zululand)

Ms. Betz Wenhold (stand in for Dieter Wenhold, Kroondal)

Mr. Werner Dyer (stand in for Herbert Switala, Johannesgemeinde)

Ms. Liz Kohlmeyer (stand in for Karsten Hinze, Augsburg)

Ms. Rose Negota (replaces Betty Mthembu, Kelvin)

Mr. Bernd Röhrs (stand in for Dieter Muhl, Vryheid)

Ms. Helene Schmidt (stand in for Klaus Krüger, St Peter's Pretoria)

Mr. Heinz Lütge (stand in for Martin Schroeder, UELC)

Dr. Hans Schütte (replaces Bernd Klingenberg was elected into Circuit Council, Braunschweig)

Mr. Rainer Schütz, delegate for Nelspruit

Mr. Tristan Krüger (replaces Ditebogo Lebea as co-opted LWF young reformer / Youth)

Pastor Randolph Kassier (replaces Pastor Dieter Trümpelmann)

1.2.3 Establishing the Quorum

It was established that the Synod was in quorum as more than 50 % of delegates were present.

The President, Mr Henning Springer, declared the Synod officially constituted. The Synod was prepared and convened in accordance with the Constitution.

- 1.2.4 **Nomination of Secretaries**
Minutes were kept by Ms. Liselotte Knöcklein (Church head office) as Scribe, assisted by the secretaries on Synod Council.
- 1.2.5 **Table Discussion Groups**
Mr. Springer explained the groups for the table discussions, the group leaders and reporters were appointed.
- 1.2.6 **Election of Synod Secretary and two alternates**
Church Council nominates Ms. Stella Cockburn to be the second synod secretary.
Result: elected unanimously with one abstention.
Church Council nominated 2 alternates to synod council secretaries:
Gloria Sehume and Jürgen Voges.
Result: the alternates were elected unanimously

1.3 **Subcommittees**

Synod members accepted the following proposals by Church Council for committees:

- 1.3.1 Formulating Committee: Dr. Mark Rohwer (Convenor), Ms. Leonora Klein, Ms Tanya Wichmann
- 1.3.2 Legal Committee:
Pastor Udo Lütge, Mr. Heino Küsel, Ms. Karin Meyer
- 1.3.3 Nomination & Election Committee:
Prof. Dr Friedeburg Wenhold (Convenor), Dr. Hans Schütte, Ms. Penny Summersgill, Pastor Jack Magoro
- 1.3.4 Complaint Handling Team
Pastor Elke Carrihill, Pastor Dr. Reiner Focke, Ms. Margaret Dippenaar
Ms. Ann Mokhine explains the importance of the Code of Conduct during NELCSA events.

1.4 **Reference to Standing Orders of the Church Synod**

The President referred to the rules and procedures of Synod. Additional motions or proposals were to be submitted in writing and forms were made available for this purpose.
He thanked Bishop Horst Müller, Church Council and Church head office for the preparations.

1.5 **Explanation of election procedures**

(Appendix 4 flowchart)

Prof. Dr. Friedeburg Wenhold explained the procedure of nominations for the positions that have to be filled. Additional nominations would be accepted until 11:30 on Saturday.

The nominated names would be displayed.

The following elections were going to be conducted during the Synod:

- i) Bishop
- ii) Deputy to the Bishop and Alternate
- iii) Dean and Deputy Dean, Eastern Circuit
- iv) Alternates to the Deputy Dean, Northern, Eastern and Southern Circuits
- v) Possible filling of posts that become vacant due to the above elections or for other reasons

2. **Theme of the Synod "Alive"**

Each congregation was given a cloth and fabric paint and requested to depict the theme of the synod. In his opening welcome to NELCSA Synod 2021, Synod President Henning Springer explained the theme of Synod "Alive".

'The banner is sewn together by a tread. This common thread is a symbol of our Lord Jesus Christ, who sews us together and makes us one. As you can see, the final shape is not a perfect square or rectangle. This indicates that there is room for growth and change.

As we head into this synod, we will discuss the theme "Alive", and we will talk about growth. There will be a notable change in our church after this Synod. We will have a new bishop and surely there will be further changes. The one thing that will however not change is the common thread that holds us together. The thread, which is Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.'

- 2.1 **Bible Study by Pastor Wilko Hunger** **(Appendix 5)**
 On Saturday morning, Pastor Wilko Hunger, addressed the plenary as keynote speaker with a Bible Study based on the text written in Colossians 3, 12- 17. 'Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves...' Several table discussion points were introduced and time allocated for further discussion.

