

Profile of Pastor

1. Name: Rolf Schmidt
2. Contact email: rolf@uelc.org.za

3. Personal history:

Date of birth: 14 August 1984 in Estcourt in South Africa

Where I grew up:

1984-1990: Winterton Family Farm (Schmidt Family Farm)

1990-1992: Winterton on Ronnie and Edna Wortmann's farm.

1993-1997: Moorleigh Old Mission and Pastor's House (Where the Hahne's used to live)

1998-Marriage: Ramsgate/Southbroom area, where my parents still live on my mother's family Farm.

Where I went to school.

1991-1992 Winterton Primary School (Class 1 and 2)

1993-1997 Moorleigh Primary School (Grades 3-7)

1998-2002 Deutsche Schule Hermannsburg for my High School years.



Rolf and Jessica Schmidt

4. Marital status

Name of spouse: Jessica Schmidt (currently a pastoral intern/Vikarin in UELC)

Name/s of child/ren: We are blessed with three girls: Mia (13, born 2008), Éva (10, born in 2010) and Anna (8, born in 2012).

5. Studies:

Where and when I studied theology?

2003-2005 UKZN: Bachelor of Theology

2006: UKZN: Honours in Theology

2007: 5th Year of Theological Training

2008-2009: Internship in the Hayfields Lutheran Congregation under Horst Müller, then Georg Scriba.

2010-2011: Internship in Brück-Merheim, in Köln, Germany

I began my studies straight after High School. I felt a pull to serve God in some capacity ever since High School and so enrolled at the University of Kwazulu-Natal (UKZN) in Pietermaritzburg for my Bachelor of Theology degree. During my studies I stayed at what was known as "LTI" (Lutheran Theological Institute) where I met my wonderful wife, Jessica. Jessica was on an exchange program from Texas, USA. During my studies Bishop Emeritus Dieter Lilje spoke to me about becoming a pastor. One thing I will never forget. He said, "You must be absolutely sure of your calling into ministry because it is a very tough and challenging ministry to be in. Don't just become a pastor because it is the next logical step." I prayerfully considered this for quite some time afterwards until I felt God's call while walking back from lectures.

6. Any subsequent/other studies or previous occupations.

2018 Course in Traumatic Incident Reduction Counselling techniques.

7. Congregations and positions in which I served:

2011-2015: Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Zululand.

2015-2018: Neuenkirchen Congregation, Harburg (until it united with New Hanover and Wartburg to create a new congregation: the UELC)

2018 -Present: United Evangelical Lutheran Congregation since its inception on the 13 May 2018.

8. Other Church Tasks: IMPACT MUSIC MINISTRY

I am assisting in the leadership of the IMPACT Contemporary Music Ministry which is a new branch of the music ministry of the Southern Circuit alongside Brass and Choir Ministries.

9. Personal strengths and interests

I strongly believe in keeping a close personal relationship with God as Christian and pastor is important as God is busy working in and around us fulfilling His plan. Through knowing Him, we learn to recognise His activity/working in the congregation and in its surrounding community. For this reason, it is vitally important to know your congregation first to see where the strengths and weaknesses lie. By learning from past experiences, I am not one to push congregations into my own ideas but walk alongside a congregation in their strengths and weaknesses to see where one can grow or sometimes challenge.

I believe that coming back to basics of Bible Study and personal relationship with God are especially for any individual and congregation as from this faith, comes the desire and challenge to become the hands and feet into the community. Our faith is based completely on the strength, call and mercy God has for us and this sets us free to be ourselves, be open about our weaknesses and through love, truth and acceptance become a home for all who struggle.

In Jesus we find purpose, peace, and hope. Our God is a victorious God and I believe God has given us great freedom to heal by seeking help from one another.

To me community, fellowship, worship, prayer, Bible Study, and service are the backbones of any congregation.

I also believe that building up the family unit to teach and lead devotions at home is particularly important.

I also believe that one challenge we face as a church is our ability to bury our heads in the sands. Our congregations very easily become ideal little islands often very disconnected from what is happening around us. This is something that needs to be challenged.

I enjoy working with youth, especially in the confirmation age. I enjoy teaching them and assisting them in building up relationships with Jesus and with each other. I am currently heavily involved in our congregation's school from devotions to the Board and work together with the teachers to assist with counselling, scripture lessons and services.

Even though we received little formal training in this field, one of my strengths is empathy and counselling, especially in Trauma Counselling.

I am fluent in German and in English. I can hold a general conversation in Afrikaans but have never preached in it. This would need some work.

I also enjoy working with seniors, leading bible studies, preaching and visiting.

I come from a musical family and enjoy playing the guitar and am involved with the worship team of our congregation.

I can play trumpet (tenor) even though I have not taken played in a few years.

10. Hobbies

Camping, playing with my children, walking, freshwater fishing.

11. What do you think, makes church relevant to people and society today?

The message we have to share, the Gospel, that in Christ we receive forgiveness, love, acceptance, renewal, purpose, a family, and hope; this is absolutely what people yearn for and need in today's world. There was great pushback against the church for a time, but now people are yearning for certainty, real love, and acceptance through relationship. In this uncertain world, God's grace experienced through individual service and love conveys God's love without doubt in a world defined by mistrust and misinformation.

This message of love and mercy through Jesus enables us to become the hands and feet to people around us. Serving generously is how church can make the most impact.

I believe that we as church and as congregations need to actively work on making our "boundaries" porous, not working only to enhance the congregation, but God's kingdom, even if it does not directly benefit the congregation.

I also believe teaching people the absolute fundamentals of what we believe and hold most dear, such as the Gospel, will enable us to be open to others and unafraid of real questions and debate, because they then know what is most important and what is not.