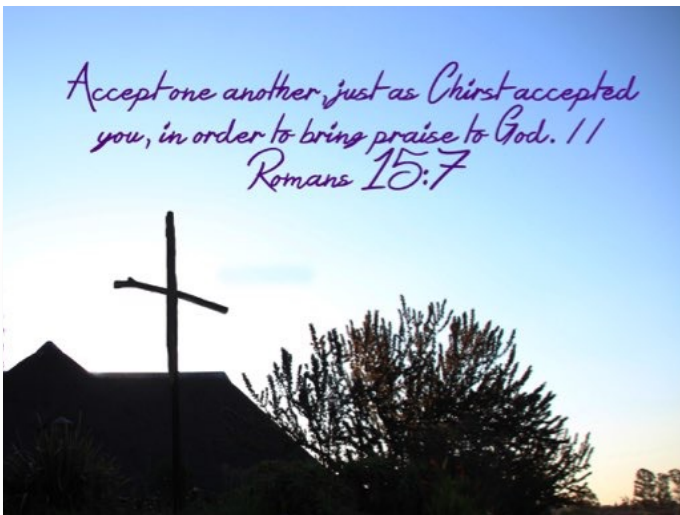


LUTHERAN COMMUNION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA NEWSLETTER

Message from the Executive Director

Greetings fellow brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The year of 2015 will be the year of hope and vulnerability. The watchword for 2015 calls us to accept, receive, and welcome one another. This call is about dropping our guards, arms, and fences to instead open our arms towards everyone. Sometimes we do not know who we are welcoming, but our hope is that it is not our choice but the injunction of the Lord for the church.

There are more spiritually and physically displaced people in our time, than at any given period in history. The church is called to serve them all. The church's vulnerability is actually its strength in this regard. We are able to follow the call towards welcoming those who have been severed from their homes and serve those who need to be strengthened in their faith.



Watchword for 2015.

Photo taken at Emseni Conference Center.

discuss the progress of LUCSA as well as examine where we have work yet to be done. During this meeting, the idea of capacitating LUCSA member churches in serving displaced people was endorsed. As we look towards the future, with our arms open towards one another, let us rejoice in the gifts we have received and work to spread them towards our neighbours.

As we are in the Lenten season, let us remember that the crucifixion and death of our Lord on Good Friday, was the fountain of strength for the church and not vulnerability. We are never alone, and we are blessed with unending grace. Let us be moved by this gift to serve those who are displaced.

This last quarter there has been a lot of planning and work being poured into the 60th Anniversary of Marangu in Tanzania, as well as the 12th LWF Assembly in Namibia. I have been apart of both the planning committees on behalf of LUCSA, and ask that you lift up both events in your prayers. The Marangu Jubilee in May 2015 will act as a stepping stone to the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation that will be celebrated in Namibia in 2017. In May, we will be looking at how far our nations have come and also open ourselves up to the amount of work yet to be done in the church and in our countries. Please keep your fellow brothers and sisters in your prayers as we share in God's work with our lives. Thank you for your support that has already been given, and please continue to walk with us on this path of hope and acceptance.

Communion Office News

HIV & AIDS Desk



Verna Mzezewa prepares to present the new computers to the three member churches.

On February 16th, at eMseni Conference Center, the HIV & AIDS Desk held two different workshops to develop curriculum with the leaders from member churches, Christian Educators, and leaders of leagues, and to prepare member churches for end of phase evaluations that will take place this year.

During the review of LAAP Phase four and planning, member churches presented progress reports in mainstreaming HIV & AIDS, T.B., gender and development principles, planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting tools. Advocacy on HIV & AIDS and formation of in country and regional networks programmes were introduced to the participants as well.

The Curriculum Development meeting collaborated with the LUCSA Christian Education desk as the committee met for the second time to develop the mainstreaming curriculum for all the member churches. This group will be meeting again during the second quarter of this year.



Group photo of the member church representatives for the Regional Planning Meeting.

