

# Journal of Mission



MISSION OF LUTHERAN CHURCHES

(Bleckmar Mission) Association not for Gain



**SERVING THE MISSION FOR  
NEARLY FOUR DECADES**

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## IMPRINT

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Mission Director  
Edmund Hohls

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I find it hard to count the years of service of two of our oldest and most active volunteers, because many decades have passed since Cornelia and Gerhard Bokelmann of Hermannsburg began collecting and sorting stamps and coins to eventually sell them for the benefit of our mission work. Over the past four decades or so, they have raised several tens of thousands of euros for the mission.

Andrea Riemann has not been working in Brazil quite as long, but this fall will mark three decades. She consistently reports with great dedication on the extremely important work being done in Brazil. Now a new milestone is being added, for it is thanks to her initiative that we can hope for further strengthening of this work, as the Mission of Lutheran Churches (LKM) intends to conclude a cooperation agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Lower Saxony - Hermannsburg Mission (ELM), the purpose of which is to be able to send volunteers to Brazil and South Africa for various types of work. Of course, the handshake in the photo (page 18) will be followed by the signatures of both parties. We are well aware – and delighted – that the ELM and the LKM stand on the same side: the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

You can read about a completely different, but no less impressive initiative, “Step by Step,” on page 14. Our very energetic missionary Hugo Gevers is not only wholeheartedly committed to his work in the Lukas Congregation and at “Brücke” in Leipzig, but is also an enthusiastic and skilled cyclist. Now he is inviting people passionate about missions—and those who want to become so—to a mission of a very special kind: Early in September, we’ll set off on a long bike ride to Hermannsburg for the Mission Festival. Let yourself be inspired and join us. If you also find sponsors who will make a donation to the mission fund for every kilometer you ride, you’ll really give the mission fund a boost. Of course, you can also sponsor the main participant – for the mission. To be fair, though, I must give you a little warning: Hugo Gevers is well-trained and will likely cover the planned 554 km in no time at all – pedal stroke by pedal stroke, for the mission.

Thank you very much for your support of our church’s mission work

Yours

Edmund Hohls



Picture: Wikipedia, Gemälde der Candaze

## ANCHORED IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

There are images in the Bible that immediately make sense to us: “We have this hope as a sure and steadfast anchor for our souls.” (Hebrews 6:19)

An anchor is there for times when the wind picks up and the water becomes rough. In the harbor, a ship is additionally secured so that it does not break free.

It is the same with us. Our lives are not always calm. Many things cause us worry: the state of the world. Likewise, the profound changes in the church and mission, and in the society around us. There are also burdens in our personal lives: grief, illness, family strife, loneliness. In such times, the soul needs hope — not just in matters of faith.

The foundation of our hope is God’s promise and His “oath” (Heb 6:13-18): that He will bless us in Jesus Christ. Because God keeps His promises, the soul is secured — in all that troubles us.

That is why it is good for us to let ourselves be “anchored”: in listening to Scripture, in prayer, in singing, in the

celebration of the Lord’s Supper. There we are assured: God is here. Avoidance strategies in the face of change ultimately do not help. What concerns us belongs within this perspective: God does not fulfill all our desires, but all His promises.

In June 1854, Emma Rebmann (a missionary’s wife) describes in her diary how the mission ship “Candaze” arrives in Mombasa. It lies at anchor for a whole month; the new missionaries cannot set foot on land. “We felt very sorry for them in their disappointment... for they were full of love and zeal... and now they could do nothing,” Emma recounts. How disheartening that must have been: called to the mission, ready — and held back. So close to the goal. Jesus Christ holds us when our hands are empty.

The diary continues: Since they could not go ashore,

some decided to explore a new option: “...and so they decided to return to the Cape and make themselves useful there. May God be with them!” Eventually, the “Candaze” weighed anchor. The journey to the mission continued quite differently than expected. So it is with hope: It does not solve every problem immediately. But it keeps us — like an anchor keeps a ship — from drifting into the unknown.

Hope in Jesus Christ is not available only to us. Where people pray for the mission in their own communities and for the work throughout the world, this becomes, in a figurative sense, an anchorage for the “ship called the church.” *Markus Nietzsche*

## CHANGE IN ADMINISTRATION

Farewell to Mrs. Milbrandt – Welcome to Mrs. Wolf

Unfortunately, we must once again say goodbye to Mrs. Julia Milbrandt, who has managed our office in Bleckmar for the past two years and has done an excellent job in the process. She has accepted a job offer from her previous employer and will be leaving us on June 1. We are very grateful to Mrs. Milbrandt for her brief but very intensive contribution to our work. Not only did she handle the very diverse, purely administrative tasks with great skill, but she always communicated in a friendly and competent manner and went far beyond what one could expect from an office worker, helping to ensure that the mission house ran smoothly: It was not uncommon for her to pick up a drill or a paintbrush herself to carry out repair work. We wish Mrs. Milbrandt every success in her new / old position and thank her from the bottom of our hearts for her thoughtful dedication!

