

LTS NEWS

**Lutheran Theological
Seminary in Tshwane**
[Pretoria, South Africa]



OFF TO A GOOD START

As usual for the past decade the [LTS in Tshwane](#) started its proceedings on the first Tuesday in February - just as the new academic year began at the [University of Pretoria](#) (UP—Tukkies) Deaconess D.Rockrohr has also started the fulltime deaconess program with 8 new students from Liberia, Botswana and South Africa - with one more hopefully coming in from Uganda.

Together with the theological faculty at UP we are now offering the Bachelor of Theology degree at our Seminary. Hopefully most of the more than 20 new students at LTS will finally enter this program after successfully passing the bridging course of 2 years.

During this introduction the newcomers are learning Greek (Mr. S.Oxlon) and Hebrew Grammar (Rev. N.Mntambo), Academic skills (Mrs. A. Dorfling) besides basic Introductions into biblical and confessional theology (Rev. D. Tswaedi DD and Bishop Weber).

May the triune God bless the Lutheran Church and it's Seminary in its teaching, preaching learning, worshipping and praying.

25,000 US\$ to match

The good news is that we have the commitment of a \$25, 000 US dollar grant to address the staffing costs at the LTS in 2012. The challenging bit of this information is that this grant

is only due, when and if we can raise the matching funds. For every 1US\$ we raise, we are to receive a matching dollar. So please do support the Seminary and help us to raise this outstanding amount - for the sake of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa and its future pastors and deaconesses.

The 25k US\$ grant is a very generous gift and we are very grateful for it, because it will help us significantly to address the financial challenges faced by the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane, but it will hopefully also raise the awareness in the Lutheran Church that good Seminaries need support and we can help to raise it.

It is only by God's grace that our Seminary has survived many decades on a shoestring. There have been good times, especially in the 70's and 80's, when the [Lutheran Church in Southern Africa](#) was able to support the Seminary substantially together with its german sister church the [Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa](#), but even back then all staff members - at some times up to 5 - were funded by the [LKM \(Bleckmar\)](#). Bleckmar - as the Church mission of the SELK - has over the years, decades in fact, continued to sup-

port this "its" Seminary faithfully and substantially although it has had more than its fair and growing share of challenges in increasing abilities.

The fact that they have now freed up Prof. Dr. habil. Werner Klän to take up the Lutheran Chair of Theology at the University of Pretoria and have even managed to raise the funds for a 6 year long posting. That goes a long way to prove their ongoing enthusiasm for theological education in Africa.

The past decade - since the translocation from Enhlanhleni to Pretoria - has also been a good time for the Seminary. Student numbers have increased, teachers have been constantly available and the facility has grown nicely. All this growth was mainly due to the significant increase in support from the [Missouri Synod](#) (LCMS) and its many subsidiaries notably the districts in [Rocky Mountains \(Randy Golter\)](#) and in [South Illinois \(Herb Mueller/Tim Scharr\)](#), but also World Relief and Human Care (Matthew Harrison), World Mission, the Lutheran Heritage Foundation and last but not least both Seminaries in St. Louis and Ft.Wayne. To be fair, we have to admit that Ft.Wayne really has carried the main load of sending teachers here regularly - up to 4 per annum. So we are looking forward to seeing Prof. John Pless (CTS Ft.Wayne) and Prof. Dr. Reed Lessing (CS St.Louis) here soon.

Post-graduates do well

Several of our post-graduate students at the Missions and Systematics respectively, University of Pretoria have completed their whereas Rev. David Tswaedi DD is now en-degree and have moved on. Vicar Bheki rolled in the PhD program at CS St. Louis and Ngobese (Mpumalanga), Eric Gebotoe has had the first session on campus after (Liberia) and Abia Anibati (Sudan) have suc- Christmas. Rev. Eliot Sithole is continuing with cessfully completed the Honours Degree in the writing and finalization of his dissertation in Systematics, Missions and New Testament Mission theology and Old Testament under respectively. The last two of these Gebotoe supervision of CTS Ft.Wayne, where Rev. Na-and Abia have moved on to the Masters pro- than Mntambo would also gladly enrol to pro-gram, whereas Ngobese is called to serve in ceed with the PhD in practical theology. KwaNgema, Mpumalanga in a new mission Our prayers and best wishes accompany station being built up. these theologians as they grapple with the on-The pastors John Nkambule and Orapeleng going task of working in Lutheran theology in Shuping are busy with the Masters program in an African context.



