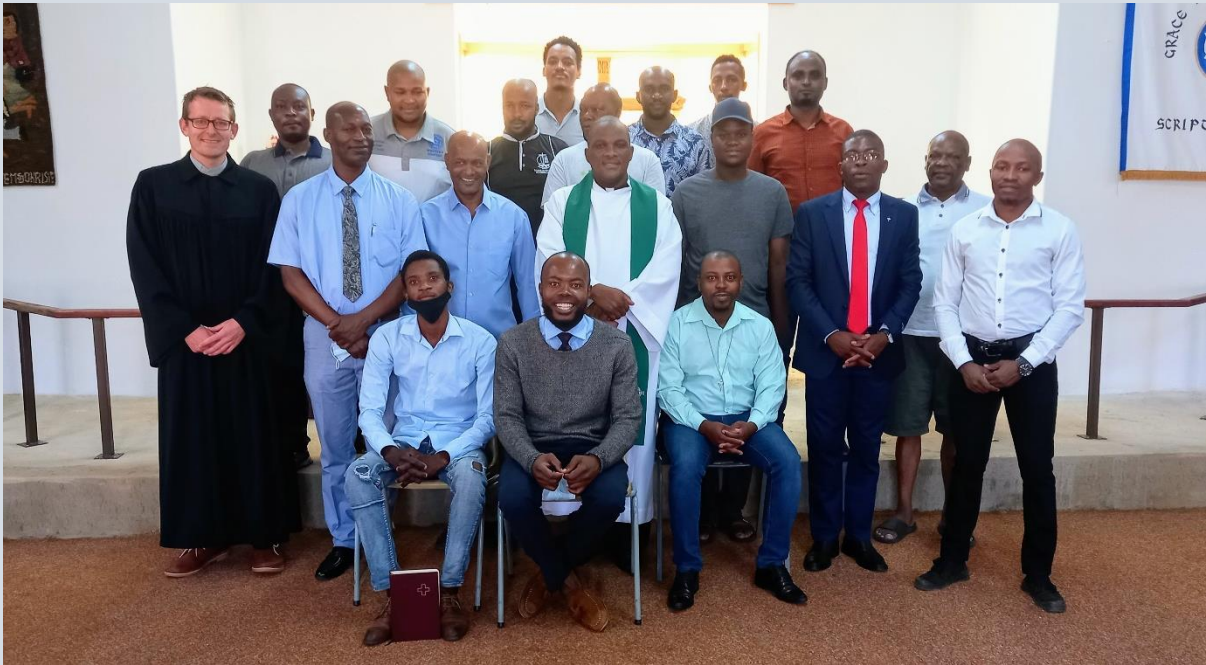




# LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL **SEMINARY** IN TSHWANE

## NOVEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends, read more on the closing of the 2021 academic year and other highlights.



Usually, a group photo of LTS students and staff is taken at the start of the academic year. This year – due to Covid-19 – the group photo (without masks) was taken on the last day of the academic year, November 18, 2021! We thank our heavenly Father that even with all the Covid challenges, we were able to successfully complete the academic year. Praise be to God!

Rev. 1:4-7 **Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood 6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.**

Rector's message: At our academic closing and prize-giving ceremony, we sang the well-known Christmas hymn: *Joy to the world, the Lord is come. Let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare him room. And heaven and angels sing.* But did you know that if you google to find more information on this beloved Christmas hymn, many claim that it was actually not written for Christmas, but its main concern is the second coming of Jesus – his return from heaven? Not his first coming at Christmas, but his second coming at the end of time might be described in the words of the hymn.

And if we have a look at the calendar of the church, we will see that we are now at the end of the church year, this time of the year where we remember and reflect on the second coming of Jesus.

After the end of the church year, Advent and Christmas follow. We normally look forward to Christmas with joy. We rejoice in the birth of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. With the shepherds we rejoice, with the angels we sing, at the birth of Jesus. Maybe we also enjoy spending precious time with family.