We are particularly grateful that Mrs. Janina Wolf, like Mrs. Milbrandt also a member of the Große Kreuzkirche in Hermannsburg, will seamlessly take over her work as of May 1. Mrs. Wolf brings solid, broad-based education, which she acquired in the Gifhorn church district. Her qualifications are perfectly tailored to the administrative tasks we need for effective administration and range from financial accounting to payroll accounting and office management. We



Picture: Hohls

V.l.n.r.: Julia Milbrandt, Janina Wolf

warmly welcome her to Bleckmar and wish her a smooth transition. During the first three weeks of May both Mrs. Milbrandt and Mrs. Wolf will be in the office in Bleckmar. This will ensure a smooth and seamless handover of all office duties. So stay tuned to see whether, when you call during this time, you’ll still hear the friendly voice of Mrs. Milbrandt or the equally engaging voice of Mrs. Wolf.

*Edmund Hohls*

Cornelia and Gerhard Bokelmann have lived in Hermannsburg for many decades. They raised a family here and call it home. The stamp campaign they have nurtured since around 1988—though it may have begun a few years earlier—is also in good hands with them.

Retired Mission Director Johannes Junker had asked them in the mid-1980s to convert the postage stamps into monetary value for the Mission of Lutheran Churches (LKM). In fact, through their dedicated work during this time, they have already raised more than 10,000€ for the mission fund.

Mission Director Edmund Hohls recently visited them to express his heartfelt thanks on behalf of the LKM.

## SERVING THE MISSION FOR NEARLY FOUR DECADES

Gerhard and Cornelia Bokelmann have lived in Hermannsburg as a married couple since the 1970s. Gerhard Bokelmann became acquainted with philately as a boy, having been encouraged to do so by his mother. Thus, he brought with him a solid knowledge and a passion for spending countless hours removing, sorting, organizing, and rearranging stamps. Gerhard Bokelmann has long since become a philatelic expert who offers “his wares” at auctions, flea markets, and even on online platforms. A prerequisite for this is a meticulously maintained inventory list he created himself, which can be obtained from them. This allows a potential buyer to quickly get an overview of which stamps they can expect, for example, in a sheet of 100. He also collects stamps privately.

In the course of our conversation, I learn that they not only sell stamps for the benefit of the mission but also, from time to time, coins of various countries. Thus, in the years following the introduction of the euro, the energetic couple undertook an extensive tour of European countries because many mission supporters donated their old currency — brought back from neighbouring countries — to the LKM. The couple exchanged this currency for euros at national banks in Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Spain, Italy, and Austria, among other places.

When I ask them if the LKM ever contributed even a little toward their travel expenses, they both shake their heads. They explain that they were also on vacation, and that the capital they invested was an additional donation to the LKM.

Stamps tell a story; they are, in a sense, silent witnesses to history, an archaeological treasure trove. Over the past decades, public figures have repeatedly been honored by having their portraits featured on stamps. Every stamp has also been on a journey: as postage on a package, a letter, or a postcard. They have not only carried mail but also connected people with one another. In the age of digital communication, postage stamps are used less and less. Yet they are by no means worthless.

Cornelia and Gerhard Bokelmann have long since retired. Demand for stamps has dropped drastically in recent years due to digital communication options, but so has their energy. That’s why they can no longer handle large shipments. Small donations in manageable quantities are still welcome, though. They hope to continue visiting flea markets in the Lüneburg Heath in the future, not only to delight philately enthusiasts with their collection but also to encourage them to buy.

It’s a shame that we don’t have the authority to issue postage stamps.



Picture: Hohls

Given their dedication to the LKM, the Bokelmanns would have deserved to be honored with a stamp of their own.

So all that remains is for us to thank them wholeheartedly: May God bless them.

Edmund Hohls

## 75 YEARS OF MISSION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN FREE CHURCHES (BLECKMARER MISSION)

References for quotations and literature can be found in the full version of the article in “Lutherische Theologie und Kirche” 3/2025.

The (old) Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Church had meanwhile made it clear that “there is no pulpit and communion fellowship between the Hermannsburg Mission Church on the one hand and all dioceses of the Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Church.” The mission leadership therefore expressed its joy February 1954, as did the pastors of the Free Evangelical-Lutheran Synod in South Africa and the missionaries of the Bleckmar Mission, at the changed state of affairs. In October 1954, the 25th General Synod of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Old Prussia (which had since renamed itself the Evangelical-Lutheran (Old Lutheran) Church) passed, among others, the following resolutions: “Our church participates with full shared responsibility in the mission of the Evangelical-Lutheran Free Churches (Bleckmar Mission) by sending one representative to the mission leadership and two representatives to the mission council with a seat and a vote.” “Insofar as old ties to the Leipzig Mission exist, the congregations are free to participate in it in a manner to be regulated by a bylaw.” The Higher Church Council notified the mission leadership of these decisions January 18, 1955. In doing so, it emphasized “that our church has decided to henceforth regard the work of the Mission of Evangelical-Lutheran Free Churches as its actual ecclesiastical mission work.”

