



## IGREJA CRISTÃ DA CONCÓRDIA EM MOÇAMBIQUE

*“Jesus Cristo é o mesmo, ontem, hoje, e eternamente.” (Hebreus 13.8)*

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### NEWSLETTER MOZAMBIQUE - APRIL 2020 - ENGLISH

#### A WORD FROM THE COORDINATOR:

**"BUT GOD'S WORD IS NOT CHAINED"** (2 Timothy 2.9)

In many countries due to government decisions during this Coronavirus pandemic, we are trapped inside the four walls of our homes. The elderly, as they are most vulnerable, are especially prohibited from going out and having contact with other people. This is a form of prevention to avoid spreading infection.

The apostle Paul was literally handcuffed and imprisoned in Rome because of the Gospel. In the quiet and loneliness of his cell he wrote letters to the churches and to his friends. In this letter to his disciple Timothy he speaks of his suffering, yet at the same time he states that **"GOD'S WORD IS NOT CHAINED,"** but continues to be free and that it is being spread through the apostle's testimony. Thanks to this period of forced seclusion during which the apostle was prevented from travelling and from dedicating himself to active ministry in the congregations and in mission, he took advantage of the time and left behind written documents that encourage us in our faith to this day.

We are prisoners in our homes because of the Coronavirus, but **"GOD'S WORD IS NOT CHAINED."** It remains free and active especially through the media which we today have available at our disposal. Pastors and churches send out messages and services for everyone at home to follow. The Gospel has come out of the four walls of the church and it is reaching countless numbers of people, more than those being hit by the Coronavirus. We are daily updated regarding the number of infections and deaths. Who can do the statistics as to how far the Gospel spread? Only God knows those who belong to Him and how many through faith will awake to life in Jesus the Saviour!

*“Sometimes good comes from bad,”* goes the saying. We do not understand this catastrophe that torments the world. Still, we have to make the best of it and take the time of seclusion in order to read the Bible more, to listen to the messages over the media, and to pray more.

Giving thanks to the Lord for the Coronavirus at this time in Mozambique is understandably small. A country that has suffered so much in recent years from irregular rainy and dry seasons, thereby not allowing normal harvests, has as yet being spared another calamity. May God save this and other countries from this evil.



**"GOD'S WORD IS NOT CHAINED,"** but is alive and active in Mozambique. The number of believers in Lutheran churches is growing despite misfortunes and hunger. The number of congregations is growing despite the insufficient number of church buildings, most gather under a tree or in a straw hut. The number of baptized people is growing despite the strength of traditional religions that appease the ancestors. The number of Christians is growing despite the advances of extremist Islam.

Again, in this newsletter, I bring reports received from the leadership of the Lutheran Church of Mozambique. I have not been able to travel there yet this year and it seems that it will be difficult to obtain an entry visa due to the Coronavirus situation. Currently all visas and visa applications have been suspended by the government and there is no clear indication when the borders will again open. However, **"GOD'S WORD IS NOT CHAINED"** and the faithful Lutherans testify this by word and deed and impact the local society with the message of Jesus' love and of love for one another.

Continue praying for Mozambique and the spreading of the Gospel. Continue praying for the people who have not had a good harvest even after suffering from Cyclone Idai in March of last year. Continue to support God's Mission in Mozambique financially. Spread news of this undertaking and encourage your friends and family to pray for and offer support for Mozambique.

*Deliver us from evil. Lord, have mercy.*

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle, Coordinator

### **ONE YEAR OF THE IDAI CYCLONE**

The situation in Mozambique has not changed much in the last year since cyclone Idai destroyed 90% of the city of Beira and razed plantations – as well as house and church – in central Mozambique to the ground.



In spite of the humanitarian aid received from many countries and especially from the Lutheran church, this gesture only alleviated the hunger of the families for a while. The hope of a good harvest in the following months was dashed during the drought that followed. They sowed once more and waited for the rainy season, but it rained too much and drown the plants in the field. Then, when they expected to harvest a little green corn in the last few weeks, the worms ate the cobs.

Even so, God's people do not abandon their faith and hope in the gracious God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. The churches are always full and the people gather to pray, praise, and hear the Word of God.

A German newspaper, *Allgemeine Zeitung der Luneburger Heide*, put out a report by the East Africa Press Agency recalling the passage of cyclone Idai through Mozambique a year ago. In addition, one of our co-workers from Brazil sent us a link to an article also describing the situation: (<https://g1.globo.com/mundo/noticia/2020/03/18/um-ano-apos-o-idai-recuperacao-de-mocambique-avanca-a-conta-gotas.ghtml>). It is interesting to note that these two articles published by the secular media contain exactly the same information as we have been sharing in this Newsletter. The situation impacts not only the church, but the whole country. The difference in these reports is that the people of God find strength to overcome these trials through faith in the Word and promises of God and in the Sacraments.

