



Lutherans IN Africa

FORMING AFRICAN LUTHERANS TO BE TEACHERS OF THE FAITH

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April Showers of Water and Word



"And rain fell upon the earth" (Genesis 7:12)

The long drought has finally come to an end and people rejoice! The barren, dry landscape has turned green and fertile. Large quantities of water have also caused a few flash floods that in turn have created some damage. But overall, everyone who has been yearning for rain for their crops and cattle, thank God, who *"gives rain on the earth and sends waters on the fields"* (Job 5:10).

Catechism Course Graduates

The Lutheran School of Theology receives students from different backgrounds. Some have been Lutherans for a long time, many have previously been members of different denominations and some of these men are recent converts to Lutheranism. Our school emphasizes the importance of learning the Six Chief Parts of Christian Doctrine: the basic summary for teaching the Christian faith and life. Each one of our students undertakes memorizing these parts with their explanations as found in Luther's Small Catechism. This benefits new and old Lutherans alike by strengthening their understanding of the Christian doctrine and by



providing a great teaching tool to be used at their homes and congregations.

Every student, who attended classes at the LST last autumn, has now passed their Catechism exams. To recognize each Catechism class graduate, they receive a handcrafted crucifix and *The Lutheran Service Book* with their name inscribed on the cover. The crucifixes are made and gifted by Pastor Dan Vines from Calvary LCMS Aberdeen, WA. *The Lutheran Service Book* now provides them with the



next tool in their ministry to serve as pastors in Lutheran congregations. We celebrated the students' accomplishments further by going out to share a roasted goat meal together.



"As the director of the Lutheran School of Theology, I am elated and proud that these future pastors are learning Luther's Small Catechism by heart and that they see how important it is as an evangelism and apologetic tool to help them quickly and rightly confess the faith." ~Rev. James May

"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:14-17

Learning about Pastoral Ministry



Reverend Emile Nkurunziza from the Lutheran Church of Burundi taught one of LST's spring term courses. LST student, John Ukongo, shared what he gained from these Pastoral Ministry classes:

"The course contained a lot of practical advice for pastors. We discussed about challenges that pastors face. For example, when pastor has difficulties in his personal life within his family and how that might affect his ministry. Or when a pastor ages and is retiring; how to ensure the continuance of the ministry. How to cope when we as pastors are criticized, because not everyone will appreciate you. It can hurt you, but if you are strong enough you won't get angry, but say, 'No problem, let me carry on with my work.'"

In regard to the proper work of a pastor, Pastor May adds, "The call comes from Jesus and not ourselves. If people are criticizing the Word, their problem is really with God, not us as a person. Therefore, we need to remember not to take it personally but remember that they are criticizing Jesus as they even did in the New Testament times."

John continues, "A pastor has to be faithful and responsible in his vocation. He needs to focus on the word of God and set times for prayer and fasting. A pastor also has to be trained and educated, because how can you manage the church, if you don't have education? How can you even write a sermon if you are not educated? You will be in difficulties."



"The book for this course was *The Lutheran Pastor* by G.H. Gerberding [recently re-printed by LIA]. I found it very helpful and I know it is a great book to return back to for future reference. It contained advice for the time when a pastor enters a new location and is hoping to operate a church there. You cannot just push your own thing on people before even knowing anything about their community. You are to first meet with the leaders and elders of that area to learn more about the community. How are the church affairs? What is their current situation; is there a Lutheran church or should one be started? What other needs do people have? A pastor should strive to respond to the needs of the community. From there, you can begin evangelizing by going from door to door visiting people in their homes, comforting sick, and sharing the Gospel. Soon you can gather a group of people whom you can train to be the church leaders."

John's Road towards Pastor's Vocation



"I come from South Sudan. I left my family, my parents and siblings, behind in 2007 to come to Kenya's refugee camp with my cousin. I was then thirteen years old. For sixteen years I have not seen any of my family members. Even communication is rare."

"Before finding the Lutheran church in 2018, I was a Roman Catholic. Things that caused me to depart from the Catholic church were witnessing the priest abuse people by embarrassing them in the front of the whole congregation. Secondly, it bothered me that I never received any training such as Bible studies in my Catholic church. This was very different once I joined the Lutheran church where studies are regular. When I witnessed that Lutherans teach from the Bible and help people see how to focus on the word of God, I wanted to be Lutheran. I came to learn how some Catholic teachings are not biblical."

"I attend the Kalobeyei church in Kenya's refugee camp and also visit the other camp and Kakuma church sometimes. I met Pastor May the first time, when he came to teach at the camps. Later, my congregation came together and nominated some of the men whom they had selected as pastoral candidates to come and study at the LST. They asked me if I was willing to go. I believed that it was the work of God that I was called by the congregation, so I came with joy."

Field Trip to a Mosque

Professor Philemon Tanui from the Africa International University occupied LST's lecture's



chair twice. First, he taught a course on Christianity and African History. His second class discussed Islam and witnessing to Muslims in African context. The Islam study included a visit to a mosque. The purpose of the students' visit to a mosque was to enable them to learn the basic Islam fundamental beliefs, observe the common practices in the mosque, and to give feedback of the visit in order to prepare students for witnessing to Muslims. This way they received first hand experience.



After the visit, over the weekend, we enjoyed a roasted goat meal to celebrate the Catechism course graduates. We had a discussion about what they had learned at the mosque. The students told that among other things they had asked questions about Islam's prophets and learned that their prophet Isa is Christians' Jesus. However, the Muslims say he is not the Son of God, but only one of the prophets. They claim that Isa (Jesus) did not die on the cross, but Judas died on his behalf. The students learned that some Quran writings have similarities with Bible accounts, but none of them point to Jesus as Savior. They were told that everyone is Muslim at birth but are corrupted by their parents if they become Christian.

The students believe that the prophet Isa could be the starting point in conversations with their Muslim neighbors. Everyone they talked with in the mosque was friendly and welcoming and likewise they realize that witnessing to Muslims can bear fruit if it is done in love and with respect. All the while pointing to the necessity of a Savior to die for their sins and that it is not our works that can earn salvation.

"Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified."

Galatians 2:16

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