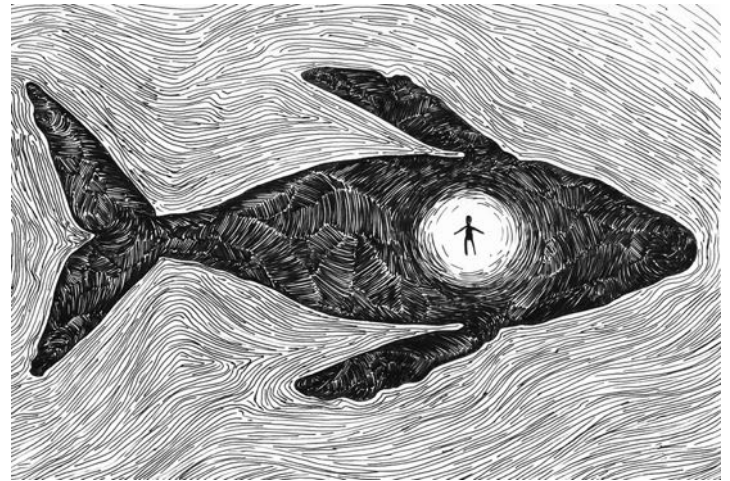
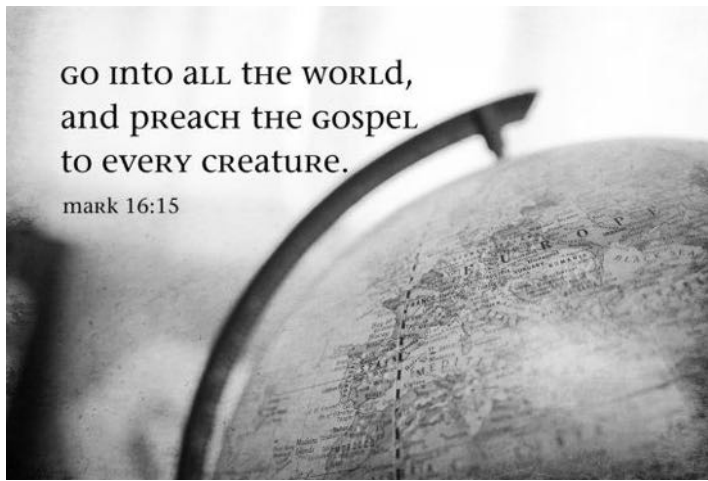


LTS NEWS

March 2019 Page 1



Go and Preach!

by Rector Dr. C. Walter Winterle

The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." But Jonah ran away from the Lord... (Jonah 1:1-3)

A new academic year begins at our seminary. Is it just another beginning of just another new year? What is your goal for this year? The big question facing us at the seminary is: Why are we here?

The season of Epiphany begins with the visit of the wise men from the east, foreigners, gentiles, coming to worship the newborn king. Epiphany continues up to the transfiguration of our Lord. Epiphany reveals Jesus as the Son of God, and the emphasis is always on mission: God sent His Son not only to the Jews, but also to the gentiles, to all peoples.

Jonah was one of the prophets of the Old Testament who was sent to a foreign country. Specifically, he was sent to preach repentance: People should turn from their evil ways and worship the true God. Jonah was sent not just to any city, but to the so-called "great city" (Genesis 10:11,12), to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Nineveh was founded shortly after the flood and played an important role in ancient history. Just as with Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20-21), God became angry with the wicked behavior of the people of Nineveh. But instead of destroying the city as He did with Sodom and Gomorrah, God decided to give it an opportunity to repent. He said to Jonah: "Go

to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come before me."

But instead of obeying God, Jonah took the opposite direction from Nineveh. He tried to flee to Tarshish, probably a city in Spain. He ran away from the Lord. Jonah didn't know the African Proverb that says: "There is nowhere on earth where the wind does not blow." And he forgot Psalm 139: "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ... if I make my bed in the depths, you are there...if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast."

We see God's mercy to the gentiles even in the midst of the storm He sends to overtake Jonah's ship, with the sailors each crying out to his own god. Here Jonah had an opportunity to witness his faith to them: "I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land." And they acknowledged the God of Jonah and believed in the Lord, even to the point that they prayed to the Lord before throwing Jonah into the sea. And after the storm died down, they worshiped the Lord, offering a sacrifice and making vows to the Lord. How many of these gentile sailors were saved by

(continued on page 2)



LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

Academic Year 2019 Begins



On February 5, 2019, the new academic year commenced at the LTS. Rector Winterle held the sermon for the divine service of commencement. 17 students are enrolled this year, hailing from South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Representatives of the LTS Board of Members (Trustees) were present at the opening service to greet the students, staff, and faculty. May the Lord bless the teaching and learning at the LTS in 2019 in service to His kingdom and to the glory of His name.

