

LTS NEWS



LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

Watchword 2017



2017 off to a good start

By the grace of God, almost all LTS students, both new and returning, arrived in time for the start of classes on February 7. For more than ten years, the LTS has been welcoming students from all of Africa and beyond, and this year is no different - with theology students and deaconess students coming in from Liberia, DRC Congo, Zambia, Uganda, Sudan,

as well as from a number of Lutheran church bodies in South Africa itself, the seminary is full to capacity and bursting at the seams. But this is our joy, and as our Lord instructs us to work while it is day, before the night comes when no one can work, we will joyfully be about the Lord's business of teaching and training confessional Lutheran pastors and deaconesses for Africa.

Unfortunately, one of our staff members, Dr. Eric Gbotoe, has been unable to join us to date due to visa issues which have left him and his wife stranded in their home country of Liberia. We solicit your prayers for the Gbotoes, that these hurdles may be overcome and the LTS staff return to its current complement of faculty members. LTS lecturers have had to fill in for Dr. Gbotoe as best as they can, and so life at the LTS continues under the Lord's grace and blessing.

This edition of the LTS News includes a report by Rector Dr. Wilhelm Weber on his trip to Rome for an ecumenical conference on "Luther and the Sacraments" hosted by the Johan Möhler Institute of Paderborn, Germany. Together with Rev. John Nkambule's recent study trip to CTS Ft. Wayne, IN and Dr. Karl Böhmer's March assignment to the headquarters of the Mission of Lutheran Churches in Bleckmar, Germany, LTS staff have represented the seminary in a number of international locations.

Also featured in this edition of the LTS are delightful reports by some of our visiting lecturers in the first quarter, Prof. Pless and Rev. Tony Oliphant, a write-up of the recent installation of Dr. Böhmer, as well as the latest developments at the LTS preschool.

*Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!
Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!*
(Ps. 34:8)

The Eternal City on 7 hills: Rome the Glorious.

by Rector Dr. Wilhelm Weber

Visiting Rome is always a highlight even if the many old ruins don't look as if they are really made for eternity. Still, it is quite an experience to walk on the Via Antiqua imagining St. Paul walking up that road as a prisoner, or St. Peter fleeing in the opposite direction, only to be called back by his master: Quo vadis? The old catacombs of St. Sebastian are supposed to have housed these apostles for some time even as they were in hiding. That however is somewhat up to speculation even if some archeologists would put their head on the block for this.

One week in Rome is much too short really. Still the conference on "Luther and the sacraments. A catholic re-reading of Luther" organized by the Johan Möhler Institute

(Paderborn) was reason enough to take on the arduous journey and hear from Lutheran and Catholic experts about Luther's understanding of the sacraments: Baptism, Confession & Absolution (Penance), Lord's Supper (Eucharist) and the office of the ministry (Ordo). The program was set up in such a way, that the keynote lecture on one of the sacraments was held by a Lutheran expert in the auditorium of the Pontifical Gregorian University and then a re-lecture of Luther's theology by a Roman-Catholic theologian followed. Time for questions and comments was provided even before the conference split up into seminars to work under the guidance of those 2 experts on one of the topics in more detail. This was a very efficient and productive procedure.

The conference was imbedded in a rich offering of devotions and catholic services in the impressive churches around the university like the Latin Mass in St. Peter's basilica on Sunday morning, Sanct' Ignazio for Vespers on Sunday evening, the Ash Wednesday service in Apostoli XII etc. The eminent Cardinals Koch, Kaspar and Müller did not only attend, but preached, celebrated, lectured and mixed most amicably with the numerous guests from across the globe, specifically post-graduate students, learned professors, bishops, priests, theologians, nuns etc. Even a delegation from our sister Seminary – the Lutherische Theologische Hochschule Oberursel i.T – was there together with Bishop emeritus Dr. Jobst Schöne and his wife from the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche (or Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church) in Germany.

This week impressed on me the necessity to look beyond the individual personality of Dr. Martin Luther, however impressive and noteworthy it may be. The Lutheran Church does not hero-worship him as if he were our founding saint, but rather as the unique and devout friar and

ordained priest and pastor, theologically well-versed academic, who the Lord of the Church used to reform his eternal church, which had fallen into serious disrepair. In such inter-denominational dialogue we should focus more on the Confessional writings of our Church than on the personal subjectivity of these ecclesial celebrities even if they were as productive in their writing as Luther obviously was. More important that the highly debatable 95 Theses commemorated in 2017 is the anniversary of Luther's Catechisms (1529), Melancthon's Augsburg Confession and Apology of 1530, the Smalcald Articles in 1537 and the timely publication of the entire Book of Concord in 1580. Now that would really be a lot of food for thought.

