



# FELSISA Witness

## VELSISA Boodskapper

Newsletter of the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa  
Nuusbrief van die Vrye Evangelies-Lutherse Sinode in Suid-Afrika



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**Coverpage: CLCMS Church in Mzuzu (p. 4)**

**The FELSISA  
has an  
Assistance Fund**

This fund is to be used for the purpose of growing the FELSISA. This includes mission initiatives, loans to congregations for the acquisition and upkeep of church facilities, the training of pastors (students of theology), and further training courses for pastors, as well as car loans.

First National Bank | Swift code: FNBJNB01 | Name: FELSISA | Reference: "Assistance Fund" | Branch Code: 252145 (Hatfield) | Account Number: 51060018955

**FELSISA Witness / VELSISA Boodskapper**  
Commissioned by the Synodical Council of the FELSISA

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## Oordenking

*Pastor Matthias Albers, Panbult*

**“Julle moenie aan hierdie wêreld  
gelykvormig wees nie,  
maar verander word deur die  
vernuwing van julle denke,  
sodat julle goed kan onderskei  
wat die goeie en aanneemlike en  
volmaakte wil van God is.”**

**Romeine 12:2**

Wat onderskei Christene van ander mense? Is hulle beter, ryker, gesonder, meer suksesvol as ander? Leef hulle op 'n hoër vlak, volg “geluk” hulle om elke draai, staan hulle altyd voor in die ry wanneer die goeie dinge uitgedeel word? Nee, hierin verskil hulle nie van die “wêreld” nie; dit beteken ook nie dat hulle konserwatief of liberaal of alternatiewelik dink nie.

Die groot verskil kan eintlik nie gesien word in die eksterne en sigbare vergelyking tussen Christene en nie-Christene nie. Die verskil lê nie by ons nie, nie by ons beoordeling of vergelyking nie, maar die verskil is te vinde by God: hoe Hy mense sien en hoe Hy hulle oordeel.



Iets het vanaf God of vanuit God fundamenteel verander in die lewe van 'n Christen,

naamlik God se oordeel - God se gesindheid en houding - teenoor hom. Hoekom? Omdat Jesus Christus hom verteenwoordig en vir hom instaan in die heilige teenwoordigheid voor God! Waar Christus in 'n mens se lewe intree, verander God se beoordeling oor hom: God kwyt hom van al sy skuld en deur die vergifnis gee Hy hom nuwe lewe. En met hierdie vryspreking van skuld en die toespreking van volle geregtigheid en heiligheid ontvang hy ook toegang tot die familie van God en word hy Sy kind. Wat Christus dus in Johannes 8:23 sê is vir ons as Christene van toepassing: “Julle is nog in die wêreld, maar nie meer van die wêreld nie”! Dit alles het sigbaar en tasbaar vir elke Christen in die doop gebeur en word met elke nagmaalsviering bevestig.

Om hierdie rede spoor die apostel

Paulus alle Christene aan: “Moenie aan hierdie wêreld gelyk word nie, maar word verander deur die vernuwing van julle gemoed, sodat julle kan beproef wat die wil van God is.” Met ander woorde: verander jou gesindheid en houding! Moenie oordeel, dink en doen soos die wêreld doen nie, maar dink, oordeel en handel vanuit God! Paulus sê iets soortgelyks in Filippense: “Wees onder mekaar eensgesind soos dit in ooreenstemming is met die gemeenskap in Christus Jesus. ... Hy

het homself verneder en gehoorsaam geword tot die dood aan die kruis” (Lees Fil 2:1-8).

Liewe mede-Christene! Hierdie gesindheid van die Here Jesus Christus teenoor 'n verlore en skuldbelaaide wêreld, waaraan ons ook behoort het, wil ons vorm en vernuwe sodat ons ook vanaf die kruis leef en dink - oor onself, oor ons naaste, oor ons gemeenskap, oor die wêreld. ▪

## **Church Fellowship declared between the CLCMS and the FELSISA**

*Bishop em. Dr. Dieter Reinstorf, Pretoria*

After official theological consultations in 2022, the FELSISA had voted unanimously to declare church fellowship with the CLCMS (Confessional Lutheran Church – Malawi Synod) at its Synodical Convention in 2023. This declaration was to be confirmed by CLCMS, who held its 1st Synodical Convention from 1-5 August 2024 in Mzuzu, Malawi.