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this testimony of Jonah? We don't know, but God works in mysterious ways.

We know from the story that Jonah eventually did go to Nineveh, that he preached there, that the people repented, beginning with the king, and that God had mercy on them and did not destroy the city.

“Go to the great city... and proclaim to it the message I give you” (Jonah 3:1). Will the Lord also call our graduates to proclaim His Word in a particular place? Will He send them out after their graduation? The circumstances will not be favorable to their preaching. The world around us behaves like Nineveh, Sodom, and Gomorrah. Some sins of Nineveh are mentioned, and they are familiar to us too – there is nothing new under the sun: violence, evil ways, plotting evil against the Lord, cruelty, prostitution, witchcraft, and commercial exploitation (as we read in Nahum).

We face some of these sins too. Not only outside the walls of the seminary, but even inside. Last year's record bears testimony to that. How will it be this year? God is still merciful, and He still sends His messengers to call for repentance. The time of destruction has not yet



come, and we pray it will never come. – Lord, have mercy!

How do we react to God's call and to God's message? Will we too run away from our responsibilities? Will we listen to God's call to repentance, confessing our faith in Jesus, amending our ways, and trusting in God over all?

God's love has no limit. In His eternal plan, He decided to offer salvation, not just to the Jews, but to all. He sent Jonah to Nineveh, a gentile city, and they repented. He sent someone who called us from darkness to His light and who baptized us. He called us to this seminary to learn His message and to prepare us to be able to share His Word with others. And Jesus was sent to all, without discrimination.

We do well to learn from the Bible, from history, and from our experience. The seminary provides sound teaching based on the Bible. But knowledge is not all. Behavior goes hand in hand with knowledge. We are foolish if we do not learn from our own experiences or from those of others. And God's grace in Christ is plentiful among us to forgive us and to lead us in a godly life.

Jonah learned the lesson. He prayed for forgiveness in the belly of the fish and confessed his faith: “Salvation comes from the Lord” (Jonah 2:9). After this he was ready to do God's will. Later, Jesus confirmed the historicity of Jonah's story when He compared the length of time between His burial and resurrection to the miracle of Jonah surviving after three days in the belly of the fish (Matthew 12:40).

Daily repentance and confessing of faith is the way God shows us to follow as Christians. By our behavior and by our words we witness to each other, to our neighborhood, and to the great city of Pretoria. We witness about who our God is and how merciful He is in Jesus. And sometimes in the future He will send us somewhere to preach repentance and forgiveness through faith in Christ. That is the goal of this Seminary: To prepare candidates for going to the gentiles to preach the message of God.

May God in this new academic year grant us all faithfulness to follow His way. May He give us love as we interact with each other. And may He give us strength to resist the temptations and turmoil of this life.



Rev. Dr. Mark Rabe,
LCMS OIM

The LTS was privileged to receive a visit from the LCMS director for theological education in East Africa. Dr. Rabe is stationed in Addis Ababa and lectures at the main seminary of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) in that city in addition to his duties overseeing theological education among confessional Lutheran churches in Africa on behalf of the LCMS. His visit made it possible for him to participate in the first quarterly LTS Board of Directors' meeting for the year, where he brought greetings from the LCMS and provided a welcome perspective on theological education in
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Study Trip

by Rev. Mbongeni J. Nkambule

LTS Faculty member Rev. Mbongeni John Nkambule is enrolled in the PhD programme of our sister seminary, Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN, USA.

In January of this year, I was given the privilege to travel once again to Fort Wayne in order to complete a number of important requirements for my studies. I arrived there on 12

January in order to attend the annual symposia being held on campus, before turning to my studies. I found it inspiring to take part in the symposia – many professors presented stimulating and thought-provoking theological papers. It was a good opportunity to reconnect with many old friends among the professors and fellow students at the seminary. I also had the privilege of meeting and shaking hands with LCMS President Matthew Harrison.

During my time at the seminary, I was invited to attend a meeting held by the St. Philip Lutheran Mission Society who are very active in supporting the LTS. Here we talked about various plans to assist the LTS and to promote cooperation. Kansas District President Peter Lange, who has been assigned to represent the LCMS at LTS board meetings, also attended the meeting in Fort Wayne, and so he and I were able to meet in person. I was very grateful for the commitment and faithfulness to theological education in Africa

demonstrated by our brothers and sisters in the Christian faith and Lutheran confession.

That same week, the head of the PhD programme, Dr. Klaus-Detlev Schulz, gave me the good news that I had passed my written comprehensive examinations. Dr. Schulz then proceeded to assign a date for my oral comprehensive examinations in the following days as well. I had prepared for my orals before I came, but I had to make sure to study hard in order to obtain a good grade. When the time for my oral examination arrived, I passed that also by the help of God. This leaves me facing the last major requirement for my PhD studies: The dissertation itself. The time has come for me to write a dissertation proposal and to enter the writing phase, which I am planning to complete as soon as possible.