But when we look at the time of the return of Jesus, his second coming, are we also looking forward towards this event with joy? When we are thinking of the events associated with Jesus' second coming, the trials and temptations, the natural disasters, the wars, the separation of believers and unbelievers, and the final judgment, do we then still feel like singing: *Joy to the world, the Lord is come?*



Or when we think of Christ's return from heaven and the final judgement, do we get a similar feeling like the one we get before writing exams, or visiting the dentist? If you think about Jesus coming back to judge the living and the dead, does it make you nervous, and fill you with dread rather than joy?

Well, in an exam you must repeat and recall what you have learned. Whether you pass or not is largely up to you and how hard you have studied. The dentist will argue that the condition of your teeth is directly connected to the way you treat them. But when it comes to the return of Jesus, your efforts will not save you. If you think that you can stand before the judgement throne of God, trusting only in yourself and your good deeds, you should be afraid.



For Revelation 1 clearly states that Jesus will come again. There will be no escaping this day where Jesus is coming with the clouds. The same information is given us in the Synoptic Gospels and by the apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians. And when Jesus returns with the clouds, **every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of him.** Sounds scary, even worse than the end of year exam or the dentist visit, doesn't it?

But now, because of Jesus, we can look at his return not with fear, but with confidence and great hope. The author of the book of Revelations gives a number of reasons we can have hope and joy on this great day of Jesus' return:

He writes in Rev 1:

- that Jesus loves us
- that Jesus has freed us from our sins by his blood
- that Jesus made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father
- and that Jesus is the firstborn of the dead. Because he has risen, we too will rise towards life eternal.

All these reasons tell us what Jesus has done for us. How he saves us. Us, who are sinners. Like we read in verse 3 of the hymn *Joy to the World: His blessings flow Far as the curse is known.* For us under the curse of sin, our only hope in life and in death is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. At the final Judgement, God will pardon our sins because of him. As we read in 1 John: **We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous... His blood cleanses us from all our sin.**

At the final Judgement, just as on every day of our lives, we trust in him who in Revelations 1 is called the one **who is, who was, and who is to come.** Jesus **is** since the beginning. He is the word that was with God at the beginning. Jesus **is**, and he **was**. He **was** here on earth. He was born of the virgin Mary. He came to save humankind through his death on the cross. And he **is to come.** The resurrected and risen Jesus will come again. The fact that Jesus will come again is just as certain as the reality that Jesus is and was.

And when he comes again, we will be taken into his glorious presence forever. Therefore, also at his second coming we can sing: *Joy to the world, the Lord is come.*

In Christ, Rector Heinz Hiestermann

## 2021 HIGHLIGHTS:

Have a look at some of the highlights of 2021:

- On February 1, 2021, the new academic year started. To comply with accreditation requirements, a new three-year curriculum was introduced. Current students are the first ones to follow the new curriculum.
- Of the 18 students, 17 have successfully completed the academic year. One student from Malawi was unable to return to South Africa after the winter break. He continued his studies online and will write his exam in January next year.
- Classes were offered online for the first time at LTS due to Covid-19 restrictions. We are grateful that online classes only lasted for a few weeks and students were able to return to campus.
- Only one student contracted Covid-19 when he was at home during the time of online classes. No one on campus tested positive for Covid-19.
- Brass band lessons started for students and staff, led by Dr. Manfred Johannes (*photo right*). These were enjoyed by all and will, God willing, continue in 2022.



- Even though our international lecturers were unable to travel to LTS for the intensive courses, we are grateful that Dr. Elliot Sithole (LCSA), Rev. Christoph Weber (MLC), and Rev. Thomas Beneke (FELSISA) stepped

in and taught intensives (*photo right*). Thanks to Rev. Beneke, LTS now has a chicken coop with 15 chickens!

- For 2022, the usual four intensives have been scheduled. Prof. John Pless, Prof. John Nordling, Rev. Eric Skovgaard, Dr. Michael Roth (all LCMS) as well as Prof. Werner Klän and Prof. Christian Neddens (SELK) have agreed to teach intensives next year. Please pray that these lecturers will be able to travel and teach our students!
- A number of renovations have been done on the campus. Roofs have been painted and waterproofed. The ELC congregation has also renovated the chapel bathrooms and the altar area of the chapel. Thank you! We are planning to do more renovations next year.
- Rev. Kurt Schnackenberg (FELSISA) has joined LTS as parttime lecturer. He already is a great asset to our seminary!
- We thank all our sponsors and supporters, who each in their own way contributed to the functioning and existence of the seminary. Thanks to your generosity, we successfully completed another year of providing quality Lutheran education to multipliers of the Christian faith in Africa!