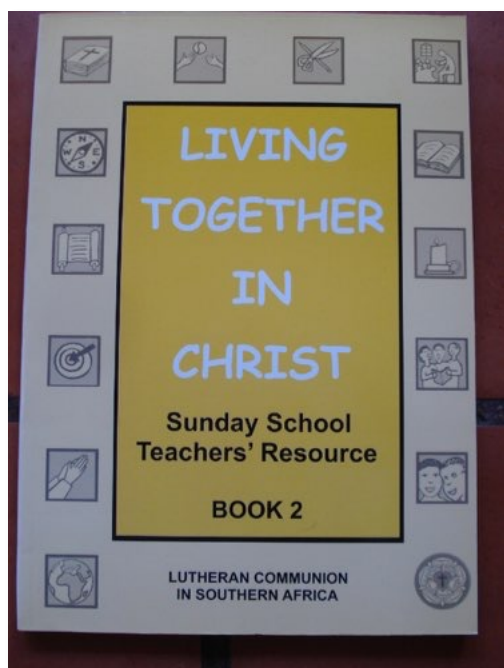
At the end of the week, LUCSA was pleased to present three of the member churches with laptops to further the development of HIV & AIDS programming in their churches. ELCSA-NT, IELA, and ELCSA-WD received their new laptops that were provided through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 2014.

Group photo of the church leaders for the Curriculum Development Meeting.



Christian Education Desk

Use LUCSA Sunday School Teachers' Resource Book Two (yellow cover) throughout 2015!



The three LUCSA Sunday School Teachers' Resource books "Living Together in Christ" generally follow the Revised Common Lectionary. The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) is a work of The Consultation on Common Texts, an ecumenical consultation of liturgical scholars and denominational representatives including Lutherans, Anglicans and others. Each year of the RCL centers on one of the synoptic Gospels (Year A – Matthew, Year B – Mark, Year C – Luke). John is read in each year in the major seasons of Christmas, Lent, and Easter.

LUCSA Book Two (Yellow cover) is based on Year B and should be used throughout 2015. LUCSA Book Three (Blue cover) should be used in 2016 and LUCSA Book One (Green Cover) should be used in 2017. The three books should continue to be used following the

same three year cycle pattern in the following years.

The fourth book provides a curriculum for confirmation classes. Book 5 will be a resource for youth and young adults and book 6 is an adult Christian education resource for lay and clergy.

The first four books are sold as a set for R250 (\$23). Book 6 is available at a price of R75 (\$7) Books can be purchased through LUCSA by calling +27 (11) 979 7142 or via email at info@lucsa.org

Malaria Desk

New program launched in Namibia this March



Rev, Gerson Neliwa, ELCIN Director of Diakonia and Social Services (DDSS), and Adina, are all smiles with their new vehicle!

The LUCSA Malaria Coordinator, Mrs Shoni Ngobenii undertook a week-long visit to Namibia between the 15th and 21st of March 2015. The purpose of the visit was to go and shortlist candidates for The Namibia Malaria Programme. Interviews were conducted and the successful candidate is Ms Yaloo Mphadi.

While in Namibia, the project vehicle purchase was finalised on the 16th March 2015, a white Isuzu double cab diesel vehicle which was funded by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The baseline survey

was completed during the course of the week of the coordinator's visit and the consultant was available to give a presentation of the findings to the ELCIN Department of Diakonia and Social Services (DDSS), as well as the LUCSA Malaria Coordinator.

Malaria Coordinator Shoni, Elise Heikkinen-Johnstone, Rev Neliwa from the ELCIN and Ludwig Beukes from Namibia Council of Churches discuss the candidates for the Malaria Coordinator for the Malaria Project.



The Namibia ELCIN DDSS is preparing for the launch of the programme and the dates are soon to be announced.

Communication Desk

Reconnecting and Revitalising the Member Church Communication Network

This last quarter, the Communications Desk had been planning a Member Church Communication Network workshop. After sending out multiple emails, and follow up phone calls, the response to the invitation was not enough to hold the workshop.

In November 2014, Allison Westerhoff attended a meeting for the African Lutheran Communication Network (ALICNET) with representatives from each of the sub regions in Africa and a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Communication staff. During this meeting, each representative was given training in how to properly report stories, take pictures, and caption photos. The task at hand, is to further reach towards each sub-region's member churches to gather and share stories from within the communion. This means, that the Communications Desk needs your stories, updates, and news so that we can further circulate what has been accomplished in each of the churches.

The Communication Desk is working towards rebuilding the connections between the Communion Office and the Member Churches, but the effort needs to be reciprocated. With the revival of the newsletter, expanded social media, and improved internet connection in the Communion office, there has been an increase of outflow of information, yet the member churches have failed to be consistent or communicate at all with the Communion office.