3. **Reports**
 All reports received were sent to delegates by email and were taken as read.
 The president expressed thanks for well written reports.

- 3.1 **Report of Church Council, submitted by Church Council** **(Appendix 6)**
 Mr. Henning Springer presented the Church Council report.
 An omission was noted in line 160: Add to report that the service of Pastor Dieter Trümpelmann was ended on 31 July 2021 by mutual agreement.

Below are items that had to be ratified by Synod as well as further comments from the report.

- 3.1.1 Page 8 The English Creed

NELCSA Synod requested that Church Council submit the Creed as used at Synod to UELCSA as proposal.

Against: 1

The proposal is carried by majority.

**Acceptance of Church Council report by Synod:
 Accepted unanimously.**

- 3.2 **Financial Report of the Church**
 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the finances of the Church were presented online in 2021. This enabled the Church to continue with the budget and financial planning for 2022/2023.
- 3.3 **Theological Study Commission report on Homosexuality**
 Pastor Dr. Gertrud Tönsing confirms that the work as tasked by Church Synod for the Theological Study commission regarding Human and Homosexuality has been concluded. Does Synod require the Study Commission to continue?

After some discussions Mr. Henning Springer proposed that Church Council be allowed to discuss and make a concrete suggestion for next synod.
 The proposal is put to the vote:
 Seconded: Bishop Dr. Horst Müller
 The vote is carried by majority with 1 abstention.

- 3.4 **Ministry and Discipleship Team (MaD)**
 Mr Johann Engelbrecht (chair) explains the reasoning behind the name change from Mission Committee to Ministry and Discipleship Team (MaD).
- 3.5 **Youth Work**
 The following reports on youth work were received: KZN Youth (Southern and Eastern Circuits), Northern Circuit, and the Central Circuit.
 The importance of the Kailager property for youth camps was highlighted. For many participants this was the first place where they realised that there are more congregations in our Church.
- 3.6 **KZN Youth Pastor and Hermannsburg School Chaplain**
 Pastor Rene Risch confirmed that HMB School has a place available for an intern who is willing to work alongside the school pastor from 2023.
 He further requested the congregations in the northern circuit to re-think how to cater for youth relocating from KwaZulu-Natal to study in Gauteng.

3.7 Church Music

Ms. Connie Ortmann who is the co-opted member of synod for Church Music received the following reports: General Church Music, the Brass Band, the Choir Association and the Impact Music Ministry. She mentioned that regreably congregations did not complete and return the survey that was sent and therefore a true reflection of the Church Music can not be given.

A leader fo the choir association still has to be elected.

3.8 Old Age Homes

Church Council encourages neighbouring congregations of the two Old Age Homes mentioned below to take over the role of NELCSA, just as many other congregations are involved with Old Age homes in their vicinity.

3.8.1 Old Age Home Port Natal, Durban

The Old Age Home Port Natal (APN) requests permission to change the constitution that NELCSA is no longer an acting member on the board.
The request is put to the vote:
With 4 abstentions the vote is carried by majority.

3.8.2 German Senior's Residence Richmond, Johannesburg

3.9 German Seafarer's Mission Durban (GSM)

Bishop Dr. Horst Müller commented that the post at GSM is a NELCSA post and part of our mission. He requested that they are carried in our prayers. Pastor Ron Küsel mentioned that there is a possibility of volunteer work.

3.10 LUCSA Diakonia

No report was submitted because there was no activity to report on.

3.11 Women in Church and Society

3.12 LWF Young Reformer

Mr. Tristan Krüger reported that the LWF Youth Reformers at the University of Stellenbosch (Ms Rutendo Gora and Mr Hans-Christoph Lange) are working on a project together with other reformers globally by writing an article on studying theology.

3.13 Theological Education

Bishop Gilbert Filter reported that the descision to appoint a full time tutor at the University of Stellenbosch will be taken at the UELCSA Synod in March 2023. There are currently nearly 600 students at the Theology Faculty. The Lutheran students are impacting positively in the faculty. The NELCSA students have started a Lutheran Student Society together with the ELCSA students.

Mr. Vernon Filter in his capacity as treasurer of NELCSA encouraged delegates to give more towards theological education. Historical collections have declined since the closing of LTI in Pietermaritzburg. The funds are nearly depleted because the current structure costs more and there are more students who need our support. He reminded everyone that this is an investment into to future of our church.