## War, Covid, and Studies at LTS

Imagine you had to travel through a war-torn country, leave behind your family for seven years, travel to a country you've never been to, where people speak a language you don't know and understand, to study for a job you know pays no salary. This is the reality of two of the LTS students from the DRC.

After receiving an invitation to study at LTS, these two students travelled from the DRC to South Africa and started their studies in 2017. In the DRC they speak Swahili and French. They had basically no knowledge of the English language, and had to take English classes in the afternoons. In 2017 and 2018 they learned English and took some preparatory theological classes.

Before returning to LTS in 2019, they had to renew their visas. They travelled to Bujumbura (Rwanda) for this purpose, where the closest South Africa embassy is. They were however not allowed to apply in Rwanda. They had to apply in the DRC, which meant a 10–14-day journey by bus to Lubumbashi. But as there was a general election at the end of December 2018 and results were contested, the political situation was too unstable to risk undertaking such a journey. A lack of finances for this long journey also hampered their plans. As a result, they stayed home in 2019, helping in some local congregations.

In 2020, they made another effort to travel to Lubumbashi. This time they reached the city, but due to Covid, they again failed to renew their visas. And because of a lack of finances, they could not travel back home. They had to rely on the support of friends to survive this year. They again helped in various congregations. While they were in Lubumbashi, the one of the students was robbed of his clothing and shoes.



The students had studied at LTS for two years, then they were unable to return for another two years. When they were finally able to return in February 2021, they had to start their studies from scratch. Because of the efforts of LTS to attain accreditation, the curriculum was reworked, and shortened from five to three years. Even though they had studied for two years already, these two DRC students had to start as first-year students again. They should finish their studies at the end of 2023.

When they return to the DRC after finishing their studies, they want to work as pastors in the Lutheran Church. But the church has no money to pay its pastors. They will need to find another job, preferably as teachers, to support themselves and their families financially. The church also provides no accommodation for its pastors, nor is it able to pay for their transport. Apart from possibly teaching, the students are also planning to grow vegetables and maize (corn) so that they have food to eat.

One of the students is married with five children. Now he has six. One of his young daughters was asked by a stranger to quickly hold her baby while she was going to the toilet. The mother never returned. Government was informed, but nothing has been done. And although not knowing where to get money for nappies or formula, the family decided to raise the baby. It was, at the time, two months old.

Finally, another student from the DRC, who has already finished his studies at LTS once said in class: "While I was still living in the DRC, I thought the Lord Jesus would return very soon. The Bible says in Matthew 24 that before the return of Jesus, *nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*. With the constant war in the DRC, we believed that Jesus would return any moment. War used to part of our lives." May we who live in peace praise the Lord!

We also thank the Lord that he has provided for these DRC students up to now, and we pray that he will continue to bless their commitment, their studies, and their future work in His church.

## **INTRODUCING THE LTS STUDENTS**

*In each of our four newsletters of 2021, we are introducing some of the LTS students to you. Meet two more students.*

My name is **Mongezi Mabaso**. I was born and bred in Piet Retief. I am a child of God in the Lutheran church under the supervision of Rev V. Vilakazi (LCSA).



At the moment I am studying in the seminary and by the grace of God, I will be a good pastor for the church of God. In the tough days we live in, I wish to encourage everyone with the words of the prophet Isaiah 41 verse 10 "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." This pandemic shall pass too. Thank you

---

My name is **Demeke Digebo Wakocho**. I come from Ethiopia. I am 31 years old. I am baptized and confirmed in Ethiopian Mekene Yesus Lutheran church. I started my primary and high school in village called Orede Bobicho. Then I moved to South Africa for many reasons to study theology and to gain better knowledge

about the word of God and to tell the world who is God and what he has done for us.