Moving forward, the Communication Desk will be traveling with both the HIV & AIDS desk, and Malaria desk to gain exposure to the sites as well as work with the offices on how to best communicate with the Communion office. If you have any events in the future that you think might be worth reporting, please let our office know. If you yourself have a story you would like to share, feel free to contact Allison Westerhoff at: communications@lucsa.org so that she can work with you.

Have you connected with us on social media?



www.facebook.com/LutheranCommunion

www.twitter.com/lucsa_91

plus.google.com/+LucsaOrg91

info@lucsa.org

Member Church News

Induction of ELCIN(GELC) Bishop

January 18th, 2015

We hereby take pleasure in informing you, that Bishop Burgert Brand was inducted during a festive church service on 18th January 2015 in Windhoek into his position as bishop of ELCIN(GELC) and as pastor of the Windhoek congregation. He thus succeeds Bishop Erich Hertel, who retired in Germany in April 2014.

Consecration of ELCSA-CD Bishop

March 1st, 2015

Rev. Dr. White Makabe Rakuba was consecrated as the third bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) Central Diocese. The service took place at the Klipriviersberg Recreational Center hall south of Johannesburg.

Consecration of LCSA Bishop

March 1st, 2015

Rev. Modise Maragelo was consecrated as the bishop of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (LCSA). The service took place in Salem, Mpumalanga.



Bishop Rakuba at the consecration service.
Photo: Chris Monotoe

Bishop Kameeta Appointed to Namibian Presidential Council

Respected Lutheran Leader Takes Seat in Namibian Cabinet



**Bishop emeritus Dr
Zephania Kameeta.**
Photo: LWF/C.
Kästner

The 25th anniversary of Namibian independence on March 21 saw the appointment of a prominent Lutheran figure to the state cabinet.

Bishop emeritus Dr Zephania Kameeta, a long-time advocate of the rights of disadvantaged and poor Namibians, was appointed by president Hage Geingob as Minister of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare.

Namibia has strong ties to Lutheranism and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has three member churches in the country. In May 2017, LWF member churches in Namibia will host the largest gathering of Lutherans, the general assembly of the Lutheran World Federation.

Acclaimed for his efforts to eradicate the widespread poverty in the country, Kameeta is a strong proponent of cash distribution schemes, notably Namibia's Basic Income Grant, which is designed to reduce poverty and inequality.

The LWF stood in solidarity with Namibia during its independence struggle. In addition to being the first major denominational body to renounce apartheid as a matter of faith, the LWF supported refugees fleeing the country, provided hundreds of scholarships for Namibians who otherwise did not have access to higher education, acted as a source of information about the situation in Namibia, and helped refugees repatriate after 1990.

Kameeta, 69, is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia and serves on the LWF Council.

You can find a video interview with him on the LWF website: <http://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-future-namibia>

Global Church News

Marangu Jubilee 2015

From Marangu to Wittenberg: Theological Education and Leadership Formation and the Renewal of the Lutheran Church in Africa



This May, church leaders, bishops, women, and youth will be meeting in Marangu, Tanzania to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the first All African Lutheran Communion meeting. This meeting will help the church in Africa renew the importance of the African heritage, and push us to look at where the church has left to grow, including areas of poverty, issues of corruption in our society and countries and climate change. All bible studies and themes are centred on the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

Counting the Losses

LCCN REFLECTIONS FROM THE BOKO-HARAM

The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN), the largest Christian denomination in the north-eastern Nigeria, is having to count our losses. We must go to the field and compile what can be salvaged to keep our records straight and to share with other believers who will be praying for the church in Nigeria.

Recently, over 1.5 million people have been displaced by Boko-Haram in Nigeria. Christians have been sent away from their homes and their food and farm have been looted by the extremist group. The LCCN hosted several internally displaced persons in the church



Bishop Dimga of the LCCN ShallHolma Diocese in the make shift church. Photo: Felix Samari

headquarters in Numan and gave relief material to about 5,000 displaced persons.

The Arewa Diocese of the LCCN is the most affected. Today several churches in the area are burnt. The secretary to the Bishop of Arewa Diocese, Rev. Gayus said most of the worship places in the area are burnt.