Former Bishop Dr Dieter Reinstorf of the FELSISA was invited as an official guest and observer. It was an honour

to attend the convention of this rather young yet vibrant church. Founded in 2007 it has grown to 4000 members with congregations in all three provinces of Malawi. A lack of travelling means and bad roads made it almost impossible to meet in the past. Pastors get no salary from their congregations. They are “tent makers”, like the apostle Paul, earning an income on the sideline to care for their families. They visit their congregation members by foot or on a bicycle. Having a motorbike is an exception. Yet they are

filled with the Spirit of God eager to share the Gospel of Christ with all. It is humbling to observe.

It had struck me before that in Jesus' well-known sermon in Luke's Gospel, he says: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (6:20). Poor? Did Luke overlook "poor in spirit" as Matthew records this beatitude of Jesus? Being poor is not a desired state in our world. We prefer warm showers and a hot cup of coffee in the morning. Being poor means "I am dependent" like a little child, prone to receive what others give. But indeed, those are the attributes of faith highlighted by Jesus, who wants the little children to come to him as the Kingdom of God belongs to them (cf. Mark 10:39). Children trust and are eager to receive what is provided to them. That is what I learn in Malawi: Young and old Christians trusting God, expressed by their multitude of prayers. No journey commences without a heartfelt prayer for God's protection. And no journey is concluded with a word of praise for the protection received. We can learn so much from the CLCMS.

It was therefore not only a historic moment but a moment of divine grace when the Synodical Convention of the CLCMS also voted unanimously to declare church fellowship with the FELSISA. In the first place, church fellowship expresses itself in pulpit and altar fellowship, a sharing of the proclamation of God's Word and the Lord's Supper. But it also means that we wish to walk together, encouraging each other in spreading the Gospel of Christ and caring for one another.



For some years already the Mission of Lutheran Churches (MLC) of which the FELSISA is a member, has send teachers to Malawi to teach those who wish to become pastors. These men of all ages know that this is not an easy

## *Church Fellowship between the CLCMS and the FELSISA*

journey. The executive chairman, Rev Davis Wowo reminds them frequently that they are called to suffer with Christ, like the apostle Paul. It is in suffering, Paul reminds us, that God works endurance, and endurance produces character and character hope – a hope that is not disappointed (Romans 5:3-5). After completing this basic course in theology, they are installed as evangelists. Some proceed to study at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Pretoria or elsewhere, after which they are ordained as ministers.

FELSISA members are encouraged to keep their brothers and sisters in Mala-

wi in their prayers and to look for opportunities to help this church grow. Presently the FELSISA hopes to print more hymnals for the CLCMS and has committed to guide this church in implementing its Constitution, leading to proper elections, which are to take place at the Diocesan General Assemblies in 2025, followed by the 2nd Synodical Convention in 2026.

Having learned so much on my trip to Malawi, I praise God and pray that the partnership between the CLCMS and the FELSISA will blossom leading to renewed trust in our faithful God. ▪



## **Lutheran Winter Youth Camp**

*Julia Mamabolo, ELC, Pretoria*

After a long drive, the camp (14th-18th June 2024) began with a warm welcome of a delicious bowl of soup courtesy of Elke, Frank, and Pastor Christian. An exciting game of UNO set the tone for the camp as we immediately felt at home. Saturday started with breakfast and devotion by Pastor Thomas, whereby we were taught the 4th article of the Augsburg Confession about justification by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith. This was such a great reminder that we cannot buy nor earn our righteousness as it is a gift given unto us by grace, for Christ's sake, and through faith.

The reminder and assurance of God's gift of forgiveness was only the beginning of exploring the Word of God and God's gifts for us. The big question of "why do we go to church?" was asked. We all brainstormed what makes a good church, highlighting good music, good attires, fellowship, praise and worship, the Word of God, Holy Sacraments among others. We further explored the topic in different groups as we tried to answer the ques-

tion. It was so important to be reminded that we go to church for the Word of God and that all the other things are extras. This is a reminder that for as long as the Word of God exists within the church, that is enough. Questions arose from the group with concern over the struggles and politics that can arise in the church. However, just as God created a place to bless the Israelites, we were assured that God created the church, and he blesses us within the church. God further gave us the commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy. More than anything, God wants us to come to church so that he can give us his Word (communicate with us) and give us the gift of forgiveness.