Moreover it would be also be of cardinal importance to move to a more ecclesial point of view. It's not just about what some theologians think today, but rather how

this Lutheran reformation has been received, taken on and structured in Church formations and establishments across the globe. Something like what Werner Elert illustrates in his "Structure of Lutheranism". An updated version of this outstanding monography written back in 1958 remains very much a desideratum.

So it's not just about having the official condemnation and excommunication of the individual Dr. Martin Luther recalled and nullified, but also about how the churches (!) relate to one another, because as Luther said, we don't grant, that they are the church. Rather the church is there, where the gospel is preached in its purity and the sacraments administered according to their institution by our Lord Jesus Christ. That remains the challenge to us as Lutheran Church as it is to the Roman Catholic Church and others too – with all their sub-divisions.

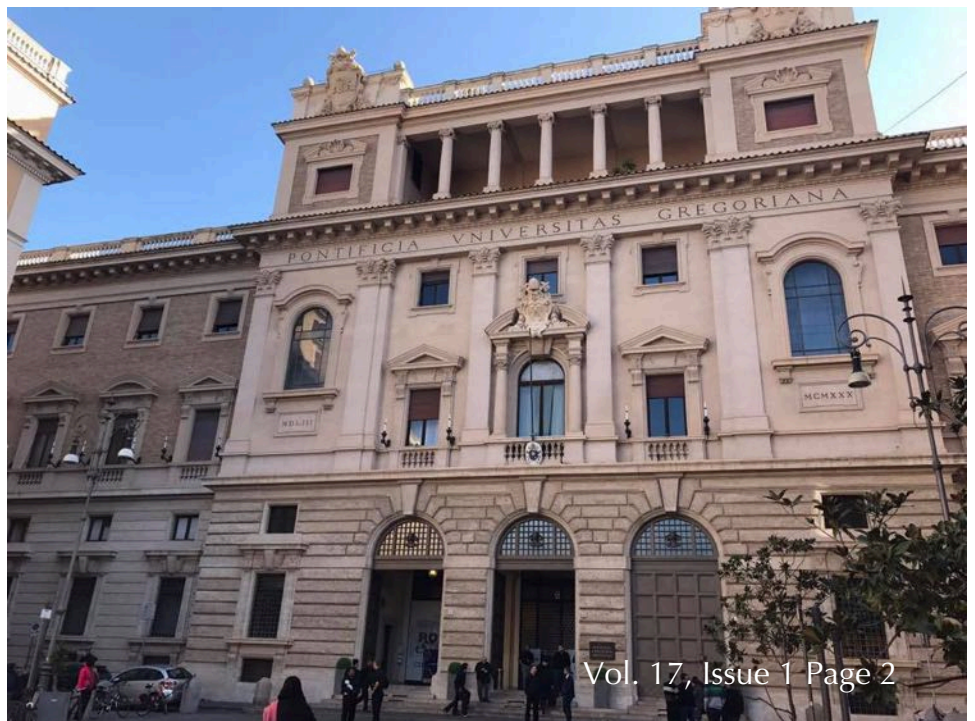


Prayers requested

Our Lord has encouraged us to pray:

"The harvest is plentiful, but workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest."
Matthew 9:37f

Please join us in prayer as we pray to the Lord for support of those students who have heeded his call and are now at the LTS in Tshwane & preparing for the work in His church and on the African mission-field, which is ripe for harvest!



Trip Report by visiting lecturer



Rev. Anthony Oliphant

Feb. 26 – Mar. 10, 2017

For two weeks I had the pleasure of co-teaching a class at LTS alongside Rev. Prof. John Pless. The course was "Lutheran Dogmatics for the Congregation". For the course, we used the recently published "The Saving Truth: Doctrine for Laypeople" by the late Rev. Dr. Kurt Marquart as the text. The class was primarily for seniors at LTS, but several juniors also attended. Several pastors from the area sat in on the class for continuing education. All seniors and pastors received a copy of the textbook. In addition, I brought copies of "Lutheranism 101" for use in classes for underclassmen.