We have again newly obtained a grant of Humanitarian Aid which was sent to Mozambique after the publication of the last newsletter reporting on the situation of floods at the beginning of this year (Cf. edition of February/2020). The church leaders undertook to organize the distribution of food. Churches



were asked for a list of members. Then, based on funds received, it was possible to calculate how many families could be helped. When the food was brought to the different locations, registered families were called one by one to receive a bag of rice and a gallon of cooking oil. A message was always given and a prayer thanks

made which included the donors.

We thank our co-workers: The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB), via IELB Project Support Fund, FAPI; the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS), via Office of International Mission, OIM, USA; the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche (SELK), Germany, via Lutherische Kirchenmission (Bleckmarer Mission), LKM; the Lutherische Missionsgesellschaft in Österreich (LUTMIS), Austria; the Hungarian Lutheran Mission Society, Hungary; the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa (FELSISA), and the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (LCSA), both from South Africa, via Mission of the Lutheran Churches (MLC); the Lutheran Church-Canada (LCC), Canada; the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England (ELCE), England; and the Portuguese Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELP), Portugal.

God bless you all.

Pastor Carlos

## REPORTS RECEIVED FROM MOZAMBIQUE



***Saint Paul's Church, Sena:*** On account of the love and goodness of God's will in Christ Jesus, in the last months of the year our congregation registered the largest number of new members. This in addition to new members that have joined other congregations in the ICCM. Some members attend the service outside the sanctuary due to insufficient space. In fact, those

who arrive late are left without any type seat. Most attendees are women and children. Pastor Manuel Jone Jambo works together with future pastors at preaching, home visits to members, and teaching catechism in the local language. (Abel Sifa)



**Cado:** The Reverend João Luís Nota, responsible for congregations in that district, asked the Special Projects Department to draw up a plan to build two more churches in Cado and to ask our partners for help with the ICCM general budget for 2020. For construction of the churches, the basic material is already available: sand, stones, water, and burnt bricks made by the members themselves. Our correspondent in Cado said this would be for the parish of Nhacolo (where Pastor Andre visited last year) and the parish of Cado, the regional headquarters (which joined ICCM this year). The special projects department will soon visit these sites and evaluate the existing materials, draw up construction plans for these churches, and submit a proposal for the general ICCM budget for 2020. (Abel Sifa)

### **Scholarship Graduation**

The five ICCM members awarded scholarships to attend the technical college have completed their studies and internships and graduated on December 16, 2019. In the midst of many economic, political, psychological, and church struggles, our God did not abandon them. On the contrary, He assured them of victory and guided them to the day of their graduation with rejoicing.

Our graduates are:

1) Castigo Joseph Mosse, middle pharmacy technician;

- 2) Jose Sande Mandala, middle technician of accounting and auditing;
- 3) Paulino Zacarias Paulino, middle technician of accounting and auditing;
- 4) Ussene Joaquim Ussene, general ward middle technician;
- 5) Costa António Lapissonne, general ward middle technician.

In view of this success, the ICCM is left speechless to describe the its delight for battle won and crowned with the glory of God and give due recognition to God himself and our partner churches in other countries that gave sacrificially for the wellbeing of the Mozambican church. We know that our TAKHUTA (thank you) is eternal in the hands of the Lord who knows how to reward those who supported these students during their education.

After the phase of study, now begins the phase of fighting for employment. Once again, we ask for the everyone's prayerful support so that our new graduates find employed in order to further the growth of the church. (Abel Sifa)



### **Reorganization of the ICCM National Board**

On December 20, 2019, the ICCM National Board of Directors met to evaluate the administrative duties for board members. Due to internal administrative issues, duties were reallocated. This decision was confirmed by the ICCM Extraordinary General Assembly which took place on January 11, 2020 consisting of 82 voting delegates from the congregations that make up the

ICCM, plus 12 invited/visiting members, for a total of 94 people. The current National Board of Directors will manage the ICCM until the next regular General Assembly scheduled for the second half of this year.



The Board is now composed of:

- 1) Rev. Rui Jalene Sousa: acting president and vice treasurer.
- 2) Rev. Manuel Jone Jambo: acting secretary, coordinator of special projects, and advisor to the president.
- 3) Rev. João Luís Nota: general treasurer and member of the ICCM's internal communications committee.
- 4) Rev. Julio Nhapigode: member of the finance committee, responsible for properties and investments of the ICCM, and responsible for gifts/offerings within the ICCM.
- 5) Rev. Paulo E. Mineses: member of the finance committee and member of ICCM's internal communication committee.
- 6) Future Pastor Abel Sifa: member of the finance committee, responsible for international communication, and spokesman for the president.



God bless the leadership, congregations and members of ICCM.



