

## MICHAELIS CONGRERGATION - VRYHEID

### FOUNDING:



Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the first Germans in Vryheid gathered for worship services. At first it was only Mrs. A. Regenass and her family. Later, the families N. Hansen, Joh. Düvel, G. Reiche and Mrs. Sunkel joined. Occasionally, Pastor Schumann from the Ev. Luth. Congregation at Glückstadt conducted the services which took place in the home of Mrs. Regenass and were also attended by the Germans from Scheepersnek. Nine times a year the service was held in Scheepersnek and three times in Vryheid.

The congregation Scheepersnek grew rapidly and in 1920 it was decided to establish an independent congregation. Mrs. Koss had donated a piece of ground to the congregation and a manse was built. Reinhard Drews was called to pastor of the congregation. On 1 October 1921 the congregation Scheepersnek-Vryheid became independent. In 1923 a church was built at Scheepersnek.

In 1920 a chapel was bought in Hlobane Street, Vryheid from the Reformed Church (Doppers). After an extension to the church in 1944 it served the congregation until 8 March 1964. In time more and more of the congregational work happened in Vryheid. In 1938 a few members of the congregation in Vryheid bought back Plot 108 under favourable conditions (it previously belonged to the Hermannsburg Mission).

The manse was built in 1949 and Pastor Drews moved there. He served the congregation until 1961. On 9 June 1963 Präses Hahne laid the foundation stone for the new Michaelis Church and on 8 March 1964 he consecrated the new church. The two old churches in Vryheid and Scheepersnek were no longer used since that day. The two congregations Vryheid and Scheepersnek became one, the “Ev. Luth. Congregation Vryheid”.

At the same time the Michaelis School, a private school of the congregation, was established. At the AGM in August 2007 the congregation handed the school over to a trust and the school was separated from the congregation. However, the congregation stays responsible for the religious education and has one representative on the School Board.

When the Michaelis congregation was founded, the following men were on the congregational council: Alex Gevers, Eduard Gevers, Robert Gevers, Karl Hellberg, Louis Tschirpig and Arthur Volker. Messr H.G. Reiche and Ernst Düvel were also founding members.

Just over 10 years later the church at Glückstadt also had to close its doors and the remaining members joined the Michaelis Congregation.

### CHALLENGES:

The Outreach Team endeavours to nurture a sense of togetherness in the congregation and to open the members' eyes for the needs outside the congregation.

About 20 years ago English Services were introduced in addition to the German Services. Since the introduction of the joint German/ English Services (2010) those who were initially against the idea are starting to attend these services as well, a sign that the two groups in the congregation are gradually becoming one.

The English and Afrikaans members are still not attending the joint services as much as envisaged. This leads to comments as: Why do we offer English services at all - which is not very conducive to the work.

Another challenge is that we have a number of members whose spouses belong to a different denomination or no denomination at all.

### **ADDRESS:**

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### **CONTACT:**

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Secretary:

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### **SERVICES:**

1. Sunday: 9:30 German with Holy Communion
2. Sunday: 9:30 German/ English with Holy Communion
3. Sunday: 9:30 German
4. Sunday: 9:30 German/ English
5. Sunday: 9:30 German

### **PASTORS OF THE CONGREGATION:**

1921 - 1961 Reinhard Drews  
1961 - 1973 H.F. Lange  
1974 - 1978 R. Schlüter  
1979 - 1988 Edgar Fröhling  
1988 -1995 Dieter Harms  
1995 - 1997 Reiner Focke  
1998 - 2002 Andreas & Gesine Staemmier  
2002 - 2006 Wolfgang Schilling  
Dez 2006 - Dirk Köstlin

## **MEMBERS:**

1921 – Scheepersnek-Vryheid:	101	
1963 – Vryheid:		461
2010 – Vryheid:		264

The oldest member presently is Reini Koch aged 91. The youngest member is Carl Hellberg, son of Horst and Dianne, born on 6/12/2010.

(Zusammengefasst von Sigrid Hegeler - 29/08/2011)