“They followed house to house and packed away food items and set fire on church buildings and furniture including pastors’ residence. LCCN No. 2 Gerewol, a big church, and the pastor’s house have been burnt. Likewise, LCCN Killing and the store and all furniture of LCCN Garden City in Mubi.”

Dean Rev. Harrison William the pastor of LCCN Garden City Mubi District a town which was taken over by the Boko-Haram said the church was faced with one of the greatest tests and difficulties of this time.



Burnt Gomi Cathedral
Photo: Felix Samari

“A church that constitutes about 1,000 people was destroyed, many of our brothers were butchered and a lot of property was lost. We have lost so much and if not for God we will not forget this and will find it very difficult to forgive. Even those churches that were not roof they gathered the furniture and everything in the church and set fire on it. This is very painful.”

Dean Harrison said those who knew Mubi before the insurgency attack will understand that it may take the next fifty years for the town to return to the former status.

“Many may not want to return to Mubi.” Harrison reflected, “This already has affected the church. But we know for the serious Christians this will encourage them to go on with the gospel. This is not new anyway; it is the fulfilment of the end time prophecies. But if it is not the fulfilment of the prophecy our prayers will bring it to an end.”

The vicar of LCCN Cathedral in Gombi Rev. Danjuma Ayuba spoke about what happened when the terrorist group came to Gombi. He said, “They looted our properties and set fire on house in the Christian villages. This is no doubt an attack on the church.” He said that the Church in Gombe lost a member who came back to the town to pick up a few other items but unfortunately was met by them and was killed.

Rev. Samuel Abafra the Secretary to the Bishop of Shall-Holma Diocese said, his daughter was trapped in Mubi by the Boko-Haram for three weeks until she was rescued by the Nigerian army. “We lost hope of seeing her. She was nowhere to be found. But God protected her. She was running from one hiding place to the other. She along one other girl from Kaduna hid in a burnt church. They were hunted like animals but God preserved them. Boko-Haram has strengthened our faith in God, we know better by our experiences that God is able to do what he said he will do.”

Mr Timothy Zange, a church leader of LCCN Ndoma a border community of between Adamawa and Borno state, said that after Biu in Borno throughout the land there is not a single church that is standing. He said, “They follow up Christians and kill them wherever they are in this area. My brother and family narrowly escape death. If you are a woman and did not wear Hijab whether

inside a commercial vehicle or in the street they will kill you, because they assume that you are a Christian. Any young woman that has breast on her chest and is still living with her parents they will seize her and get her married for 2000 naira only. In all the area from the Borno boarder right into the state, it is only in my congregation that we worship in the church in the night of Christmas and New Year.”

Zagne thought there is no presence of security in the area but they have held faith and continue to pray to God. Although, the effort of the Military and the local vigilantes are yielding some result. People are beginning to return to their homes and normalcy is being restored. But normal Sunday worships and other church activities are done under strict security and sometimes the services are shorten to avoid the risk of attack from the Insurgency.

Through all of this, the church is showing more courage and faith as they have continued to come together in fellowship. The LCCN Cathedral in Gombi gathers for worship in a make-shift tent of woods and zinc.

Rev Ayuba Danjuma said, “People have not feared to come to church, instead our faith is made stronger. We have seen the hands of God here and we shall continue to worship God.”

So far, the church has lost over 30 worship places in Arewa and Shall-Holma Diocese alone. Rev Alexander was killed in Ga’anda in Shall-Holma Diocese. Over 50 church members have been killed in different locations as a result of Boko-Haram attacks. Property worth over 30 million naira was destroyed in LCCN Gombi Cathedral alone, and so much more in Mubi and surrounding places in Arewa and Shall-Holma Diocese. Over 20,000 LCCN members have been displaced from their homes. Most of their homes are destroyed and their property looted.

“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ...” (Phil.3:7,8)

Story and photos provided by Felix Samari, February 28th, 2015.

Contact Us

24 Geldenhuys Rd.

PO Box 7170

Bonaero Park, 1622

Republic of South Africa

Phone: +27 11 979 7142

Fax: +27 11 395 1615

Email: info@lucsa.org



15 Member Churches

10 Countries

2 Million Lutherans

1 Communion

To find out more about LUCSA and our programming, visit our website: www.lucsa.org