We further explored the gift of forgiveness and that we cannot know God's forgiveness without seeing ourselves as sinners. We can only know God's forgiveness by acknowledging that we are sinful by nature and that we cannot redeem ourselves. However, God gives us the gift of forgiveness through his son Jesus Christ.

*Lutheran Winter Youth Camp*



He loves us so much that he ordained pastors to deliver the forgiveness of our sins to us through absolution and the Lord's Supper.

On Sunday, we had a beautiful church service and lunch at the Salem congregation Uelzen, whereafter we had the privilege of further exploring stewardship. As a young person, I have to admit that we often define success as the

result of following God's Word, but we were reminded that it does not follow the business model. Our purpose is to be faithful to God's Word and allow his will to be done without expecting ourselves to be successful in this world. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to create faith through the word. This was a great encouragement for us to share and spread the gospel.

More than the great teachings, and the choir sessions, the fellowship with other youth members was so refreshing. The camp provided us with a great platform to build new friendships and nurture existing ones. We bonded over the different discussions, breakouts in songs, singing by the fire, the different types of games, and of course, hiking. Hiking to the fort was quite an experience. Although I am not entirely sure I'd do it again, the views were worth it.

I gained a lot from the camp, which further fuelled my desire to learn more about God's Word, including the fact that the Holy Spirit helps us to grasp

God's Word, know Jesus, and deliver God's gifts to us. I was also reminded that we are granted a new identity in Christ through baptism.

Overall, the camp was amazing! Not only were we thoroughly fed food, but we were also fed the Word of God. I do not only speak for myself when I say, I cannot wait for next year's camp! The world is noisy enough; having a space in which to reside with-in God's Word has been a gift and a privilege. Thank you to Pastor Martin and Pastor Christian for leading the camp, and to everyone who was involved in making it a success. ■

## Youth Day 2024

*Thomas Schnackenberg, Pretoria*

The synodical Youth Day of 2024 took place in Uelzen, Dundee. With the help of the Newcastle and Vryheid congregations, the weekend was planned wonderfully. The youth programme started on Friday the 28th of June at the Dundee High School Hostel. After a song rehearsal with Dr Rainer Johannes, the first party started. The fires were lit and dinner was

served. The local congregation organised a bar and music for some dancing to take place. Like most youth days, it was a time to meet old friends from different areas again and catch up.

On Saturday the 29th, the programme started at 06:15 with breakfast. At 07:00 the youth left the hostel to travel



to Uelzen. They continued to have another song rehearsal for the church service later on. At 08:30, the brass bands of all the FELSISA congregations played a few hymnals. The church service started at 09:00 and the music was accompanied by the youth choir. After the service, the youth split into their various youth groups and sang their individual pieces. This year there was a good variety of music from each youth group. It was also the first time that the Stellenbosch Youth joined in and participated. The youth then continued to sing folk songs and for the last time, so they say, they sang “Freunde hat man nie genug”.

Lunch was served and then the sport program started shortly after. The youth participated in the “polonaise” building team spirit. Relay (running), volleyball, “Pille”, “Ball-übern-Strick” and tug-of-war were the games that the youth participated in. It was a great

afternoon of competitiveness and fun. In the end, the Stellenbosch guys won the “Pille” final. The Arcadia youth ladies won every event offered to them and the guys won volleyball and the relay. The Lüneburg youth won tug-of-war easily in the final, desperately awaiting challengers.

The day at Uelzen ended with an evening devotion which was held by Vicar Tobias Schütze. The youth then departed and arrived at the hostel again for the second party.

A big thank you to all the congregations that made this day happen. The youth enjoyed every minute and cannot wait for next year when it will be held in Pretoria..



## 100th anniversary of the Brass Band Festival

*Pastor em. Chris Johannes, Wartburg, Kirchdorf (This speech has been shortened by the editors and is available in full length in German on the FELSISA website.)*

**“Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Hallelujah!” - Psalm 150**

**“Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things! With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!” - Psalm 98:1+6**

These Words of God are intended to remind us that we humans have every reason to praise God. This praise of God should not only be expressed with our voices, but also with instruments of all kinds. The praise of God is part of the divine service, just like prayer,

the sermon and the sacraments.