**Student representatives 2012: Thulani Hadebe (Secretary);
Abia Anibati (Chair) and Matthews Tokpah (Treasurer)**

Different Weather, Customs and Languages but the Same Gospel of Joy

After six months of preparing and raising support for our move to serve in South Africa, Ted, Deborah and I felt very ready to move. Deborah's parents helped finish packing and organizing our house which we will lease and then we were off on the airplane from Detroit

on 20 January and arrived in South Africa on 21 January. The day we left Detroit was the coldest day of the mild winter in Detroit, 5° F (-15° C). We met 81° F (27° C) in Pretoria. We traveled from the winter of the northern hemisphere to the summer in the southern hemisphere.

We attended church the next day at St Paul's Lutheran Church in Arcadia only one block away from Lutheran Theological Seminary. We had made friends in the congregation when we visited Pretoria for a week in March 2011 and we wanted people to know we had arrived. St. Paul is a German speaking congregation, so we understood the liturgy fairly well but the sermon escaped us. Friends from the congregation said hello to us after the service.

The following days we caught up on sleep from jet lag and also attended a number of meetings for both the church and the seminary. The next Saturday, 28 January, Deborah and I were invited to attend a funeral service for a young pastor of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa who had died leaving behind his wife and three small children. We left Pre-

toria at 4h30 for the service which started at 7h30. The service, along with the burial site liturgy, lasted until noon. Many area pastors and women's groups came for the funeral as well as the people of the local congregation and town.

The funeral service and burial was mostly in Tswana, but also in some Zulu and English. There was grief expressed, yet also thankfulness for the pastor's faithfulness and the hope of life everlasting with the Lord Jesus. The local tradition is to take the coffin directly to the burial site right after the service similar as in

the United States. Since it was a small town all walked behind the hearse for several blocks to the graveyard. What was different however was that the burial rites include lowering the coffin and covering it with the pile of earth right then and there. Attending pastors and men of the community shoveled in the dirt and rocks while a choir of women from the Women's Prayer League and the Women in Action groups led all congregants in singing Christian songs. I was privileged to stand right behind Bishop Weber watching the men burying the coffin while being literally surrounded and enveloped with Tswana hymns sung by a women's choir of at least 50 voices.

Though sung in Tswana, I fully recognized the melody of the second last song that was sung: *Joy to the World*.



Rockrohrs have arrived

And so Lutherans in a small South Africa town of the first class of residential deaconess training sang at a young pastor's burial the very hope ing. Though our instruction is in English, our that we Christians proclaim to all: Joy - for students represent many languages and cultures. God has given us His Son to save us, even in tures. At the inductions into our seminary positions the midst of death. tions in chapel this morning, Deborah and I Lutheran Theological Seminary, the place to again plainly declared along with the whole which Deborah and I are called, has just Church that there is one true God, Father, Son started classes today (7 Feb). We have about and Holy Spirit and we would abide in true 41 students in all (some are still arriving). The faithful teaching. We are thankful to God and students are from South Africa, Liberia, to His Church for sending us to be with fellow Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Zambia, Sudan, Christians at LTS. We see again and again, Botswana, and the Democratic Republic of the Gospel of Jesus Christ reaches into the Congo. Six of the students are doing masters hearts and gives faith, hope and love to all or honors studies at the University of Pretoria. whom He calls regardless of race, language, Eight of the students are women who are part culture and condition. (Dr. C.Rockrohr)

Mercy and Grace from Beginning to End



Deaconess students from Liberia from left to right: Ruth T. Nagbe, Helen Flomo and Annie Toe

