



Lutherans IN Africa

FORMING AFRICAN LUTHERANS TO BE TEACHERS OF THE FAITH

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Unified Board Strives to Serve

Greetings, Dear Friend!



In Kenya, people often exclaim, "Mvua ni baraka!" - "Rain is a blessing!" Even more frequently used phrase is, "Wageni ni baraka!" - "Visitors are a blessing!" God showered tenfold blessings to us on both accounts in April. The month was action packed and wet! Numerous friends filled all the guest rooms as visiting professors, volunteers, and African bishops arrived and departed at different times. The academic year 2023-24 ended, and the students returned to their home countries for a break.



Graduation

At the end of the semester, we had the great joy of celebrating two of our certificate program graduates: Adelino Upwoth and Anjelo Ongang. These men had already progressed to the diploma level this spring, but the graduation event was held back until the bishops and other church leaders were present at the LST.

Bishop Ezra Ngirimo of LC Sudan and South Sudan preached in the Divine Service where the graduates



were acknowledged. He talked about the Good Shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep. Also, Adelino and Angelo, by the grace of God, will be shepherding their congregations in the future. May they always listen to the voice of our Good Shepherd to maintain the message of salvation untainted!

Bishop Ezra gave firsthand congratulations to the graduates together with Bishop Richard Amayo of LCMC Kenya (WELS affiliate) and Rev. May.



Another highlight of this letter is The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Board of Lutherans in Africa (and the LST). Rev. Matt Anker, an Australian pastor who serves as the vice chairman of the Board, recounts the meeting and his visit to the LST. With great joy we also received his wife, Laryssa, who took on the long, tiresome flights to make the Anker visit extra special. In the similar fashion, the entire LST community expresses its sincere gratitude for every Board member and other visitors who travelled to either participate in the AGM or aid the LST in other valuable ways.

Through Rev. Matt Anker's Eyes

After an absence of 18 months, it was remarkable to return to the Lutheran School of Theology and see the ongoing transformation and development of the site. But even more amazing was the way in which the pastoral students have grown in confidence and knowledge and matured in faith as they continue their journey toward ordination.

This was the first time my wife had been able to join me and see the LST with her own eyes. The last time

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she was in Kenya was 10 years ago and at that stage the LST was nothing more than a vision which Rev. May shared with us. How good it was for her to be able to see the way the Lord has enabled this vision to become a reality!

Last time I visited, the region was amid a long running drought. Roads were dry and dusty; animals were clearly suffering and gardens struggling. What a remarkable contrast to the welcome we received this time. Torrential rains reminded us that the drought has certainly broken, and the previously dry riverbed adjacent to our room was now flooded. The Ngong Hills bore witness to the Lord's renewing power and set the scene for a very productive week of meetings, conversations, and wonderful fellowship.



The Annual General Meeting of the Board of Lutherans in Africa (and Lutheran School of Theology) involved two days of robust conversation, intense discussion seeking to address challenges, and planning for the future. The management staff presented detailed reports, reminding us that every aspect of the work required to keep the school running is in good hands. As we reviewed each report, we became increasingly aware

of the incredible burden that our Director carries and the remarkable work he has done to develop the school so quickly.



One of the highlights was receiving the report of the accreditation authority, ACTEA, which is vital for the accreditation and registration of the school so that academic awards are recognised and pathways to further studies are secured. While there is still work to be done, we thank God for the work of our former Academic Dean, Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau, for his invaluable contribution in the preparation of the application for accreditation, and for the hard work of our registrar Lucy Koisaba and Director May who were also instrumental in this process. Having received this report the Board made significant decisions which, God willing, will see provisional accreditation secured before the end of 2024.

The majority of Board members are African bishops who know the challenges of serving in this context, as well as the dire need for pastors that their churches continue to experience. Each of the bishops brought not only their unique perspective to the board table, but also wonderful spiritual maturity and pastoral wisdom. It is a joy to serve along side these faithful men of God.

Other significant decisions included a program for constitutional review, succession planning and recruitment, a review of position descriptions and call documents, and the insistence of the board that the Director take a proper vacation – not a fundraising trip! As the school grows, the need for



better governance support is vital. The demands on the Director are currently unrealistic and unsustainable and we are determined to address this as a matter of urgency. We thank God for the selfless service of Pastor James and Tiina, but we must support them better and plan for the future far more intentionally than we have done thus far.

Following the board meeting, Pastor James and I had the opportunity to visit with the Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya, where we received a very warm welcome and enjoyed a fruitful conversation about how LST can continue to serve the ELCK. Archbishop Omolo Ochola gave his blessing for Diocesan bishops in the ELCK to send students to the LST if they choose to do so and went on to recommend that Rev. May visit Neema Lutheran Seminary in Matongo to discuss how we might serve and support one another. We thank God for his wise counsel and openness to work together for the sake of the gospel.

I leave the LST for another year with the gardens overflowing with fresh vegetables, the chicken coop



singing with the song of happy chooks providing daily food, rabbits multiplying to fill the bellies of hard-working students, and the vineyard expanding to provide wine for the holy sacrament. All this is being tended by contented workers who understand they are a vital part of the mission of this place. But I also leave a cohort of students who are more passionate about Lutheran theology when they entered this school and more determined to serve faithfully upon completion of their studies.

Ten years ago, this was a vision trapped in the mind of Pastor James May. Today it is a reality that must be seen to be believed!



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