3.14 Church Structures and Ministry Models

Pastor Udo Lütge requests synod to ratify the process.

- A defined process should be followed to investigate the Church Structure and Ministry Models used by NELCSA in a systematic and comprehansive way.
- Appoint the following facilitators to lead this process: Ms Tshinyi Magoro, Mr Bernd Klिंगenberg, Pastor Udo Lütge, Ms Ann Mokhine, Ms Nicky Wenhold, Ms Carmen Westermeyer, Mr Rolf Köstlin and Pastor Martin Büttner

Vote results:

Abstain 1

The process is ratified by majority.

4. **BILLS CONCERNING CHURCH LAWS**

All Church Laws were sent to delegates by email and are taken as read.

4.1 **Church Law No 2 / 2021**

Addition of administrative tasks

Church Law No 2 is put to the vote:

Abstain 1

Adopted by majority

4.2 **Church Law No 3 / 2021**

Addition to Duties of Bishop

Church Law No 3 is put to the vote

For

Abstain 2

Against 1

Adopted by majority

4.3 **Church Law No 4 / 2021**

Addition to Election of Church Council Members

Church Law No 4 is put to the vote

Adopted unanimously

4.4 **Church Law No 5 / 2021** is withdrawn and will be presented at next Synod.

4.5 **Church Law No 6 / 2021** is withdrawn

4.6 **Church Law No 7 / 2021**

Adopted unanimously

4.7 **Church Law 8 / 2021**

Abstain 1

Adopted by majority

4.8 **Church Law 9 / 2021**

Adopted unanimously

4.9 **Church Law 10 / 2021**

Adopted unanimously

5. **MOTIONS**

5.1 **Motion 1**

The name of the "Solidarity Fund" be changed to "Self-Assessed NELCSA Contribution"

Motivation:

1) The name "Solidarity Fund" has been confusing for several reasons: It used to reflect a different approach to helping congregations at a time when there was a fund from which congregations were assisted and to which congregations could make a contribution to show solidarity. Since that has changed and this money now in effect subsidises ALL congregations, the name of the fund is now confusing and no longer as relevant to what actually happens with these contributions. The use of the same name as a government "solidarity fund" is confusing.

2) In our Church we refer to the compulsory payments that congregations have to make as "Contributions." Congregations are then encouraged to pay an additional "solidarity amount" voluntarily towards the NELCSA budget. We therefore propose that such voluntary additional amounts should be called "Voluntary Contributions."

For: 38

The motion is carried by majority

6 **Elections**

Most elections were done by and for the different circuits, except for the position of Bishop of NELCSA, Deputy to Bishop and Alternate to Deputy Bishop

6.1 **Bishop of NELCSA**

Bishop of NELCSA (76 delegates were present; 2/3 majority required= 51)