The class met from 14:00 to 17:00 every weekday. This three-hour block of time proved to be easily filled with content from the lectures and with thoughtful questions from the students. I was continually impressed with the questions that were raised, as it showed a deep concern for taking what was being discussed and applying it to the level of understanding and contexts of those in the students' home countries and congregations. The students were determined to

thoroughly understand the material so that they could clearly teach the faith and defend against the heresies that are prevalent throughout Africa. On March 9, Prof. Pless and I hosted a braai for the students. Pastor Shuttleworth, a local Lutheran pastor, hosted a wine tasting to show the wide range of South African wines.

During my stay, some of the seminary students elected to go to a presentation at St. Paul's on March 8. Pastor Jacob Corzine, who works with the college students at St. Paul's, arranged for a Muslim imam to come and speak to the group about what Muslims believe so that the students can be better informed as they progress through their studies of the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions. Because many of the seminary students come from nations with a strong Muslim presence, they were able to ask many interesting questions and give further elaboration on the effects that Islam has had on the Church in Africa and on their homelands.

I was given the privilege of attending a staff meeting on March 9 in order to get a glimpse into the operations and everyday dealings of the seminary. It provided good insight into the relationships of all who work at the seminary and showed how much dedication and work has gone into building a faithful and safe place for study toward the Office of the Holy Ministry. My thanks to Dr. Weber for his invitation to the meeting.

The seminary is looking ahead at the future opportunities. The Saint Philip Lutheran Mission Society and the Rocky Mountain District of the LCMS have each raised \$15,000 toward *building a new library*. These funds will be used toward creating a study and research center that will be on the leading edge among seminaries in Africa. With interactive and telecommunication abilities, it is hoped that this new facility can



help link the Lutheran seminaries throughout the continent and world.

The new library would also serve to draw new students and strengthen relationships with the University of Pretoria. While the full scope of this project is still to be determined, it remains an exciting endeavor. The mission society will keep an eye on how the project continues to develop as we remain enthusiastic supporters of creating the best facility possible at LTS.

I would like to thank all of the faculty, staff, and students at LTS for their overwhelming hospitality and warmth. Thanks to Prof. John Pless for being a teaching colleague throughout the two weeks. A special thanks to the Saint Philip Lutheran Mission Society is in order for providing the funds for airfare in order to go and serve the students at LTS and for the opportunity to visit the seminary and see how we will be able to continue to serve them in the best possible way.



Guest Lecturers

Rev. Oliphant continues: "Another recommendation for how the mission society can help in a sustained way is to dedicate to send a guest lecturer from among our number to LTS each year. This was a strong recommendation from Dr. Weber and Prof. Pless.

After this trip, I wholeheartedly concur. By doing this, we can maintain communication and relationships with the staff and students and we can maintain a continual connection to the work being done at the seminary. We will also be able to give regular "boots on the ground" reports back to our donors in the United States."

Preaching in Chapel

"While on campus I also preached for the Thursday morning services on March 2 and 9. Matins was

prayed on Thursdays and the preaching texts of the lectionary provided good Lenten meditation."



Teaching Lutheran Doctrine in South Africa

by Prof. John T. Pless

From February 27-March 10, I team taught a course on “Teaching Lutheran Doctrine in the Congregation” with Pastor Tony Oliphant (pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Elmhurst, Illinois and Treasurer of the St. Philip Lutheran Mission Society).

The class consisted of 22 senior students, pastors, and a pre-seminary student from the University of Pretoria. The text for the course was the newly published book by the late Dr. Kurt Marquart, *The Saving Truth: Doctrine for Laypeople*. We are deeply grateful to the Luther Academy and its executive director, Dr. Robert Bennett for donating copies of this book for each of the students.

The introductory lecture explored the nature and method of confessional Lutheran theology. We examined the task of the theologian on the basis of Titus 1:1-3, noting in the words of David Hollaz that theology is “eminently practical wisdom teaching from the revealed Word of God all things which sinful man, who is to be saved, needs to know in order to attain true faith and holiness of life.” We spoke of theology as a “public mystery” (Oswald Bayer) in light of Romans 16:25-27. We accented the fact that theology is never simply theoretical but ultimately is necessary for proclamation of God’s Word noting Werner Elert’s statement that dogmatics has to do with the necessary content of the church’s proclamation if the kerygma is to be genuine Gospel, good news for Christ’s sake.