Also, I want to gain a better understanding of who God is and his role in our lives. Oh, what a joy it's to say that sharing Christ around the world, I'm called to be a servant of his word, and to announce the grace of God unto all, this is my vocation and zeal. Also, it's my duty to in future teach others the word of God and preach the good news of Gospel around the world as to bring all into the one who died on the cross for our sins.



After being trained in Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane, my vision for the future is to serve as pastor, to preach the Gospel to the world and to live happy life, to be humble, caring, loving, friendly and approachable for the congregation.

# LTS ALUMNI

*We have introduced a new feature: A look at the current lives and vocations of LTS graduates.*

*We're continuing with a look at the lives of LTS alumni with a report from the **LCSA deputy-bishop Rev. Mandla Thwala**.*

Most people assume that being a pastor is very easy. It doesn't need well-educated people as long as one is able to read a bible or able to speak loud, that's enough. These assumptions go further, even to say being a Pastor is not for young men but old men who have seen a lot in this world. Others say that studying word of God is unnecessary; you just need to have a direct calling from God. Are these assumptions true or valid? Actually, why do people think this way?



As a young man I was tempted to believe these assumptions because I used to see people preaching without even hesitating, making a loud noise, and I thought they are on point always.

When I was asked one day to help our lay preacher by conducting a service, I found it very difficult. When my local Pastor took me through order of service and how to go through a pericope, I realised that indeed these assumptions are not true but actually are misleading. When I approached my Pastor regarding going to the Seminary, I realised that God doesn't need only old men in his ministry but also young men. But those men must be well equipped, and well prepared for the mission of preaching good news.

When people heard that I was going to the Seminary to study theology, I was called names, even told that that I am running away from my responsibilities as an older son. I was asked how can God's word be studied? My calling was questioned. However, I was eager and passionate to fulfil my dream and my calling to become a Pastor.



# LTS ALUMNI

Although it was not easy when I want to study theology, I am grateful and humbled by the support I



got from my mother.

I arrived at Nhlanhleni Seminary on the 7th of February 2000. My expectation was that I will be taught about the Bible only as it is, but I was shocked when I was told about learning the two major languages of the Bi-

ble. And I was taught how to prepare a sermon and how to conduct myself as a future Pastor.

The first quarter at the Seminary was an eye opener, as I learned a lot and I realized that those assumptions I had indeed were misleading. My life changed. I never looked back as I was enjoying time at the Seminary and the knowledge I was getting. When I visited home and given an opportunity to preach, I was applying knowledge I got from the Seminary. My approach was no longer the same as before I went to the seminary.

After ordination, I enjoyed my work as a Pastor applying all what I learned from the Seminary. Because of the studies I was enjoying my work very much as a Pastor. I would highly recommend a pastor to study theology because that helps to have self-confidence and not be intimidated by any situation. A pastor without education is very difficult to work with. Even though its takes time to study theology it's worth it.

I would like to encourage everyone who wants to be a better pastor to please consider doing it in a professional way by going to the Seminary and studying. You will not regret it; actually, you will be more appreciative as you will be learning the tools necessary for your entire life.

*If you are an LTS alumni and want us to report on your work in the LTS newsletter, please write an email to [heinzah@live.de](mailto:heinzah@live.de)*

## OTHER LTS NEWS

- Farewell of LCSA emeritus bishop David Tswaedi

On Sunday, October 31, LTS lecturers Birru, Nkambule, and Hiestermann, along with five students attended the farewell ceremony of LCSA bishop emeritus Dr. David Tswaedi in Soweto. Rev. Nkambule spoke a word of thanksgiving on behalf of the LTS. Dr. Tswaedi is one of the well-known local figures who have taught at our seminary, from 2001-2013. We all at LTS wish him many blessings for his retirement.



