

Christus Kirche Braunschweig



Introduction:

Driving around in Northern Natal one should take the turnoff to Lüneburg and enjoy the mountainous scenery with many a battlefield scene and numerous told stories of those bygone days, driving a little further you'll come to the Braunschweig settlement. The church building with its red roof and copper upper tower standing focused against the Xhosa Mountain invites you to come and stroll on the premises of an old German piece of land. Here, Sundays and on other occasions the rural community comes together to bind ties and build on its heritage.

Historical Overview:

During the years 1861/62 the colonists coming from Hermannsburg settled in the Pongola escarpment. During this time the mission stations Entombe and Ekombela were founded with the Missionaries Nolte and Engelbrecht serving them, as well as the colonists living there. Surnames such as Filter, Niebuhr, Meyer, Hinze and others are still today dominant. The first Advent 1869 a meeting was held and a congregation founded named Lüneburg as all the colonists came from the Lüneburger Heide in Germany. The Missionary Heinrich Filter was the first Pastor.

When, the separation between the Hermannsburg mission and the Hannoversche Landeskirche in Germany happened in 1892, this unfortunately spilled over to the Lüneburg congregation in South Africa. The minority who stayed with the Hermannsburg Mission left Lüneburg and 105 people met with Propst Röttcher in the Entombe Church to plan the future.

100 Acker was given by Mr A. Hinze to build a church. In 1896 the cornerstone was laid. The church was called Christuskirche Lüneburg; later Lüneburg-Hermannsburg and only in 1957 Christuskirche Braunschweig. During the battles fought in this region all the buildings were badly damaged. The church building as it is known today was erected in 1928. In 1922 the brass band was founded and in 1930 the first 'Posaunenfest' was held in Braunschweig. In 1897 at the dedication of the church the church choir participated and after 1940 Christmas Eve was dedicated to children's choir and musical interaction. In 1937 Synod took place here in Braunschweig and in 1937 the first organ from the firm Steinmann was installed. In 1955 its first 'Kreisposaunenfest' took place. A hall was erected in 1957 and the school started in 1945 but closed in 1969. Braunschweig is the mother of congregations like Augsburg and Piet Retief.

At the moment there are 155 members in the congregation.

Pastors serving were:

1892 – 1893 Johann Rössler

1893 – 1934 Christoph Schulenburg

1934 – 1939 and 1950 – 1960 August Lüdemann

1941 – 1950 Paul Hagedorn

1960 - 1970 Carl Scriba

1971 – 1975 Karl Bünjer

1976 - 1983 Georg Scriba

1984 - 1992 Werner Harms

1992 - 1993 Jochen Volker

1993 - 1997 Victor and Petra Röhrs

1997 - 2000 Remo Köhne

2000 - 2005 Siegfried Wortmann

2006 - 2008 Günther Oborski

2008 - 2009 Pensioners from Germany Arden, Lehmberg and Walz

2010 - Hugo Filter

Changes:

Demographically no significant changes took part.

Challenges:

- Numerical growth – depopulation of farms, families having fewer children and the youth studying in the cities and later working there. The age balance is uneven as there are many middle aged to elder members with a small group of young parents and thus a small youth group and in the youth group the balance between scholars and unmarried members is also a problem. With so few members in each group it is difficult to satisfy both needs and interest level.
- Spiritual – few attending bible study, choir members dwindling, little interest in mission work.
- Language barriers – being predominant German speaking with traditional and more conservative manners to incorporate mostly Afrikaans speaking newcomers (mostly through marriage).
- Spiritual and work relationship with the neighbouring ELCSA congregations.
- To keep up the good relationship with the neighbouring FELSISA congregation – through mission work done together and with many of our congregation children attending their school, where our Pastor and some of our members give Religious education.
- Finances – declining membership puts pressure on the rest to maintain the budget.

Physical Address:

Braunschweig is situated on the northern border of KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga, at the foot of the Xhosa Mountain between Piet Retief and Paulpietersburg, in the eDumbe municipal district, adjacent to the former Entombe Mission station. There is a parsonage, a hall with large veranda and two other family homes on the premises as well as the old hostel and one “Sunday house”, this one is called the Filtershaus. (These houses, belonging to a certain family, were used in the early days as dwellings during the weekend when the far off farmers arrived on a Friday to stay until Sunday; some also served as a hostel for the children).

Contact details of the congregation:

Pastor: Hugo Filter

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Current service times:

April – August:

9:30

9:00 - Confession service every first and third Sunday of the month.

September – March:

9:00

8:30 - Confession service every first and third Sunday of the month.

