



Growing Together in Christ

Lutheran Theological Seminary, Umphumulo Seminary Day 17th August 2025.

Background:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) had been without a Seminary since 2015, following the closure of the Lutheran Theological Institution (LTI) due to unforeseen circumstances. The closure of the LTI, which was based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg, left a massive gap in ELCSA's theological formation for pastors and laity. In 2024, the Lutheran Theological Seminary Umphumulo (LTS) opened its doors to a new cohort of students in its historic location at Umphumulo, KwaZulu-Natal. LTS at Umphumulo has a remarkable history; it was one of the leading institutions in the training of men and women for ministry formation and development in Southern Africa, with notable graduates including, Bishop Manas Buthelezi, Lutheran scholar and anti-apartheid activist, Dr. Ishmael Noko, former LWF General Secretary, Rev. Liliana Kasper, Executive Director of the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa and many others.

Purpose of Seminary Day:

The Lutheran Seminary Board as well as the ELCSA Church Council, wishes to invite all her congregants, stakeholders and partners to jointly pray, raise awareness of the developments of the resuscitation of the seminary and also seek support; individuals who may wish to volunteer their skills, monetary donations, non-perishable foods and what may seem needed as part of the seminary. It is a day of reflection, fundraising and thanksgiving and petition towards the betterment of the Seminary. All offerings made on the day throughout ELCSA would be offered towards the Seminary.



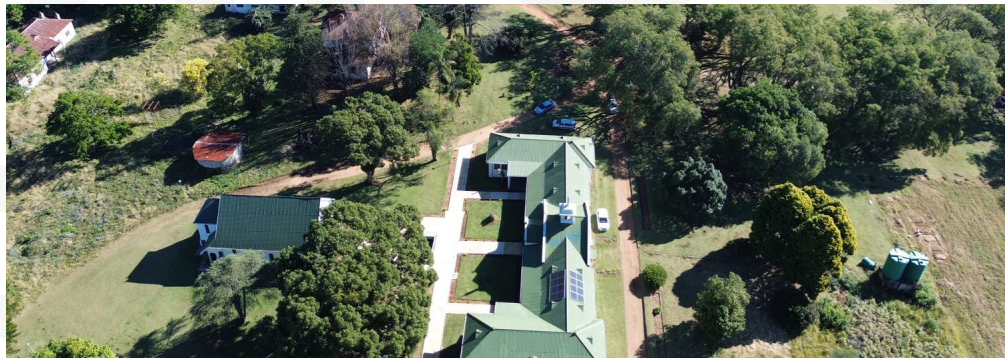
Vision for Theological Formation:

The absence of a proper theological education training institution has led many pastors of ELCSA, from 2016 to 2023, to study through long-distance or correspondence institutions. This mode of study offers limited Lutheran formation programs, spiritual practices, and pastoral disciplines to trainees. There is a considerable need to bridge the gap between formal academic studies and the practical needs and concerns of the faith communities served by ELCSA.

The Lutheran Theological Seminary Umphumulo aims to reaffirm its position as the leading theological institution, providing excellent facilities and a competitive academic program that nurtures the spiritual lives of students, thereby providing high-calibre pastors for ELCSA and its partners.

Current Developments of the Seminary:

The reopening of the Seminary generated considerable enthusiasm among ELCSA dioceses, circuits and parishes. Currently, the seminary has admitted 43 students (23 male and 20 female students) from around Southern Africa. Part of the resuscitation of the Seminary includes the curriculum programme design, which will have to be approved by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) in South Africa. The Lutheran Seminary Board resolved to focus on the Diploma in Theology to kick-start this process by the year 2026.



The reopening of the Seminary has been a joint venture of ELCSA and its international partners. To date, the administrative block, female dormitory, and Chapel have been renovated. Male students will move into the newly renovated dormitory. This has been an incredible start, yet a lot more still needs to be done to restore LTS Umphumulo, for the benefit of current and future generations.

Let us work together to build the future of theological education in South Africa:

Priorities for the 2025-2026 Academic Years:

Academic Lecturers to volunteer at the Seminary (physical and online classes)	
Renovation of 2* Student Accommodation Blocks as well as ablution facilities	30 000 USD
Renovation of Dining Hall, Kitchen and Common room area	35 000 USD
Renovation of various on Site Staff Accommodation	40 000 USD
Virtual Classrooms Equipment/Set up	20 000 USD
Renovation of Classrooms and Hall	12 000 USD