From this foundation both lecturers presented classes on the various “articles” of Christian doctrine: the inspiration, authority and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, the Trinity, the person and work of Christ, justification and sanctification, law and Gospel, preaching as means of grace, Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, ecclesiology, eschatology, and the apologetics (faith and reason). Students were

thoroughly engaged in lively and fruit class discussion.

The instructors attempted to present these topics with a view toward how pastors might teach and preach on these subjects in the African context. This meant that we spent more time on issues that are lively in Africa such as :

- The distinction between general revelation and the salvific revelation of Christ Jesus in the Gospel;
- Lutheran hermeneutics in contrast to cultural and contextual hermeneutics;
- Pentecostalism and its errant teaching regarding Baptism in the Spirit;
- The ordination of women and why this practice breaks church fellowship;
- The nature of altar and pulpit fellowship. This is especially critical as the Lutheran World Federation is influential in southern Africa.

In addition to teaching, both Pastor Oliphant and I preached two sermons each at the morning chapel services. I also preached the Ash Wednesday sermon for the Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University

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Visiting instructors during the first quarter

also included:

- Dr. S. Elliot Sithole (LCSA)
- Prof. Dr.habil. Werner Klän (SELK)
- Deaconess Grace Rao (LCMS)

Thank you to all instructors who came and to all who made their visits possible. Our seminary students benefited tremendously.



of Pretoria.

I am grateful to Dr. Weber for inviting us to teach this course and the many kindnesses shown to us on this trip. I’m also grateful to Dr. Jacob Corzine of the Lutheran Campus Ministry for providing me with housing and local transportation. In addition to the text books provided by Luther Academy, Bethany Lutheran Church in Naperville, Illinois and Immanuel Lutheran Church in Frankentrost, Michigan provided funds to purchase many new books to keep our library up to date.

God willing it, I will return to teach another two week course at LTS on August 14-25, 2017.



Installation of Dr. K. Böhmer

Transfiguration Sunday

By the gracious invitation of the German-speaking St. Paul's Ev. Luth. Church in Arcadia, Pretoria, a joint divine service was held with the ELC and the Afrikaans-speaking St Paul's congregation to mark Transfiguration Sunday. Also present at the service were dignitaries and guests representing a range of churches and organizations – the South African representative of the Mission of Lutheran Churches (MLC, also known as the Bleckmar Mission of the IELC in Germany), the bishop and members of the synodical board of the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa (FELSISA), the bishop and assistant bishop of the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (LCSA), the rector of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane (LTS), members of its board of directors, as well as local clergy and many distinguished guests. The reason for this celebration was on the one hand the joint divine service regularly held between the three Pretoria

congregations in the framework of Arcadia Lutheran Ministries (ALM), and on the other hand, the installation of seminary lecturer Dr. Karl Böhmer. Böhmer has been called and seconded by the FELSISA to teach church history and mission at the LTS. At the same time, his call is made possible by close cooperation between the FELSISA and the MLC, who contribute generously to this end in an endeavor to support the education of Lutheran pastors and deaconesses at the LTS, to which all of its members are fully committed.

The installation was performed by FELSISA Bishop Dr. Dieter Reinstorf, LCSA Bishop Rev. Modise Maragelo, and MLC representative Rev. Christoph Weber. Rev. Weber preached the installation sermon on Matt. 14:22-33. After the installation, Böhmer preached on Ex. 3:1-15.

Rev. Dr. Karl Böhmer lives in Pretoria with his wife and two daughters. He has been



lecturing at the LTS in various capacities since 2015 and has now been installed in a full-time position. He studied at the University of Pretoria, the Lutherische Theologische Hochschule in Oberursel, Germany, and in Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO, USA before receiving his doctorate from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN, USA. In the meantime, he has served as a parish pastor in the KZN midlands in South Africa and in the Rocky Mountain District of the LCMS.

LTS Preschool Teacher Interview: Trinh Simakoloyi

Tell us about your background.