With this in mind, the brothers P. Louis and P. Theodor Harms gave our Lutheran forefathers two important things to take along with them to the mission field in Africa around 1854, namely the Word of God and praise to God through the music of the brass choirs!

We find Psalm 150:3 and Psalm 98:1+6 written as mottos above the statutes of our Brass Band Association. This is a sure sign that the praise of God was still taken seriously 100 years ago, in 1924, when our Brass Band Association was founded. Praising God, that is our ministry! In carrying out this ministry, the brass bands should also help us, alongside the organs, the congregational singing and the choirs, together with many other musical instruments.

When we look at brass bands, it is important to realise that brass music as we know it today is one of the young-

est forms of praise to God in the Christian church. Although there is already mention of blowing on ram's horns in the Old Testament, for example in the temple, it was never possible to play the full scales in the various keys on such horns.

Even in the world of sacred choral and orchestral music, e.g. with JS Bach, there were trumpets that were all fundamentally tied to one key, which was determined by their length. They did not yet have valves or holes, as was the case with flutes. The notes that were played in the high overtone series of the natural trumpets had to be intoned with the lips in order to play a clean series of consecutive notes as a scale. This was a fine art that made trumpet playing very complicated and exclusive. Only very few could manage it. These trumpets were therefore definitely not suitable for use in brass bands!

The first brass instruments that made it possible to play complete scales in the lower registers and in all keys were the slide trombones. This is why they were built in all sizes, from the small treble trombone for the soprano voice

to the contrabass trombone. As the treble trombone is unfortunately still very difficult to play today, it never really caught on as a choral instrument. Nevertheless, four-part songs could be played by such trombone quartets or choirs.

The Count von Zinzendorf was probably the first to introduce this principle into church and worship use in his Moravian Brethren congregation around 1730. When the revivalist movements gained momentum in Germany at the beginning of the 19th century, the use of brass bands in church services soon became a general trend.

By then, important progress had been made in the further development of the trumpet. It gradually became possible for amateurs to play these instruments. There were now so-called keyed trumpets, which, like clarinets and saxophones, made it possible to play lower scales. Experiments with valves for trumpets began in 1815, particularly in Berlin. It was not until around 1885 that the generally usable trumpet as we know it today was finally developed. Since then, it has been possible to play all scales with just 3 valves. This last

step meant and helped a great deal in the development of the brass bands. Finally, this system with three or four valves was transferred to the tenor and bass instruments.

But there was still a problem! At the beginning, the trumpet players had to transpose all notes. They therefore played one note higher according to the piano notation. With Harms, they then had to rethink in order to play everything a note lower. This was the only way they could play together with the lower voices.

The history of our Brass Band Association began in 1849 at the missionary seminary in Hermannsburg, Germany. Pastor Theodor Harms, who himself had learnt to play from an old hunter, had founded a brass choir with the 12 men from the first group of theology students. Initially they played on keyed trumpets! Through this choir, which P. Louis Harms then took with him to his missionary festivals to accompany the singing, the playing of chorales and other sacred music spread very quickly across the Lüneburg Heath. Many choirs gradually developed from this.

Thanks to the ongoing brass work at the missionary seminary in Germany, most of the missionaries and colonists who came to South Africa were able to play. They played their instruments



often and gladly at their new location in Hermannsburg, South Africa since 1854. Later, as the missionary work spread, choirs came together in the newly founded congregations. In our midst, for example, the choir in Lüneburg was founded in 1883. In 1885 the choir in Kirchdorf was founded, and in 1897 the choir in Uelzen. In 1909, after the 2nd Boer War, the choir in Wittenberg followed. These were the choirs that were involved in the first Brass Band Festival in 1924.

When we consider the history of our origins, we should not forget that we, together with the NELCSA, LCSA and ELCSA associations, emerged from the Hermannsburg missionary movement. Therefore, we can and should recognise each other and promote cooperation among ourselves.

I would like to correct a misunderstanding that I realised when reading *The History of our Brass Choirs, Volume 2*. From the very beginning, our history had nothing to do with either P. Eduard Kuhlo or his son, P. Johannes Kuhlo, and their brass work in Minden/Ravensberg in Westphalia, Germany.