With these developments, a provisional consolidation of the MELF was achieved, which also had organizational and legal consequences. Thus, as early as July 1954, a first

draft of the bylaws for the “Verein Bleckmarer Mission e.V.” had been submitted. It was adopted in a revised form on November 27, 1956; and on the same day, the founding meeting of the association took place. Finally, on February 12, 1957, the association was entered into the register of associations at the Bergen Local Court “under No. 69.” This did not truly resolve the internal difficulties; they persisted until 1972, at times acting as obstacles to the merger into the SELK, and have ultimately not been completely resolved to this day.

### 5. Conclusion

The founding of the Mission of Evangelical-Lutheran Free Churches (Bleckmar Mission) was ultimately driven by the conviction that mission is “a matter for the Church as such,” as the constituent General Synod of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Prussia had already formulated programmatically in 1841. The Hanover Evangelical-Lutheran Free Church had decided in 1892 in a very similar vein to conduct “its missionary work as an ecclesiastical [...] endeavour.”

In 1950, this principle was applied to the missionary work of independent Evangelical-Lutheran churches in Germany: Now a confessional institution was established, which—in continuity with the missiological approaches of 1841 and 1892—has rightly called itself the “Lutheran Church Mission” since 1993 to the present day. *Werner Klän*

## ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLY BAPTISM

A special baptismal candle

On July 3, 2016, Matthäus was baptized in the Zion Congregation. His name was not only recorded in our church register but also in the Book of Life. Jesus says to his disciples: “Rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). Matthäus suffered from severe depression but did not let that stop him from returning to Iran a few months after his baptism. I heard from his acquaintances that he was reportedly imprisoned immediately upon his return to Iran and died there. He left his baptismal candle here in Hamburg. Whenever I look at his baptismal candle, I am reminded of how important our missionary work is—that people may come to know and love Jesus Christ as their Savior and be baptized. Thus, even in the face of death, we know: “I will never blot out his name from the Book of Life” (Revelation 3:5).

Exciting visit to Zion: On October 10, Steve Diebenow visited me—the son of Peter Diebenow, who was baptized on the very day that Hamburg and our church were bombed. Pastor Erwin made the first entry in the Zion Congregation’s church register, since the old baptismal register had been retrieved from the burning church during the bombing (see photo): “Peter Diebenow received holy baptism on July 27, 1943, in his pa-



rents’ apartment in Rothenburgsort (a district of Hamburg) (just a few hours before the entire district was destroyed).

Amid all the suffering of World War II, it was a comfort to his parents to know that their Peter had been baptized and had become a child of God. The parents later emigrated to America with Peter. He studied Theology there in Fort Wayne, became a pastor, and died twelve years ago. So it was a very special occasion for his son to be able to visit our church and browse through our church records.

*Sup. Bernhard Schütze*

Superintendent Bernhard Schütze, Hamburg, reports on two baptisms from the life of the Zion Congregation. He writes: “I thank all the congregation members who support the mission work in so many different ways! I especially thank all the godparents for standing up for their godchildren and praying to God for them! May God continue to grant us and many other Christians the opportunity that, through our efforts, people may find the way to Jesus Christ and eternal salvation.”



Picture: privat

On that Picture  
f.l.t.r.: Johannes,  
Anna, Marie,  
Martina und  
Pfarvikar Simon  
Pfitzinger

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

### Assistant Pastor Simon Pfitzinger appointed to Steeden and Limburg

Assistant Pastor Simon Pfitzinger, of Lachendorf, was registered as a mission student many years ago and had originally intended to enter missionary service. That remains his wish, as well as that of his wife, Martina. However, due to financial constraints and the need to consolidate the finances of the Lutheran Church Mission, we are grateful to the church leadership for taking him into their service for the time being. This provided planning security for everyone involved. He has since accepted a call to the Evangelical Lutheran

Zion Congregation in Steeden and the St. John's Congregation in Limburg and will move there this summer. The possibility of future service with the Lutheran Church Mission (Bleckmarer Mission) e.V. is thus not entirely ruled out, but is not planned for the coming years.

We are very grateful to the Pfitzinger family for their flexibility and wish them God's blessing for their ministry in the Hesse-South church district.

*Edmund Hohls*

## REPURPOSING OF THE MISSION HOUSE

### What Has Happened So Far?

On November 28, 2025, the Mission Governing Board issued the following directive to the Mission Council: "1. To prepare for the organization of the LKM without the Bleckmar property, taking into account, among other things," that Bleckmar serves the following functions: "a place of remembrance, an administrative center, and an archive." In addition, it instructed the Mission Leadership to "prepare options for the sale of the property."