Nominations: Theo Jäckel, Remo Koehne, Dirk Köstlin, Petra Röhrs

Result: Second round takes place since no absolute majority was reached

- Result: In second round still no absolute majority. The candidate with the least counts dropped out: Remo Koehne
 Result: The third round shows no absolute majority.
 Remaining: Theo Jäckel and Petra Röhrs
 Result: No absolute majority; the number of votes were given at this stage:
 Theo Jäckel 47 Petra Röhrs 28
 After the next round of voting a 2/3 majority of 51 votes is achieved.
 Bishop Dr. Horst Müller announced the newly elected Bishop of NELCSA
 Result: Theodor Jäckel
- 6.2 Deputy to the Bishop (Majority is 50% +1=39) (The person with second most votes, becomes Alternate to the Deputy Bishop)
 Nominations: Remo Koehne, Dirk Köstlin, Mark Meier, Petra Röhrs
 Result: Petra Röhrs
- 6.3 Alternate to the Deputy of the Bishop
 Result: Mark Meier (Second most votes in previous round)
- 6.4 Ordained Member (Majority is 50% +1 =39)
 Nominations Wilko Hunger, Udo Lütge, Rene Risch
 Result: No clear majority; the candidate with the least counts dropped out: Rene Risch
 Wilko Hunger and Udo Lütge go through to second round
 Result: Udo Lütge
- 6.5 Dean Eastern Circuit
 Nominations: Mark Meier
 Result: Mark Meier
- 6.6 Deputy to the Dean Eastern Circuit
 Nominations: Reiner Focke, Rüdiger Lutz
 Result: Reiner Focke
- 6.7 Alternate to the Deputy Dean of the Eastern Circuit
 Result: Rüdiger Lutz (Second most votes in previous round)
 Dean Northern Circuit
 Nominations Nicole Otte Kempf, Detlev Tönsing
 Result: Detlev Tönsing
 Deputy Dean to the Northern Circuit
 Nominations: Jan Duvenhage, Nicole Otte-Kempf
 Result: Nicole Otte Kempf
- 6.8 Alternate to the Deputy Dean of Northern Circuit
 Result: Jan Duvenhage (Second most votes in previous round)
- 6.9 Alternate to the Deputy Dean of the Southern Circuit
 Nominations: Victor Röhrs
 Result: Victor Röhrs
9. Words of Greeting
- 9.1 The following invited guests presented words of greeting during the Synod
 Rev. Marc Reusch EKD
 Rev. Lilana Kasper Executive Director LUCSA
 Bishop Burgert Brand ELCIN (GELC) / UELCSA
 Bishop Gilbert Filter ELCSA (Cape Church)
 Bishop Dieter Reinstorf (FELSISA)
 Dr. Gustav Claassen (DRC)
 Rev. Paul Verryn (CUC)
- 9.2 The following Words of Greeting were received and read during the Synod
 Rev. Dr Joe Lüdemann (ELM)
 Dr Detlef Görrig (DNK / LWF)
 Retired Pastor and Bishop Dieter Lilje (ELCSA (N-T) / NELCSA)
 Mr Matthew Reed, Principal Hermannsburg School
- 10 **Requests and Announcements**
- 10.1 Mr Steven Radeba (NGLC) thanks the congregations that donated towards the flood disaster in KZN. Bishop Müller thanks the New Germany congregation for their willingness to act so quickly to distribute and help where it was needed most.
- 10.2 Mr. Edmund Bunge suggests that Pastors should be given the opportunity to receive

- psychological support (Care for the Carer)
- 10.3 Mr Abraham Bore suggests that congregations start bee keeping projects a possible income to support unemployed
- 10.4 Mr Vernon Filter suggests that congregations “Adopt a school for life skills”.
- 10.5 Ms Liselotte Knöcklein is requested to co-ordinate the sending of the banner from congregation to congregation.

11 **Word of Greeting to Congregations**

A Word of Greeting from Synod to congregations was presented and finalised. The Word of Greeting was distributed to all congregations via Email and WhatsApp. **(Appendix 7)**

12 **Next Church Synod Meeting**

- 12.1 1st Sitting of the VIII Church Synod in 2023

Venue: Augsburg

Date: 19 – 22 October 2023

All congregations must elect new delegates and alternates because it is a new synod cycle.

Delegates who have only served one synod cycle (VII Church Synod) may be re-elected.

- 12.2 2nd Sitting of the VIII Church Synod in 2025

Venue: UELC invited to host this synod.

Date: to be confirmed

13 **Closing**

- 13.1 Closing service with Holy Communion and induction of newly elected office bearers.

The closing service was held in the North Rand congregation. The outgoing Bishop, Dr. Horst Müller, held the sermon, the liturgy was conducted by Pastor Wilko Hunger.

Bishop Dr. Horst Müller inducted Bishop elect Theodor Jäckel.

The following partners and guests assisted:

Presiding Bishop Nkosinathi Myaka (ELCSA); Rev. Lilana Kasper (ED LUCSA); Bishop Burgert Brand (ELGIN GELC); Bishop Gilbert Filter (ELCSA Cape Church); Rev. Mark Reusch (EKD); Mr. Ekkehard Pape (Chair Kroondal congregation) and Mr Henning Springer (President of Synod).

The following newly elected active office bearers were inducted by Bishop Theodor Jäckel:

Pastor Petra Röhrs, Deputy to the Bishop

Pastor Udo Lütge, Ordained Member of Church Council

- Pastor Dr. Detlef Tönsing, Dean Northern Circuit

Pastor Nicole Otte-Kempf, Deputy to the Dean Northern Circuit

Pastor Mark Meier, Dean Eastern Circuit

Pastor Dr. Reiner Focke, Deputy to the Dean Eastern Circuit

- 13.2 The President of Synod, Mr Henning Springer, thanks all who helped in preparing and conducting a successful Synod.

Mr. H Springer
President of the Synod

Bishop Dr. H Müller
Chair of the
Church Council

Ms Anna Kaduma-Gumbie
Secretary

Ms L Knöcklein
Scribe

First draft sent to delegates: 30 November 2022

Second draft incl. input from delegates sent to CC: 10 January 2023

Final Minutes: 10 February 2023