



LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL **SEMINARY** IN TSHWANE

NEWSLETTER 1, 2022

Dear Friends, read more on the start of the 2022 academic year, the new students, the USA trip of the rector, and other highlights.



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Our first group photo of 2022, taken during the intensive courses of Profs. John Nordling and John Pless.



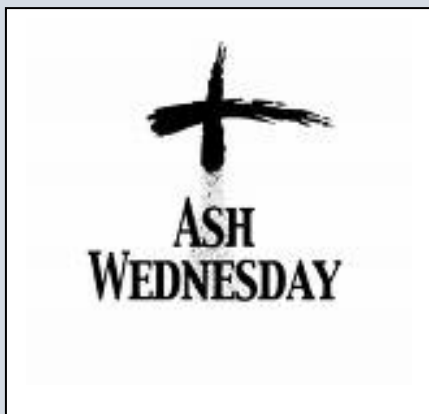
This year, the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane has six new first-year students, pictured left. 18 students are in their second year of studies, bringing the total student body to 24 students.

Of the 24 students, 16 are South African, 4 from Ethiopia, 3 from the DRC (Congo), and one from Malawi.

The new academic year started on February 8th.

May God will bless our work of training multipliers of the Christian faith!

Rector's message:



During my recent trip to the USA, I attended an ordination service one Sunday afternoon. During Holy Communion, the newly ordained pastor blessed the children at the communion rail, saying, "The Lord bless you and keep you in the grace of your baptism".

During our Ash Wednesday chapel service on campus, I was reminded of these words. In Lent, we very much focus on the cross of Jesus, His suffering and death. The season of Lent is kept as a time of special devotion, of self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart. And as part of the Ash Wednesday liturgy, we acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall re-

turn. Ash Wednesday and the whole Lenten season show us our sin and its consequences. As we read in Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death".

But Romans 6:23 continues, "the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord". This gift of eternal life was given to us by God in baptism, where we were marked with a cross. The sign of the cross was made upon our forehead and heart.

While Ash Wednesday teaches us that sin and death leaves its mark on everything, our baptism is the promise that we have been connected to the death and resurrection of Jesus. He died for our sins also. He has come to bring the gift of eternal life to us also.

Throughout these forty days of Lent, we will see how the Lord saved us, taking away the sins of the world by dying on that cross that rightfully belongs to us. He died the death we deserve. It is there on the cross that He accomplished His mightiest work. All for our salvation.

So, this Lent, these days after Ash Wednesday, do not forget the cross which you wear upon your forehead and heart. The sign of the cross you put on when you were conquered and claimed in baptism. Remember that Jesus died for your sins also. Therefore, repent, and receive His forgiveness.

Do not forget that you were marked with the sign of the cross at your baptism. This cross is our hope in life and in death. As we sing in the last verse of the hymn "Abide with me" (LSB 878:6):

Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes ;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies ;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee ;
In life, in death, O LORD, abide with me. Amen.

A blessed Lent to you, dear Christian. **"The Lord bless you and keep you in the grace of your baptism"**.

In Christ,

Rector Heinz Hiestermann

LTS RECTOR VISITS USA

From February 14-25, Rector Hiestermann visited the USA for the first time. Here's a short report:

In 2020, LTS applied for accreditation with the South African Department of Higher Education to offer a three-year diploma in theology.

The accreditation process brings some challenges with it: In the past, LTS has had two groups of students: Junior and Senior Students. With the new three-year diploma, a third group of students needs to be accommodated. God willing, from 2023, LTS will have first-, second-, and third-year students.

To be able to teach and host three cohorts of students, LTS will need:

- *And additional classroom. We currently have two classrooms, a third one will be needed.*
- *At least one more fulltime lecturer.*
- *More office space for the academic staff.*
- *More student accommodation.*
- *Possibly additional staff accommodation.*

To discuss possible ways of overcoming these challenges, I visited the USA. My trip consisted of three legs: Phoenix, Fort Wayne, and St. Louis.

In Phoenix, I visited a meeting of COFA ([Christian Outreach for Africa](#)). COFA, with its members from the LCMS Michigan District, has been supporting the work of the Confessional Lutheran Church of South Africa for many years. COFA members had visited LTS in November 2021, as reported in the previous newsletter. At the COFA meeting in Phoenix, I explained the above-mentioned needs to COFA members, and COFA South Africa member David Hannay introduced possible ideas for the redevelopment of the LTS campus.

After the meeting, I attended the "Best Practices Ministry" Conference ([BPM](#)) for two days, where Pastor Micah Greiner and Michigan District President David Maier made lots of effort to introduce me to many people. I attended some of the sessions at the conference which were very informative. *Below is a picture of a session held at BPM.*



After my visit to Phoenix, I travelled to Fort Wayne, where Prof. John Pless took great care of me. He gave me a tour of the campus of the [Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne](#) (CTSFW) and introduced me to some faculty members. I also met for the first time, in person, former LTS student Gemah Ballah from Liberia.

Prof. Dr. Detlev Schulz, who is the Ph.D. supervisor of LTS lecturer Rev. John Nkambule invited me and Prof. Pless for dinner one night.

From left to right: Drs. Pless, Hiestermann, and Schulz



In Fort Wayne, I also met up with [Saint Philip Lutheran Mission Society](#) (SPLMS) board members, LCMS Pastors Christopher Maronde and Samuel Wirgau. It was good to finally meet some members of SPLMS in person. I was humbled to see how much effort the SPLMS makes in supporting LTS, simply for the Gospels' sake. I am grateful for these faithful supporters of the seminary. May God bless the wonderful work they are doing. I also met with Prof. Roethemeyer, Rev. Richard Lammert and Rev. Roger Peters, all from the CTSFW Kroemer Library to discuss the Chemnitz Library Initiative.