What have we done so far? Immediately following the Mission Council meeting, after we had informed the local pastor Markus Nietzsche, the mayor of Bleckmar, and the church community, a member of the Bleckmar congregation came forward with a matter close to his heart: The mission house must absolutely be preserved and continue to serve a good purpose: Lars Wrogemann comes from the same farm as the first Bleckmar missionary, Wilhelm Wrogemann, who was sent out in 1896. He still lives with his family on the same farm in the center of Bleckmar. Since he lives at the heart of both the church and the political community, the mission leadership could not wish for a better source of ideas and local contact person than him. He is also a fountain of ideas, so I am happy to

tell you what the mission leadership has already considered—thanks in part to his initiatives—and has approached potential partners with corresponding inquiries. This now quite extensive list of ideas includes:

- Hospice
- Multigenerational housing
- Accommodation for harvest worker
- Expansion of the nursing home in Bleckmar
- Conversion of the rooms into vacation apartments

Unfortunately, the ideas listed above cannot be realized for a variety of reasons. Will a meeting with the mayor of Bergen, scheduled for May 19, yield new insights?

And yet we can report that something is happening that fills us with joy and hope. Just stay tuned and read the following two articles as well. Then you'll be well-informed about developments in Bleckmar and can join the conversation.

Throughout this process, we have been in close contact with Prof. Dr. Martin Selchert, who has offered to continue to assist us in this process.

*Edmund Hohls*



Picture: Benhöfer

## DISTINGUISHED VISITOR AT THE MISSION HOUSE - DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR AXEL FLADER PAYS A VISIT

In mid-April, we welcomed a distinguished visitor to the Mission House in Bleckmar: District Administrator Axel Flader had heard our request for help in finding a good solution for the future use of the Mission House and gladly accepted our invitation to visit the site.

Rev. Markus Nietzke of Hermannsburg had advised this step, reasoning that “the district administrator would surely know best what is in his district and what is needed.” The former mission director had hit the nail on the head, for it soon became clear that Mr. Flader is very well disposed toward our mission societies, the Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Lower Saxony (Her-

mannsburg Mission) (ELM) and the Mission of Lutheran Churches (LKM), as his wife comes from a missionary family that served in South Africa for many years. So we hit it off right away. It was also good that the head of the building department, Gerald Höhl, was accompanying him, as he was able to provide very knowledgeable information about the prerequisites and requirements in

the building sector and offer reliable advice. The district distinguishes between outdoor and indoor use, with outdoor areas generally intended for agricultural purposes.

This includes the site of the mission house, meaning that rezoning the mission house – for example, into permanent residential units – would be more difficult,

though not impossible, especially in times of housing shortages.

At the start, our housekeeper, Mrs. Bärbel Denning, showed them around our facilities. Both visitors were very impressed by the sound structural condition and the overall state of the double-occupancy rooms, the chapel, the conference rooms, and the dining hall. Even during the tour of the building, they expressed the impression that our mission house would be very well suited for educational institutions, as everything needed for that purpose is

already available. Whether this would bring things full circle was particularly relevant, given that this very part of the mission house was originally designed in the early 1960s as a mission seminary, where seminarians were to be trained and prepared for their ministry. That is indeed what happened until 1980.

Over coffee and cake, our distinguished visitors pointed out several ways to get in touch with potential interested parties.

In a follow-up discussion, the staff at the Mission

House summed it up: Wow, what an encounter! A district administrator who comes and asks, “How can I help you?!” And a head of the building department who provides very knowledgeable information. A strong team!

Deeply impressed by this wonderful and hopefully fruitful encounter, we part ways on this Monday afternoon in April with light hearts – full of anticipation for positive developments.

*Edmund Hohls*





## STEP BY STEP

Hugo Gevers goes Große Kreuzkirche



Picture: privat

The best things in life don't happen all at once, but step by step — or pedal stroke by pedal stroke. So I invite you to join a special project for the mission. Even in mission work, the wheels turn to the rhythm of a bicycle — not at the speed of speeders on the highway. I see my work at the Lutheran Church Mission (now for over 30 years) as a long bike ride: with ups and downs, with headwinds and joyful descents.

A bike ride is a parable not only for the mission, but for life itself.

### The occasion

On September 6, the Great Kreuzkirche Parish in Hermannsburg will host a mission festival — combined with a bike tour, as was once the tradition.

### The project

Outbound: Leipzig, Magdeburg, Elbe Cycle Route, Hitzacker, Hamburg, Lüneburg, Uelzen, Hermannsburg.

Departure is on August 31 at the Lukaskirche in Leipzig.

