

The Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

(Anglican Church of Southern Africa in Limpopo)

Bishop: Martin Breytenbach

martin@stmark.org.za

Tel: 015 297 3297 Fax 015 297 0408

Secretary at Diocesan Centre: reception@stmark.org.za

Diocesan Administrator: administrator@stmark.org.za



P.O Box 643
Polokwane, 0700

09 February 2017

To All: Clergy
Churchwardens
Leaders of Organisations
Diocesan Youth Council

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is a bit late to wish you well for the New Year, because it isn't so "new" anymore! But may 2017 be a year of blessing and growth in the Lord for you and your parish! I am working hard to catch up after 8 weeks away in December-January:

- ✦ Four weeks of mission and ministry in the UK and Germany – it was a good and fruitful time.
- ✦ Four weeks on holiday in Pretoria, Cape Town, St Francis Bay and various places in between!

Thank you for your prayers, love and support. And thank you to Dean Luke and the Diocesan Staff who held the fort while I was away.

1 Personal

Let me also report that my relationship with Colleen Thomas is going from strength to strength, and we think 2017 will be a big year for us! She is planning to come and spend a few weeks in Polokwane at the end of April and beginning of May, so many of you will have a chance to meet her. After experiencing deep loss and grief in recent years, God is using this relationship to restore both of us in love, light and joy.



Colleen & †Martin on holiday

I still have a lot of accumulated leave due to me, and from time to time I have meetings in Cape Town... So I plan to use those times to take a few extra days and spend them with Colleen. And there will be a few special trips there as well – for example when her daughter Julie gets married on 1st April. But of course I will remain as committed to you and the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist as I ever have been!

2 Bishop's Parish Visits in 2017

Every few years God has led me to take **one message of vision and challenge** to all our parishes in my weekly visits. I believe that God is calling me to do that again in 2017. So, in all my visits, I would like to preach and teach about the vision and goals of the Diocese and what they mean for each congregation. In order to do that, I have chosen the following readings. Please prepare to use them unless I specifically give you something different:

OT:	Exodus 18:13-27
Ps:	Psalm 24
NT:	Hebrews 10:23-25
G:	Matthew 16:13-25

This applies whether or not the service is a Confirmation. To help you with Confirmation services, I enclose a special outline to guide you in your preparation.

Diocesan Vision: To make disciples in vibrant, self-sufficient congregations established and linked to each other by sharing in resources; ministry & service; outreach & evangelism.

3 Making Young Disciples

The highlight of my year so far has been spending Sunday morning 5th February with our first trainee **Licensed Youth Pastors**. Twenty of them spent the weekend at Jane Furse Memorial Village Conference Centre, where they received the first round of their training. At the end of the weekend I issued them all with Probationary Licenses as Youth Pastors. It was so exciting to meet them and experience their passion for the Lord and his church; and to see how they had grown in love and become a “family” over the weekend! I was deeply moved by the high calibre of many of these young people. I believe this was the start of something incredibly significant in the life of the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist.

Thank you to Walter Setshedi who did a brilliant job of organising the weekend and planning the programme with a lot of input and support from Nosipho Nzama. (Yes, even at a distance for a while, Nosipho continues to be committed to young people in this Diocese. She is doing well, and expecting her son in March – see Ad Clerum Advent 2016 for the background.)

The next challenges are:

- 1) The 20 Probationary Youth Pastors need to start implementing what they have learned, in their congregations and parishes. They have also been charged to identify more potential Youth Pastors: our ultimate goal is to have 2 Licensed Youth Pastors in every congregation. Please support them and encourage them in this ministry – **if you do your church will be blessed!** Also, please give them opportunities to get more training, for example attending Langham Preaching and Rooted in Jesus Training Conferences later this year.
- 2) We need to identify potential Youth Pastors for training in the parishes that were not represented at this first training weekend. Walter will soon plan another one, so please make use of this opportunity. Here are the parishes that were represented and the number of Youth Pastors who received training:

Parish	No	Parish	No
Moletši	4	Tlhatlaganya	3
Letaba	2	Dzindi	2
Mokopane	2	Good Shepherd Mission	2
Christ Church Cathedral	2	Ga-Seabe	1
Modimolle	1	Sekhukhuneland	1
Zoutpansberg	1		

Well done to those parishes! Let’s see how quickly the others can catch up!

4 Lent and Easter

Lent and Easter are a little later than usual this year... so that gives us time to prepare and do it well! Please use these special seasons to lead your people into:

- ✦ **A deeper relationship** with God through faith in the crucified, risen Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit: *“To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.” (John 1:12)*
- ✦ **A deeper love** for one another as the community of God’s people: *“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)*
- ✦ **A deeper commitment** to participate in God’s mission to the world: *“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (John 20:21)*

Yours in Christ,

†Martin

†Martin: St Mark the Evangelist