



Bishop's Post

December 20, January 21

James 4,13: **Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money..."**

... and then came Covid-19.

Indeed, the year 2020 will be difficult to forget. We started it with the motto from our 2019 Synod: "Go- with Purpose" - and suddenly the going was gone! Plans were put on hold or shelved completely. Add to this the numerous other challenges that we were facing: a struggling economy, an immense scale of corruption and incompetence coming to light at the Zondo commission, and to add international "spice", the embarrassing presidential election event in the USA.

I hope that you took on the challenge to read the daily bible passages. In November we read the prophet Jeremiah. Many times I thought: This could be a quote from our daily newspapers! The similarity was striking. Lockdown (not from Covid, but due to the siege of Jerusalem), corruption, self-proclaimed prophets, rulers refusing to accept defeat. "Thus says the Lord..." we read countless times, when Jeremiah issued warning after warning, offered a way forward, even if humiliating, but at least forward.

We know that the people then did not take the warnings seriously - and I keep on praying that at least some will today acknowledge the seriousness and do something about it.

In December we will be reading from Isaiah. The passages were written a few decades later. As Jeremiah had predicted, tragedy had struck, and the promised land been destroyed. Isaiah now addresses the children and grandchildren, who suffer the consequences of their forefathers' wrongdoings. (Really, make a point of reading these daily passages!) His words are messages of hope, a promise that God had not given up but is planning something new.

And then, in January, we turn to the gospel of Luke and read how Jesus invites us to follow him. We believe that Jesus is the ultimate fulfilling of Isaiah's message of hope.

These Bible readings will help us to find direction again - at the end of this chaotic year, and still in the midst of the Covid Crisis they assure us that there is a purpose, a way forward, even when we are prohibited from travelling.

My prayer is that 2021 will be a much better year, but also that, at some stage, we will look back at 2020 and recognize that amidst all the chaos the Lord was at work.

....Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." (James 4,15)

Host Müller

News from the Church

Even before the Corona-crisis there were some congregations that could no **longer afford a full pastor's post**. Currently various alternative and sustainable options are being investigated, including co-operation with local congregations from different denominations, and a "e-Pastor" with virtual parishes. We pray that the Lord will guide the deliberations.

Due to the corona situation it was decided to have **eQuip 2021** as a virtual event on 2 and 3 January. The topic is: From "Go - with purpose" to "Gone is the going" We want to reflect on the experiences of the past year. For many it was like a traumatic desert experience. What can we learn from it, how can it prepare us for the way forward?

Because it will be offered via Zoom, you can attend without travelling. In order to prepare the Zoom platform we do, however request that you register via equip@nelcsa.net . The link to participate is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83865675655?pwd=NFkrUUJvZFFZYVRNTU4rUlgxejNGdz09>

Details will be available soon on the NELCSA web page.

NELCSA virtual services will be organised by Bishop Müller for 4th Advent Sunday, 20 December, New Year, 1 January and on Sunday 3 January linked to the eQuip.

You will find the links for these services on the NELCSA web page.

The **Hermannsburg brass choir** could celebrate their centenary in November. We praise God for this possibility, and pray that many blessings will still flow through this ministry!