Sept. 1: Wittenberge- Elbe area. Location to be announced

Sept. 2: Bleckede- Elbe area. Location to be announced

Sept. 3: Hamburg, Zion

Sept. 4: Lüneburg, St. Thomas Congregation

Sept. 5: Uelzen, Ev.-Luth. Christuskirche zur Erfrischung and Hermannsburg Große Kreuz

Arrival after approximately 554 km at an average speed of 25 km/h. After the Mission Festival on September 6 we'll head straight back via Magdeburg to Leipzig.

### How can I get involved?

- **Follow along:** Subscribe to my social media channels! I'll be posting short videos regularly and reaching out to you during the ride. Or visit us at the church congregations in the respective towns.
- **Ride along:** You're warmly invited – to ride the entire way or just a part. Please let me know!
- **Pray along:** Support the project in prayer — for the mission and for a tailwind!
- **Donate:** A one-time donation or an amount per kilometer (554 km) to the Lutheran Church Mission.



I'm thrilled about everyone who joins this project!

Hugo Gevers

# Bleckmarer Missionsfest 12. Juli 2026



Prof. Dr. Heinz  
Hiestermann



Missionsdirektor  
Edmund Hohls

## 10.00 Uhr Festgottesdienst mit Hl. Abendmahl in der St. Johanniskirche

Predigt: Prof. Dr. Heinz Hiestermann  
(LTS Tshwane/Südafrika)  
– Kindergottesdienst –

Anschließend in der Kirche:  
„Die Arbeit der LKM“ (Film)

## 12.00 Uhr Mittagspause

Mittagessen und Zeit für Begegnungen

## 13.30 Uhr Informationen aus dem Luth. Theol. Seminar (LTS)

(Prof. Dr. Heinz Hiestermann)

## 14.30 Uhr Kaffee & Kuchen

## MEMORIES OF A MISSIONARY LIFE – AMONG INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA: 1979-2000

Mrs. Margot Behn was invited to share her story with the Bethlehem Congregation in Hanover. Here is her second contribution. She writes:

Of course, at first we didn't know anyone in the metropolis of Durban — except for the Hecklau missionary couple, who ministered to an Indian congregation in "Phoenix," and our predecessor in Chatsworth, missionary Johannes Schulz and his wife Ruth. We benefited greatly from their experiences and learned a great deal.

In October 1979, our son Johannes was born. And there was a surprise there as well: While people found Christiane "beautiful and sweet," Johannes was truly celebrated. "It's a boy!" One who carries on the family name and can hardly do anything wrong. There are many more stories about the various customs within an Indian family.

Apart from the worship services and Bible study, there were no other events at first. Johannes then started a "women's group," but it failed because many women said they wanted to come but then didn't show up. There were many unnecessary trips to "Chatsworth," and it was frustrating. Until we asked and were told that the husbands didn't want to leave their wives alone with the pastor in church for 1-2 hours. They were jealous! Who would have thought?

None of us! So I held the women's group once a week, and there were almost always 12-15 women. There was always a devotional; we sang and prayed and talked a lot about "my friend who has a big problem. What can we do about it?" We did crafts for Easter and Christmas, celebrated Mother's Day, and went on outings. Things they had previously only done "accompanied" or not at all. We still talk about that today and fondly remember those times.

Another great blessing was our visitors from Germany. Mr. Hermann Lindhorst from Hamburg and his team packed containers in Germany with used items for Africa, and these arrived by ship at the port in Durban. Johannes then had to go to customs, and if everything was in order, the container was released. We sold the clothing with the congregation and were able to use the money to buy paint for the church, for example.

Many groups came to South Africa from this team of volunteers and other interested individuals to experience the mission "up close." This often meant that the children gave up their rooms and we all stayed in the parents' bedroom.

We were always delighted by the great interest in our work and enjoyed showing them the city, the beach, the temples, the bazaar, the snake park, and the aquarium with sharks from the Indian Ocean. We truly lived in a wonderful place. Johannes remarked one day, however: "I'm not going to the aquarium anymore: the fish are already calling out my name!" It's always a gift when people take an interest in the work you do! It certainly did us good!

In Indian culture, hospitality is a top priority, and this was also practiced in the congregation. Birthdays, baptisms, confirmations, Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas were always celebrated with the entire congregation. Everyone brought something to eat, and after the service, we ate together. The Indians usually ate with the three fingers of their right hand (the left hand is considered unclean) — we were given a fork or a spoon.

When we were invited to the Indians' homes, we stayed among ourselves. The hosts waited outside in case we needed anything else. I was always glad about that. The food was usually too spicy for

me, and I was glad that the children loved it and it ended up on their plates. Or I took it home with me, and then the neighbors were happy!