After a very productive time in Fort Wayne, I left the USA on 2 February to get back to the LTS on time for the start of the first term.



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other Lutheran churches in Africa. Dr. Rabe is pictured here presenting gifts (including copies of some of the Lutheran Confessions in Amharic) to the LTS library and students.



Our New Librarian



Introducing Mr. Mintesinot Birru

Greetings in Christ! My name is Mintesinot Birru Hanfato. I was born into a Lutheran Christian family in Ethiopia. My father supervised church literacy programs and also served as

parish coordinator, while my mother was a businesswoman. When I was 6 years old, my mother joined the church clinic staff. My mother would discuss Sunday school lessons about the Bible with me and tell me about her walk with God, how God answered her prayers, the importance of prayer, and the importance of Bible readings.

As I grew up, I began to serve in my home congregation in different ways – in the Sunday School choir, the youth choir, then as youth leader, parish youth leader, and finally as chairman of the congregation council. Then the parish leaders decided to send me to seminary. I see this as a pivotal point in my life. When my mother heard that I was called upon to go to seminary, she told me that her prayers had been answered – that she had been praying for me to attend seminary.

I was sent to Mekane Yesus Seminary in September 1998, and after four years of study, I graduated with a Bachelor of Theology. After graduating, I was assigned as a youth coordinator,

and six months after that as the director of the Department of Gospel and Mission at Synod office. I also served as a Bible translator in my mother language.

In 2006, I went to the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, where I graduated in 2009 with a Master of Divinity degree. Next, I served at national level as a project manager of Bible translation, literacy, and Scripture use projects. In 2013, I started my doctoral program in South Africa, but have not yet been able to complete it due to lack of funds. I trust the Lord God to provide funds to finish my PhD and hope to serve Him and His people in His kingdom in a professional capacity. Throughout all those years I served also in congregations - preaching and training, instructing in the Bible Schools, Bible colleges, and coordinating distance education. Now I am serving as librarian and instructor here at the LTS. I am committed to the Lutheran teaching of the Gospel as one who was catechized and served in it all my life. I love and serve Jesus Christ, who will come and who reigns forever.



Washer needed!

The LTS could really use some help: The big industrial washing machine used on campus for doing laundry has broken down and needs to be replaced. Do you perhaps have a washing machine at home you could donate? Or would you be willing to help sponsor a new machine for the LTS?

LTS Guest Room Renovated

The South-East Regional Cell Group of St. Paul's Lutheran Church (FELSISA) solicited donations and joined hands with LTS students to refurbish the LTS Guest Rooms

Before...



On the right: First guest/willing guinea pig Rev. Eric Skovgaard (LCMS) approves of the new guest rooms and gives them a grade of "cum laude"!

Pictured below: Members of the southeastern cell group of St. Paul's met for a work day at the LTS with several LTS students



Work on Guest Rooms

at the LTS

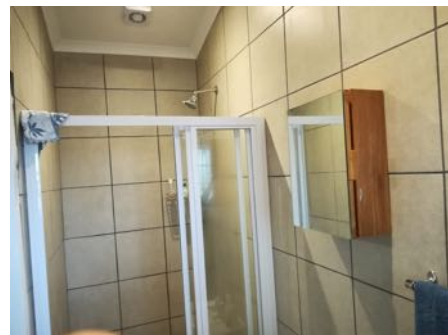
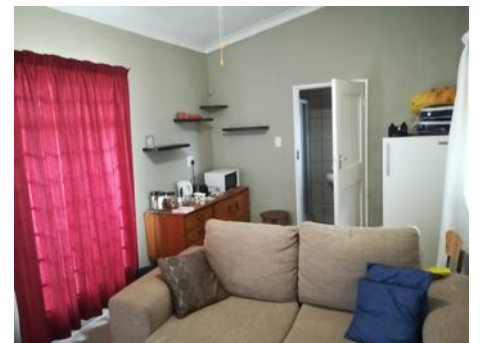
After sponsors from St. Paul's congregation committed to cover the costs to have the rooms stripped and reconfigured, work commenced to renovate the guest rooms. In the past, there had been a single guest room with an adjoining bathroom. The layout was extended, so that there are now two guest bedrooms leading into a joint living room/work space and an adjoining bathroom. The bathroom itself was retiled and new fixtures were installed.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church (FELSISA) is located just up the road from the LTS. This congregation is organized regionally into different cell groups. The group representing the southeastern region of the city of Pretoria decided to adopt the project of renovating the LTS guest rooms. This project was intended to augment the professional services of Mr. Stephan Albers of Kliprich Construction, who is responsible for the entire refurbishment.