I was born and raised in Zambia and come from a large family with three sisters and four brothers. My father, who sadly passed away in 1997, was a police officer and my mother was a school teacher. I was baptized and confirmed in the Anglican church but during my father's illness, we began to attend the Lutheran church closer to our home. I was active in the Sunday School Ministry and from 2004-2007 was fortunate to be selected and sent on several courses at the Lusaka Evangelical Bible School in the capital, Lusaka. One of the courses I even attended with my brother who was ordained in 2008. I became a Coordinator for women's work in the Zambian Diocese and traveled to the different congregations to report on the activities and requests of the women's leagues. I worked for the Southern District as Women's Coordinator until 2012 when I came to the LTS.

How and when did you first become acquainted with the LTS?

In November 2011 I received a call from our Bishop telling me that I should attend a Deaconess Course at the LTS. At first, for personal reasons, I was reluctant but was encouraged by my mother and finally accepted the call. The documentation for my travel/study permit ran smoothly and I knew then that the hand of God was upon it. I

completed my Deaconess studies in 2014 and was commissioned by Bishop Weber in November of that year.

Please share some of the joys and challenges of being a Deaconess.

The joy I find in being a deaconess is that I am being strengthened by God's word every day. My reward is that I am permitted to serve and that is what gives me joy. My calling is always service to others because service to our neighbor is service to Christ. My role as deaconess in this community, in which I am currently living in Pretoria, is being fulfilled as I carry out my duties as a teacher at the LTS Preschool.

Tell us about your role in the LTS Preschool – how did it begin? What have you learned from working with children in the last two years? What (if anything) has surprised you about this work?

Towards the end of my deaconess training, Bishop Weber and Karin Niebuhr came up with a plan to include us deaconesses in the teaching of several seminary children who were not in school. As the Preschool grew, we began our training in Early Childhood Education (ECE) under the tutelage and mentoring of Karin. I enrolled in an ECE certificate which I completed in 2015. Not only am I teaching formally but I am also integrating our Christian faith on a daily basis



whilst working with the Preschoolers who come from different countries and different backgrounds. Working with Preschoolers is challenging because the children don't always cooperate or listen to reason. I am learning how important the children's artwork is for their fine motor development and how this is sometimes challenging for me. The more I put into practice my teaching skills, the more my teaching and working with the children will improve. I am learning something new every day and sometimes it can be quite overwhelming to remember and put in to practice everything I have learned.

You have decided to continue with your studies. What prompted this decision?

I have noticed that many parents ask whether we have a Grade R class, and so I have decided to enroll in a 3-year diploma

[Trinah Simakoloyi - cont. from previous page]

which will allow me to teach grade R. Maybe one day, God willing, the LTS Preschool will open a grade R class. I think the studies will improve my teaching and I will get to know how to work with preschoolers of all ages and be able to determine the readiness of a child before entering school. My dream is to be a grade R teacher someday and God willing that is what I will gain from these studies.

What role do the LTS Preschool and your work as a teacher/deaconess play in the Kingdom of God?

The preschool is a Christian preschool where our faith is being integrated in our daily teaching and in so doing we are changing the lives of many, not only our learners but also the parents and their neighbors through our learners. My role as a teacher and deaconess is that I offer spiritual care to my learners and nurture them with

Christian morals and values and bring them together in the one true faith in our Lord Jesus.



LTS Preschool Update

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

It is with this praise in our hearts that we celebrated the dedication of our newest classroom on a recent sunny morning. We were humbled by the presence of the whole Seminary community, visitors from abroad and from our local Primary School and friends of the LTS Preschool. The seminary students led the procession with flags from the whole continent, also reflecting many of the countries from which our preschoolers hail. Dr. Weber reminded us that borders are man-made but that we are all one in Christ and that we keep our "doors open" as we reach out into the community proclaiming Christ and teaching our little ones about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The ribbon was cut, officially opening our new classroom and the children sang beautifully for our guests. Afterwards the students and guests enjoyed seeing the new classroom and everyone was grateful for refreshments in the shade! We are so thankful to be part of the seminary community

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and the wider Arcadia community and we continue to be awed by God's providence and care for His people.



Coming up@LTS

March

- 13 Prof Klän (Oberursel)
- 24 End of 1st Quarter
- 27 Beginning of 2nd Quarter

April

- 7-18 Easter break
- 25 Board Meeting

May

- 29 - June 9 Examinations



LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL
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Training Christ's followers as pastors, teachers, evangelists, missionaries, bishops and deaconesses for faithful service in the Lutheran Church of Africa.

The Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane is a registered Public Benefits Organization. Donations to LTS can be deducted according to Section 18(a) in the South African tax laws.