On Sunday afternoons, we were often "visited." People wanted to see what we were up to. Our visitors always brought something "for tea" with them. Johannes would often go fishing at the sea with the men, and I stayed home with the women and children. They had also become "family" to us — partly because of our faith in Jesus Christ, and partly because we shared a completely normal life together.

It was a wonderful time!

*Margot Behn*



Picture: privat



## NEWS ABOUT THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

at the Instituto Santíssima Trindade (ISST) in Moreira

First, a little history: In 1990, Esther Hinzberg (née Meyer) became the first volunteer from Germany to spend a year at ISST. By the year 2000, 19 young people had followed her example, most of whom stayed for three to six months—as long as their tourist visas allowed. Between 2000 and 2020, another 63 volunteers followed. With the pandemic, the volunteer program was put on hold for an extended period.

Volunteers enrich our daily lives with their individual talents. They give their time to things that often get neglected in our busy workdays, get to know our culture and language, and at the same time bring their own perspectives to the table. This creates a lively exchange: We learn from and with one another — and they become a valued part of our large home family. There has been big news in the volunteer service program since March 1, 2026 — the day we had a visit from Regina and Simone. As early as the beginning of the

year, initial discussions took place regarding a potential partnership between the Mission of Lutheran Churches (LKM) and the Evangelical-Lutheran Mission Society in Lower Saxony (ELM), which offers the “Seitenwechsel” volunteer program. The ISST had requested to be included in this program as a host site so that it could welcome volunteers for one-year stints in the future. During the meeting with coordinator Regina (Germany) and Deaconess Simone (Brazil), we were finally able to seal the deal with a handshake, confirming that nothing stands in the way of this collaboration.

Now we just await the formal confirmation and signature from the mission directors—and then a new chapter will begin for the volunteer service with us. Would you like to come visit us sometime? Do a volunteer placement with us? Subscribe to our newsletter? Just get in touch (in German) via email at: [kontakt@isstrindade.org.br](mailto:kontakt@isstrindade.org.br)

Curious about the “Seitenwechsel” program, which allows for volunteer service at various locations? Then feel free to contact Regina directly at: [seitenwechsel@elm-misson.net](mailto:seitenwechsel@elm-misson.net) or find out more at [www.elm-mission.net/seitenwechsel](http://www.elm-mission.net/seitenwechsel)

## INTERVIEW WITH ANDREA RIEMANN

Dear Andrea, 30 years ago you went to Brazil for the first time as a volunteer and have been working ever since to improve the well-being of the people there.

1. Would you like to tell us how it all began?

Yes, I'd love to. The youth group of my home congregation (Zion Verden) had a sponsored child at the children's home for many years, with whom we exchanged letters, and even back then there was the “Brazil Support Group” in our — and neighboring — congregations. So I had already heard a lot about the work of the Instituto Santíssima Trindade (ISST) in Moreira and when the then-director of the home gave a talk in our parish, I knew that one day I wanted to help out myself. In October 1996, I went for the first time as a volunteer for six months to Brazil, and in the following years, I repeated this service several times over longer periods. Since 2007, I have been

serving with the LKM as a staff member in the social, diaconal, and missionary ministry in Brazil. My main workplace is the ISST, where I also live. Once a month, I spend two days in Canoas, where I oversee the “Sunbeam” project and I try to offer children's Bible camps once a year in northern Brazil.

2. What do volunteers do at the ISST, and how can they help you?

Volunteers help us in our daily work with the tasks for which we often lack time and they contribute their talents to our work. Since we care for both children and seniors and, in addition to residential care, we also operate a kindergarten with preschool and a childcare project, the opportunities to get involved are very diverse.

3. What are the specific tasks for the coming period?

This year, we have revamped the sponsorship program at ISST and are striving to

match all children and youth, during the time they spend at the home (max. 1 ½ years), with sponsors who will accompany them. I am still “right in the middle” of this transition, which is a special task. In addition, there is a lot of planning for the home's 80th anniversary and the upcoming renovation of the children's home.

With the Sonnenstrahl project in Canoas, there is a faster turnover of families than before, as many families (due to the flood disaster in 2024) are still moving frequently. This means we are constantly saying goodbye to families and welcoming new families into the project. This, too, is a special task.

Dear Andrea, we thank you for the interview and furthermore wish you Gods blessing.

*The interview was conducted by Edmund Hohls.*

F.l.t.r.:  
Simone Engel-  
Voigt, Coordinator  
of the network  
of Deaconesses  
and Volunteer  
Programm of the  
IECLB.

Regina Temm-  
ler, Coordinator  
North-South  
(ELM)

Werner Kuchen-  
becker, Manager  
of the childrens  
home

Andrea Riemann,  
Church Social  
Worker (LKM)



Ulrich Leupold - persecuted by the Nazis, abandoned by his church

Wolf Warnecke, Tarmstedt, draws attention to this worthwhile article about the life of a lesser-known Protestant hymn writer and theologian.