Under the leadership of Mr. Günther Heyman, the cell group met on Saturday, 16. February on the LTS premises. Together with volunteers from the LTS student body, the day was spent doing hard work. Mr. Hugo Meyer of the LTS Board of Directors graciously donated meat for a very welcome braai over the lunch hour. The aim of the work day was to clear out adjoining trees, address structural challenges, and apply two coats of paint to the interior.

Since then, members of the group have donated additional labour to build closets and finish the space. Take a look!

After...



The First Set of Intensives Has Begun

Dr. John Pless and Rev. Eric Skovgaard teach at LTS

The first set of intensive classes at LTS in 2019 runs from 25 February to 8 March. Dr. Pless is teaching on Baptism and the Lord's Supper, while Rev. Skovgaard is instructing the students in the Pastoral Epistles. A number of pastors in the field have elected to participate in the intensives. We bid both instructors and guests a hearty welcome to the LTS! We hope to publish reports of the intensives by the instructors in the next newsletter. Meanwhile, here are some pictures taken around the campus during the weeks of intensives:



Brothers in Christ from the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) visiting the campus. From left to right: Rev Dr. John T. Pless (CTFSW), Rev. Dr. Mark Rabe (OIM), and Rev. Eric Skovgaard (Elm Grove Lutheran Church, WI)



Above right: Rev. Nkambule with visitors

Right: Rev. Shuttleworth Ntsie with food donations for the LTS



Top left: Tight quarters - solid theology

Above: ELCSA pastors with confessional documents in SeTswana

Immediate right: Relaxing during a coffee break between classes





Dr. John G. Nordling



Dr. Sibongiseni Elliot Sithole

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ALBERT PAYVAH

By Michael Mutonga

Our beloved brother and fellow student Albert Payvah came from the Lutheran Church in Liberia and was a dear co-worker in Christ. Brother Albert was a very strong man, and at the same time gentle and intelligent, a man who worked hard at his studies. He wanted to prepare for work in the church as a servant of God. This is evident from the fact that he came the whole way from Liberia in West Africa to study theology at the LTS in South Africa.

Albert was a frank and straightforward person; he called “wrong” wrong, and “right” right. He did this in Christian love to bring about peace and unity and put an end to confusion. His relationship with the Lord took priority in his life, and he took it very seriously. I remember how he said to me: “Michael, I will not make it.” So I questioned him about his faith. He answered, “Michael, I still believe in Christ Jesus.” That gave me joy – even as he died, he had faith in Jesus Christ the Saviour. We learnt a lot from him.

We really miss him! Some of us miss watching soccer with him; we all miss his presence at our meals together. But we know that there is a time for all things, as Ecclesiastes 3:1ff says: “*There is a time for everything... a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot... a time to mourn and a time to dance.*” God made Albert to be born, and now He came and took him. God planted him in the field, and now He uprooted him. Today we mourn; tomorrow we will dance in heaven. Today I am very proud to be Albert’s friend, brother, and colleague. I ask that we remember him diligently and thank the Almighty God for Albert’s faith and salvation and wonderful service in the church.



In Memoriam

+Albert Payvah+

“This is what the Lord says: Seek me and live.” Amos 5:4

The LTS community gathered on Friday, February 12 to mourn the death of fellow student Albert Payvah and to give thanks to the Holy Lord for His gift of redemption and salvation to Albert in Holy Baptism before calling him out of this life to the life eternal.

Albert was born on 16 January 1979 in Voinjama, Lofa County in Liberia, to parents Tarnuekollie and Kaibeh Payvah. Albert was baptized on the 22 November 1992 into the death and life of Christ Jesus his Savior in Christ Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church. He was married to Anna, and they were blessed with two sons, Albert jr. and Dennis.

Albert came to South Africa to study at the LTS in February 2016. Albert suffered from several illnesses, among them diabetes and hepatitis. Towards the end of 2018, he fell more and more sick. He was admitted to hospital in critical condition at the end of November 2018. His condition improved gradually, allowing him to travel home to Liberia on 5 December. Unfortunately, Albert’s condition worsened again, and he was readmitted to hospital in Monrovia. He underwent treatment there, but to no avail. The Lord God called Albert Payvah out of this vale of tears on 21 December 2018.



Seminarian
Michael Mutonga

Coming up@LTS

March

- ☐ 21 Human Rights Day

April

- ☐ 8-17 Intensive Lectures 2
- ☐ 18-22 Easter recess
- ☐ 24 Lectures recommence

May

- ☐ 1 Workers' Day
- ☐ 20-24 FELSISA Pastors' Convention
- ☐ 30 Ascension of our Lord
- ☐ 31 Lectures end for Semester 1

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. Donations are also possible via check or Paypal. Please see our website for details (www.lts.ac.za).

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