With the start of the new academic year, this week the residential deaconess training programme at LTS was launched. While a new thing, this is not a new idea for LTS. In fact, it has been the dream to add deaconess training for some time now. Initially, LTS was able to offer deaconess training only on a short-term intensive course basis. This year, we have seven women who have come to study on a full-time basis for two years. By God's grace we will yet add two more students in the coming days. We know they are trying to come and have places reserved for them, but they have so far been delayed in travel. As the director of the residential deaconess training programme, the work for me is simultaneously exciting and daunting. It is a big task to design and then carry out a programme to train these women. It is a big responsibility to see that they are well cared for, and have a healthy, comfortable and safe living and learning environment. And yet, what joy to see these new faces and to know that these women are eager to learn and develop their skills so that they can extend the mercy work of the church both within the congregation and into their communities! Just yesterday, my husband told me that he has not seen me smile so much nor so often as I have in the last few weeks since we arrived in Pretoria and began preparing in earnest for the tasks ahead. Whether that is true or not, I can tell you that I look forward to each new day with joy and great anticipation! The Lord has already showered great mercy and grace upon this fledgling programme. I invite you to rejoice with me as I recount just a few examples of the Lord's blessings already received.

1. Seven women have safely arrived from various towns and villages in South Africa, Botswana, and Liberia, and are already eagerly settling in and taking up their studies. We look forward to two more, yet to arrive from Uganda and Zambia.

2. A beautiful residence has been provided for the women, Dube House. Those who have previously visited the seminary will have known it as guest quarters only. Now it is the deaconess student residence, and has sleeping rooms, bath facilities, a fully-equipped kitchen and laundry, and a large study room.)

3. One of our students, arriving by plane, accidentally left her purse (with passport) on the luggage trolley in the parking lot of the airport. It was only after the hour-long journey to the seminary and then while settling into her room that she discovered it was missing. After making several phone calls to the airport, we learned that the purse, with passport and all contents intact, had been spied by an airport worker and taken to lost luggage. That same afternoon we were able to retrieve the purse and passport! We praise God for His provision and protection in what could have been a disastrous turn of events!



Nokuthula Dlamini from the Mpumalanga diocese of the LCSA is the only local South African in the fulltime deaconess course.

As we have begun with a recounting of God's grace and mercy on the start of the new residential deaconess training programme, we also pray that His mercy and grace will continue throughout, from beginning to end, and

These students from Botswana are members of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa: Boingotlo Khuto, Gaseteko Otugile, Tshiriletso Lonyatso . They are enrolled in the LTS deaconess program.



Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane

[Pretoria, South Africa]

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First Quarter 2012

- 7.2 Classes begin at LTS and UP
- 27.2: Deaconess Grace Rao (LCMS World Relief & Human Care) leads a two-week intensive for Advanced Deaconess studies in collaboration with the UP Trauma unit at S. Biko Hospital
- 27.2 Prof. Pless (CTS Ft.Wayne) teaches "Spiritual life for Pastors" in the Ordination Course)
- 12.3: Prof. Klän (LTH Oberursel) works on Truth & Reconciliation with vicars
- 19-22.3: Pastor's convention at "Good Shepherd Retreat" (North-West)
- 24.3: Easter Break starts
- 14.4: Joint-Supervisory Board UP/LTS meets at the University of Pretoria

Prayer Requests for the LTS

- > More able students to study Lutheran theology and be prepared as pastors and deaconesses in Africa
- > Means to support local teachers so that they can concentrate on teaching, preaching and research.
- > More bursaries for under-graduates & post-graduates to study Lutheran theology full-time at LTS
- > Suitable opportunities for graduates to be called and installed, ordained and taken into service.
- > Volunteers to help with a growing work-load: administratively, with house-keeping & tutoring
- > Necessary means to sustain, renovate and expand the facility to meet demand and increase capacity
- > Good theological books for the library, for teachers and students to grow in Luther's teaching.
- > Opportunities for Seminarians and their teachers to tell their story and that of the Seminary in the Churches, dioceses and congregations here and abroad.
- > Possibilities for international exchange to broaden the perspective of Seminarians globally.