## A LIFE IN PIECES

He is risen, Hallelujah!

Ulrich Siegfried Leupold, the author of the hymn “He Is Risen, Hallelujah” (ELKG<sup>2</sup> 459), fled as a “half-Jew” from Nazi Germany to Canada. His grandparents had already been Christians. The church did not do enough to stand up for its own members when they were of Jewish descent. Not even the Confessing Church, which is often glorified as a resistance organization.

Leupold was born in 1909 in Berlin. His father, Anton Wilhelm Leupold, served as organist at St. Peter’s Church in Berlin-Mitte, which was destroyed in 1945. His mother, Gertrud, a singer and music teacher, came from a Protestant family with Jewish roots. After graduating from high school in 1927, he studied theology and music in Berlin. In 1937, he passed his first theological examination. In 1939 he went to Canada to work as an “assistant pastor” in Kitchener until 1942. On July 11, 1942, he married Gertrude Daber there. Beginning in April 1945, Leupold became a professor of New Testament and church music at Waterloo Lutheran University (Ontario), where he also served as director of church music. From 1957 onward, he was dean, and from 1968 onward, director of the seminary. He traveled regularly to Europe and was actively involved in ecumenical work.

From these international connections emerged his hymn “He Is Risen, Hallelujah.” Its melody is based on a tribal song of the Haya people in northeastern Tanzania. In 1966, the Tanzanian pastor Bernard Kyamanywa at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Arusha adapted it into the Swahili hymn “Mfurahini, haleluya.” He was inspired to do so by the German Bethel missionary Gerhard Jasper, who encouraged his students to write new lyrics to traditional African melodies. Howard S. Olson brought the hymn, which first appeared in a hymnal in 1968, not only to North America but also to an international hymnal working group.

In a sermon titled “All Christians Are Asylum Seekers” Leupold compared the emigrant’s move to America in 1950 with the turning point in life marked by the confession of Christ and becoming a Christian for life : “We enter a new world when we become citizens of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ (...) Spiritually speaking, becoming an ‘asylum seeker’ is no less painful than leaving one’s homeland.”

By Klaus Loscher and Markus Springer in *www.sonntagsblatt.de* (published on June 9, 2020)

## TWO FACULTY MEMBERS FROM LTS

This summer, we are expecting two faculty members from the Lutheran Theological Seminary Pretoria / Tshwane (LTS) to visit Germany

Rev. Mintesinot Hanfato will be in Germany from May 23 to June 21, and Rev. Dr. Heinz Hiesteremann will seamlessly follow up his visit from June 27 to July 19. While Rev. Hanfato teaches at the seminary and fulfills important duties as registrar, Rev. Dr. Hiesteremann leads the LTS and also teaches students himself at the theological educational institution, which is becoming increasingly important for Africa.

Rev. Hanfato also leads a congregation in Diepkloof, Soweto. In this vast residential area, located southwest of Johannesburg, there is unfortunately a very high rate of unemployment, which particularly affects young people. The Diepkloof Evangelical-Lutheran Church would like to address this issue and increase job opportunities for young people through a computer school where they can learn digital skills. To do this, we need your help to implement this three-year project from 2027 to 2029.

Not only passing on theological expertise, but also providing theological training for congregation members has been a priority of the Bleckmar Mission from the very beginning. This year we are already celebrating the 25th anniversary of the LTS in the national capital Pretoria / Tshwane, which starting in January of this year will undergo a much-needed expansion. From Rev. Dr. Hiesteremann, you will learn many interesting facts about the LTS and its specific challenges.

My heartfelt request to all congregations of our church: Please feel free to invite our two staff members and stay up to date on developments in Diepkloof / Soweto and at the LTS in Pretoria / Tshwane.

Thank you very much for your support of our church’s mission work!

Edmund Hohls



Picture: privat



Picture: privat

## VISITING GERMANY IN 2026

Rev. Mintesinot Hanfato would like to visit your congregation weekdays from: May 24 to June 21.

Rev. Dr. Heinz Hiesteremann would like to visit your congregation weekdays from: June 29 to July 18.

During these periods, both missionaries can be contacted at: +49176 56011459

# FEBRUARY TO APRIL 2026

<b>Kirchenbezirk Niedersachsen Ost</b>	
Hamburg (Dreieinigkei)	2.960,00
Hohenwestedt	150,00
Kiel	900,00
Nettelkamp	2.435,51
Stelle	2.400,00
Wriedel	140,00
Klein Süstedt (Nachtrag)	2.367,70

## Kirchenbezirk Niedersachsen-West

Bremen	718,00
Bremen	311,78
Bleckmar	356,00
Hermannsburg Kl. Kreuzk.	120,00
Hermannsburg Gr. Kreuzk.	624,57
Soltau	205,00
Sottrum	8.240,20
Tarmstedt	779,00
Verden	50,00
Sittensen	285,00