*Rector Hiester-
mann, Rev.
Maronde and
Rev. Wirgau of
SPLMS*

In St. Louis, Provost Dr. Douglas Rutt was my gracious host. He had organized meetings with many faculty members, including [Concordia Seminary St. Louis](#) (CSL) President Thomas Egger, lecturers William Schumacher and Joel Elowsky. I was invited to a faculty lunch, where I was given the opportunity to introduce LTS to the CSL faculty. I attended the classes of Dr. Mart Thompson and Dr. Jeff Gibbs, from which I learned a lot.

Dr. Rutt gave me a tour of the campus, including climbing up the Luther tower. He and his wife Deborah also invited me for dinner one evening.



At the Luther Statue, CSL campus

On Friday, February 26, a meeting with LCMS President Harrison, OIM Director Rev. Dan McMiller, Director of Church Relations Rev. Jonathan Shaw, and Chief Mission Officer Rev. Kevin Robson, had been planned. Due to bad weather, President Harrison was unable to attend, and the meeting was postponed. We will now have a Zoom meeting on March 16. I did however manage to have a short meeting with Rev. Dan McMiller and Rev. Kevin Robson.

It was great to see how the LCMS seminaries are run, structured, and organized. I have learned my things I can hopefully also apply at our seminary.

I thank everyone who made this trip possible. The hospitality that was shown to me was amazing. It was wonderful to meet so many people, have the opportunity to visit the seminaries and learn from them. Thank you to all!

CURRENT LTS HAPPENING:

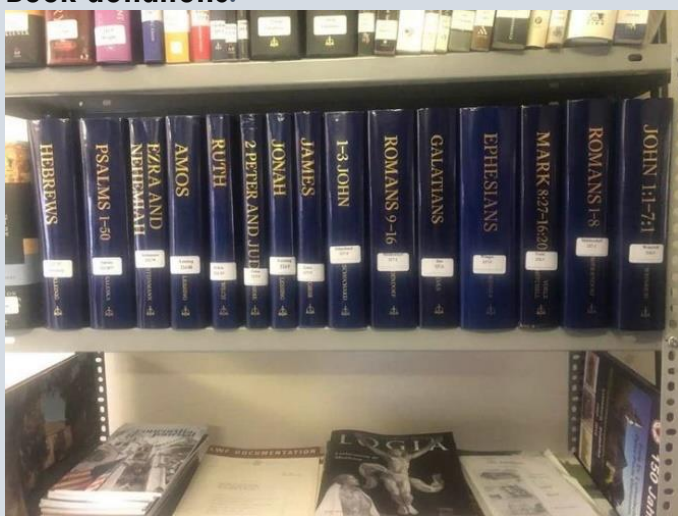
- **Intensive Courses:** CTSFW lecturers John Nordling and John Pless are currently teaching an intensive course at LTS. Nordling is teaching on Galatians, Pless on Catechesis. It is the first time in two years that international lecturers could travel to South Africa. More details to follow in next newsletter. *Picture: Rev. Birru, Drs. Nordling, Hiestermann, and Pless*



- **Ordination of Rev. Mintesinot Birru Hanfato:** On February 20, LTS lecturer Mintesinot Birru was ordained into the holy ministry. LTS member churches were all involved on this joyous day: FELSISA's Bishop Dieter Reinstorf, LCSA's Bishop Modise Maragelo, and MLC's Rev. Christoph Weber. Praise, glory and worship to be to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



- **Book donations:**

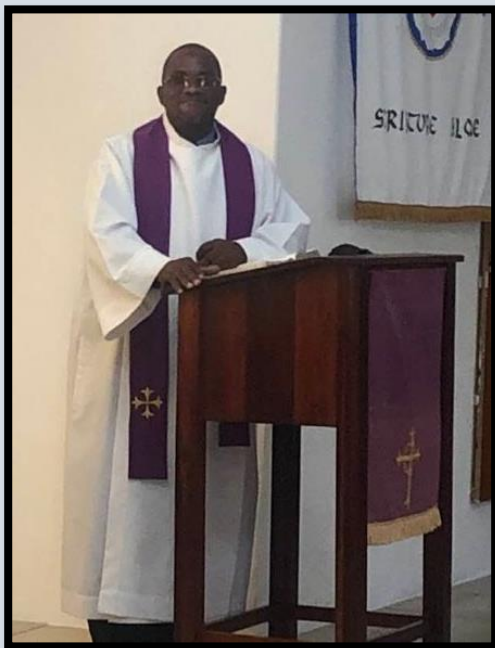


We would like to thank our generous donors for sponsoring books for the LTS library, and to Prof. Pless for organizing them. Thank you also to Prof. Pless and Prof. Nordling for bringing books to the seminary from the USA. May the Lord our God bless you richly!

- As always, we thank all our sponsors and supporters, who each in their own way contribute to the functioning and existence of the seminary. Thanks to your generosity. Please pray the needs and challenges, as described in page 3 of this newsletter, can be overcome!
- Here are some more pictures of our seminary campus. Blessings



Top: Students attending the intensive courses. Bottom left: Rev. Nkambule preaching during Matins. Bottom right: LTS Campus Chapel



During the Summer Break, the LTS chapel floor has been renovated. It looks much better now!

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 1st 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
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- PayPal via www.splms.org
- Thrivent Choice: SPLMS can be supported through Thrivent Choice dollars. You can direct Thrivent Choice dollars through www.thrivent.com or by calling 1-800-THRIVENT.
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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).

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

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