*Left: Bishop emeritus David Tswaedi.*

*Right: LTS lecturer R Rev. John Nkambule speaking a greeting at the farewell ceremony of bishop Tswaedi in Mofolo North, Soweto.*



- Visitors from the USA

On November 2, after a long break, we were happy to welcome international visitors at LTS again. From the USA, we welcomed LCMS Michigan District President David Maier, Pastors Micah Greiner and Bill Wanglin, Rev. Scott Rische and wife Lori ([PLI](#)), and Mr. Gary Grom ([COFA](#)). Also attending our meeting was CLCSA acting bishop Manqoba Zungu, Mr. Musi Khumalo, Bishop Dr. Dieter Reinstorf (FELSISA), Bishop Modise Maragelo (LCSA), and MLC director Rev. Christoph Weber (via Zoom).

Rector Hiestermann informed our visitors about the work of LTS, whereafter Rev. Rische introduced PLI to all attendees. Thereafter, a discussion around the needs, challenges, and possibilities of LTS followed. It was wonderful to welcome these visitors!





## Closing of the Academic Year and Prize-Giving Ceremony



On November 18, LTS closed the 2021 academic year with Matins and prize-giving. Rector Hiester-mann preached on Rev. 1:4-8, while Rev. Nkambule led the liturgy.

LTS registrar Rev. Nkambule (*left*) also led the prize-giving ceremony. Students received for each subject prizes for best grade, most improved student, and a “good fellow” award.



Student chairman Given Masemola (*left*) received the prize for best grade in the subject Confessions I. *Middle*: LTS lecturer Mintesinot Birru Hanfato.



Student Derese Yohannes received the award for best grade in:

- Christian Worship
- Christian Education
- Academic Skills
- Computer Literacy
- Church History I
- OT Survey
- Greek
- Greek readings



Student Zwedu Ultro (left) received the award for best grade in NT Survey and Greek.

Students Dipolelo Moatshe (middle photo) and Julias Khumalo (bottom photo) achieved the best grade in Hermeneutics. Our secretary Mrs. Rosemarie Rynners was assisting in handing over the certificates.



## Coming up @LTS

- ◆ 8 February 2022: Opening of academic year
- ◆ 28 Feb-11 March Intensive 1: Dr. J. Pless / Rev. E. Skovgaard
- ◆ 8 April: End of 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter
- ◆ 30 May-10 June Intensive 2: Dr. J. Pless / Dr. J. Nordling

**Mission: "The LTS is a mission agency seeking to graduate multipliers for the Lutheran Church in Africa."**

**Vision: "To provide quality confessional Lutheran formation."**

### **HOW TO SUPPORT THE LTS:**

**IF YOU LIVE IN EUROPE:** Send it via Lutherische Kirchenmission (Bleckmarer Mission) e.V.: IBAN: DE09 2579 1635 0100 4239 00, BIC: GENODEF1HMN; (Spendenzweck „LTS“)

**IF YOU LIVE IN NORTH AMERICA:** Send your donation via St. Philip Lutheran Mission Society - SPLMS.

- Saint Philip Lutheran Mission Society

c/o Rev. Anthony Oliphant, Redeemer Lutheran Church  
123 E. St. Charles Rd., Elmhurst, IL 60126

- PayPal via [www.splms.org](http://www.splms.org)
- Thrivent Choice: SPLMS can be supported through Thrivent Choice dollars. You can direct Thrivent Choice dollars through [www.thrivent.com](http://www.thrivent.com) or by calling 1-800-THRIVENT.
- Amazon Smile: SPLMS can be supported through Amazon Smile, where a small percentage of every purchase goes to designated charities. Go to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and search for 'Saint Philip Lutheran Mission Society'

**IF YOU LIVE IN SOUTH 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](http://www.lts.ac.za)).

**Account Holder: "Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane NPC"**

**Bank: ABSA, current account no. 860510030 Branch Code: 632005 Swift Code: ABSA ZA JJ**

Bank Address: ABSA Enterprise Business, Campus Building, 1102 Burnett Street, Hatfield, 0083 South Africa

LTS: 790 Arcadia Street, Arcadia, 0083 | P. O. Box 12547, Hatfield, 0028 | South Africa

T: +27 (0)12 344 2302 | E: [LTSinTshwane@gmail.com](mailto:LTSinTshwane@gmail.com) | [www.lts.ac.za](http://www.lts.ac.za)