

Ministry and Discipleship Team 2022-2023(MaD Team)

For the sake of new Synod members and as a refresher for Synod representatives present in October 2022 it is necessary to repeat parts of the previous report.

As Pastors get moved around to different congregations and circuits the membership of the Team changes quite frequently. This has its pros and cons. It so happened that at the beginning of 2022 there were quite a few new members on the then NELCSA Mission Committee.

In March 2022 the “new” committee met for the first time for an in-person meeting. It became clear that new members bring fresh ideas and the “New Normal” after Covid-19 also requires new strategies!

The 2-day meeting was used for brainstorming and strategizing. We came up with a concept, which we would like to introduce to our congregations and to synod.

It was decided to change the name **Mission Committee** to **Ministry and Discipleship Team** **abbreviated as M&D (or MaD Team)** to get away from the perceived view of mission being limited to a teaching of heathens. The new purpose of the MaD Team is to *understand, encourage, challenge, and equip NELCSA congregations to love and follow Christ*. This clearly shifts the onus onto each individual member of the congregation. By getting involved in a ministry of the congregation, the rest will follow.

The MaD team wants to assist congregations to learn to love Christ for what he has done for us. Our salvation is only possible through the death and resurrection of Christ. When we realise and accept God’s forgiveness through Jesus Christ, we love him and want to follow Jesus.

As a team, we want to lead the congregations to ask the following questions: 1: What is happening in our congregation? 2: Why is it happening? 3: What should happen? 4: How should it happen? Once this has happened, we as MaD team are ready to get involved by understanding, encouraging, challenging and equipping congregations and their members to love and serve Christ!

After the October 2022 Synod we decided to meet more often in order to prepare and research material that can be used in assisting congregations to develop ministries and to become disciples in their respective communities. It is amazing to see how much material, i.e., courses and training manuals, is available on many digital platforms. It also became clear to us that in true Lutheran fashion, we as church and congregations constantly need to reform and re-evaluate our role in a rapidly changing world.

A digital survey was sent out to all congregations, with the aim to get an indication of present understanding of certain fundamental theological concepts amongst participating church members. The results of this survey will assist us in determining statements or questions for table discussions at this year's Synod sitting.

We want to encourage all Synod members to participate in this survey.

As an official body of the NELCSA Church, we administer funds of the Church and are able to assist congregations in establishing growing ministries and diaconal projects. It must be clear that this committee is not a mere bank that helps congregations to survive or maintain themselves. We want our function to be constructive in assisting congregations to go back to our ultimate task in Matthew 28 v 20. Before we go to all the nations, we ourselves should become disciples, who are equipped to make disciples of others.

Further we want other congregations to benefit from the experiences, both the positive and negative, by creating networking and fellowship opportunities amongst congregations.

As a team we also want to be carriers of HOPE! Let us seriously embrace the theme of this synod: To bring hope and to live it out to the full, where we are placed.

Presently the following projects received financial assistance:

The Migrant Ministry in Pretoria

Trans World Radio / Evangeliums Rundfunk: The ministries of Eberhard Haberkorn and Gottfried Schiele.

The TTN Mobile Clinic and the Masifunde ECD projects in the Eastern Circuit.

Audio Bible distribution project also in the Eastern Circuit.

All congregations can apply via the respective Circuit Councils.

The present members of the team are as follows:

Northern Circuit: Pastor Jan Duvenhage (Gerdau); Liselotte Knöcklein (Johannes Congregation)

Central Circuit: Pastor Jack Magoro Kelvin/Midrand); Lay member vacant

(The Central Circuit has been requested to fill the vacant lay member post.)

Eastern Circuit: Pastor Mark Meier (Piet Retief); Johann Engelbrecht (Augsburg)

Southern Circuit: Pastor Rolf Schmidt (UELC); Walter Klingenberg (New Germany)

Bishop Theo Jäckel Ex-officio

NELCSA Diaconia representative (co-opted): Cathrine Makwakwa

Chairman: J Engelbrecht