**Cado Nhamichindo:**

Representatives of the congregations from Cado Nhamichindo, Morage, and Bartolomeu visited pastor Nota in Chemba, responsible for this region, and reported on activities and requested Bibles and Catechisms. There are nine (9) new

congregations in the region. The representatives received one box of Bibles each, plus Small Catechisms, and returned happy and grateful to God to their homes and respective congregations. (Pr. Nota)

**Mutarara: Installation of Pastor Paulo E. Mineses:**



The ICCM Board of Directors met at the district headquarters to install Pastor Paulo who will supervise all congregations in that district until the pastoral graduation this year, 2020, when we will have new candidates to fill positions. This he will do while continuing to serve the parishes of Mpango and Nyakazizi as well.

This took place February 16, 2020. The president shared a message and closed with some general advice for pastor Paul and the congregation. The brothers of Mutarara were very pleased with Pastor Paul and promised to help him with various opportunities. (Abel Sifa)

**Minjale, 20/02/2020:** Today we went to the area of Mijale to see up close the proposed site for digging a water well. Minjale lies in the mountain region located on the border between Mozambique and Malawi, north of the Mutarara district. The Lutheran community of Minjale is led by a layman, Tomás. ICCM president Pastor Rui Jalene Sousa and treasurer Pastor João Luis Nota were well received by the local community. They showed us the place chosen to put the water pump. At the moment they fetch water from an intermittent stream flowing down from the mountains because of the rain;



however, by the month of May there will be no more water. When that happens, they will need to cross the border and travel long distances to fetch water for consumption. We shared with the brothers of Minjale the good news that we have donors willing to sponsor a well. They were all very happy and thankful to God. The Board already has established a budget for digging of the well and is waiting for the second budget to start the work.



The brothers of Minjale have also produced the bricks to build a church and are waiting for help to buy cement, etc. in order to build their house of God. We are asking for donations of \$ 5,000 US for the construction of a church. Do you, your family, your congregation, or district care to adopt this project? (Information received from Pr. Nota).



**The Church grows in the midst of difficulties:** The amazing reality of what is taking place in Mozambique which the ICCM has opportunity to share with other Lutheran communities thought-out the world is almost unbelievable according to human logic. The extraordinary growth of membership, the firmness in the gospel of Christ, the total

surrender of pastors and future pastors to the cause of preaching, the teaching of God's word and leading of services, and the conviction in the hope to eternal life in Christ Jesus, encourages the ongoing ministry of the ICCM despite the immense difficulties it must face.

As once may witness:

- The hunger that afflicts all the members of all our Lutheran communities does not prevent people from participating in the services every Sunday and other days scheduled for that purpose;
- The high rate of deaths of adults and children caused by regional-prevalent diseases, lack of medical assistance and medicines, and insufficient food does not pull members away from trust and hope in God's promises;
- The lack of theological training (bachelors, graduates, and PhDs) does not prevent pastors and future pastors from proclaiming the gospel of Christ even to people with higher academic learning.
- The strength of our spiritual adversary is greater than human strength, but this has been overcome by the power of God, who is the saviour of mankind. This faith created in the heart of the believer in Christ who justifies, sanctifies, and saves from sin, the devil, and hell is not destroyed.
- The inadequate transportation for those who take the gospel of Christ to the most remote areas of our territory does not hinder the advance of the gospel to the ends of the Mozambican land.

- I personally have recently travelled to almost 90% of our Lutheran congregations and there observed and then reported the real situation of God's people and the true commitment of pastors, future pastors, and lay leaders of all communities. I am a living witness of the difficulties faced by the people of God and the intervention of God himself in the varied chaotic situations that the people face.

For this reason, the church of Mozambique thanks God immeasurably for the efforts made through our brothers, partners, and donors to support the development and the steadfastness of the gospel of Christ in this part of the African land.

The ICCM therefore asks God to bless you in all things, and we say our 'TAKHUTA WANKULU' (THANK YOU VERY MUCH) to all the donors for all they do for the Lutheran church of Mozambique.

God above all.

Abel Sifa.



Credit from the Photos, Mr. Abel Sifa, Pastor João Luis Nota, Mr. Paulino Zacarias Paulino

**DONATIONS MAY BE SENT TO:**

**USA:**

**The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod** PO Box 66861 St. Louis, MO 63166-6861  
– USA (Designate: Mozambique – 60606)

OR: **LCMS– Mission Central - C/O Gary Thies** 40718 Hwy. E16 Mapleton, IA  
51034 - USA (Designate: Mozambique - 60606)

OR: **Credit Card donations** – call LCMS OIM at 1-800-433-3954 (specify  
donations for Mozambique – 60606)

**South Africa: Mission of Lutheran Churches (MLC),** Account Nr. 1913-137-538,  
Branch Code: 19 87 65 NEDBANK LTD., Branch: Cresta, Account Type: Current,  
Swift code: NEDSZAJJ

(Revised by Rev. Fred Rink. This issue is published in Portuguese, English and German)