However, Pastor Johannes Kuhlo had a significant influence on our work. Firstly, he brought us from the military notation to the piano notation, and we were thus able to use the notes of the organ easily. Secondly, he compiled an extensive repertoire of music and left us a legacy on which we gratefully build.

By God's grace, the association has enjoyed good growth since 1950. From the initial 4 choirs, we have become 14 choirs. 93 brass band festivals have already been celebrated. Due to the Second World War and Covid, we were unable to celebrate any brass band festivals for 7 years. In the early years, these festivals – where we could praise the Lord together – led to the synod members getting to know each other and to synodical unanimity.

Our mission and our ministry of praising God still stands firm! May God grant that this jubilee celebration remind us that our praise of God is not only reserved for Sunday, but that it is also meant for all days of the week. May we all participate more actively! ■

## **English Regional Mission and Song Festival**

*Pastor Andreas Albers, Our Saviour, Wartburg*



On the 4th of August, the annual Mission and Song Festival for the region of southern KZN took place at the Our Saviour congregation in Wartburg. Present were choir and congregation members from Our Saviour, Durban-Westville, Pietermaritzburg and Greytown, as well as other guests. Inge Binding (Durban-Westville) conducted the choir and Angelika Ringelmann (Durban-Westville) accompanied on the organ. The service was bookended by choir performances both at the beginning and end of the service. The choir also accompanied the sung prayer of the church with a sung “Kyrie

Eleison” response after every petition.

Missionary Peter Weber held a wonderful sermon, based on Luke’s account of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, in which he spoke both about singing and mission. He started out by bursting our bubble and bringing us down to earth, when he said: “God doesn’t need our singing. If we were silent, God would make the stones of the church building sing.” Indeed, God doesn’t need us as much as we might think. Luther begins his explanations of four Lord’s Prayer petitions by stating that these things

are accomplished “without our prayer”. God is sovereign. God doesn’t need our voices to accomplish his mission. If we were silent, he would find other means. However, even though God doesn’t need our song, he wants our song. His Word is full of commands like “rejoice”, “bless”, “thank him”, “make a joyful noise”, “sing”, “make music for the Lord”. Indeed, it is good, right, and salutary, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to him. Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify his glorious name. Singing is salutary for us. It is beneficial for us. We need singing more than God does, because we are replaceable by stones. God isn’t. So let us keep singing. Let

us join in with all creation, in a world that does not know its creator. We are his singing disciples. We are witnesses of his truth and his gospel. In the end, God does not burst our bubble – he is the air that inflates us. God does not ground us – he lifts us to heaven, to live with him. And while we are here below, we have the privilege of singing his praises and witnessing to the world that he is our Saviour.

After the fellowship around God’s spiritual gifts of word and song, the fellowship continued around God’s bodily gifts in the hall with a bring & share brunch. It was a blessed festival. Thanks to all who participated. Above all, thanks be to God for his blessings. Jubilate Deo. Alleluia. ▪

## 20 Years of Mini Youth

*Edeltraut Johannes, Kirchdorf, Wartburg*

**“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them.” - Matthew 19:14**

Since February 2004, the Our Saviour congregation in Wartburg has been offering a Mini Youth “get together” for 8 to 12 year old children from the

whole area, about 9 times a year. It all started at the house of Connie and Sabine Meyer. From 2009, we were using the Kirchdorf youth room as our venue. The Holy Spirit was actively at work and at one stage, the number of children participating went up to 60 children.

In 2016 we moved across to the Our Saviour church and over the past years it has, more and more, become a blessed Outreach mission project for our whole area. We meet twice a term, starting 17.00 and ending at 19.30.

Children from the age of 3 years through to the early high school years have been attending with great enthu-

siasm. We have now separated the preschool children from the older children during the ice breaker games, bible study activities and singing.

We pray that GOD will continue blessing these children, that they may all become Christian lights in their families, circle of friends and in their schools. ■



**Announcements**



# Women's Retreat 2025

**Theme:  
Peace be with you**

4 - 6 February

Fels Retreat

Further details will be announced later



# SAVE THE DATE

## *Felsisa Summer Youth Camp*

WHERE: Kirchdorf

WHEN: 10 - 15 December 2024

COST: R500 per person

If you have any questions, please contact

Liska Paul

079 146 3257



Please send your contributions, remarks, and questions to the editor.  
All contributions for the next edition to be submitted by: 31 October