## Kirchenbezirk Niedersachsen-Süd

Alfeld	65,00
Arpke	530,00
Bielefeld	62,00
Celle	150,00
Groß Oesingen	7.000,00
Hannover St. Petri	91,50
Hannover Bethlehem	1.287,67
Hildesheim	75,00
Lachendorf	600,00
Lage	595,00
Rodenberg	820,80
Rotenhagen	162,50
Schwenningdorf	57,50
Seershausen	596,00

Stadthagen	172,00
Veltheim	450,00
Wittingen	575,84
Talle	200,00
Blasheim	83,00

## Kirchenbezirk Sachsen-Thüringen

Halle-Dessau	363,00
Steinbach-Hallenberg	266,00

## Kirchenbezirk Lausitz

Döbbrick	600,00
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## Kirchenbezirk Rheinland-Westfalen

Borghorst	30,00
Münster/Gronau	90,00
Köln	371,72
Witten	299,50

## Kirchenbezirk Hessen-Nord

Kassel	135,00
Obersuhl	300,00
Widdershausen	375,00
Usenborn	442,50
Schlierbach	37,00
Warzenbach	201,00

## Kirchenbezirk Hessen-Süd

Allendorf/Ulm	490,00
Grünberg	150,00
Steeden	703,90
Limburg	153,55
Oberursel	450,00
Wiesbaden	300,00

## Kirchenbezirk Süddeutschland

Kaiserslautern	219,00
Stuttgart	750,00
Nürnberg	166,66
Sperlingshof	10,00
Walpershofen	152,00

## Kirchenbezirk Berlin-Brandenburg

Berlin-Neukölln	475,00
Jabel	160,00

## Spenden nach Heimgängen

Hanna Dittmer (Nachtrag)	1330,00
Siegfried Mroczinski	1000,00
Martha Weinthäter	400,00
Ernst Harms	825,00
Ekkehard Meyer	710,00
Erika Behrens	50,00

## Missionsfeste

SELK Obersuhl	621,00
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## Spenden zu besonderen Anlässen

Diam. Hochzeit - Dill	200,00
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## Aktion Briefmarken und Münzen

1.198,00

## Ausland

Einzelspende	1.000,00
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**Einzelspender** 75.528,30

## Bank details Europe

Lutherische Kirchenmission  
(Bleckmarer Mission) e.V.  
IBAN: DE09 2579 1635 0100 4239 00  
BIC: GENODEF1HMN

## Bank details South Africa

Mission of Lutheran Churches  
Account: 1913-137-538  
Swiftcode: NEDSAJ

## Übersicht Besondere Projekte

Leipzig „Die Brücke“	1.510,00
PC Schule Soweto	17.408,00
Umlazi (Südafrika)	75,00
Thuthukani / Megan du Plessis	210,00
St. Martin's Village (Südafrika)	1.222,00
Newcastle (Südafrika)	2.060,00
Macadamia-Plantage	100,00
Mosambik	3.359,00
Canoas (Brasilien)	19.217,00
Moreira (Brasilien)	25.628,00

## Jahresübersicht 2026 | Allgemeine Gaben

Monat	Soll (rund)	Ist
Dezember 2025	193.000,00	147.816,00
Januar	55.000,00	44.224,00
Februar	55.000,00	32.598,00
März	55.000,00	28.117,00
April	55.000,00	77.993,00
Mai	55.000,00	
Juni	55.000,00	
Juli	55.000,00	
August	55.000,00	
September	55.000,00	
Oktober	55.000,00	
November	55.000,00	
Dezember	193.000,00	
<b>Jahressumme</b>	<b>743.000,00</b>	

# DONATIONS

Lutherische Kirchenmission Bleckmarer Mission e.V.

IBAN: DE09 2579 1635 0100 4239 00

BIC: GENODEF1HMN

## Donations South Africa

Mission of Lutheran Churches

Account: 1913-137-538

Swiftcode: NEDSZAJJ

# COMING MISSION FESTIVALES

- June 7.: Mission Festival Weigersdorf – Rev. M. Büttner  
Mission Festival Melsungen – Rev. M. Hanfato
- June 14.: Mission Festival Spiesen-Elversberg – Rev. M. Hanfato
- June 28.: Mission Festival Brunsbrock – Rev. B. Lippa  
Mission Festival Hamburg – Prof. Dr. H. Hiestermann
- July 5.: Mission Festival Groß Oesingen – Prof. Dr. H. Hiestermann
- July 12.: Mission Festival Bleckmar – Prof. Dr. H. Hiestermann
- July 19.: Mission Festival Gistenbeck – Prof. Dr. H. Hiestermann
- July 19.: Mission Festival Stuttgart – Rev. E. Hohls
- Sep. 6.: Mission Festival Große Kreuzkirche Hermannsburg – Missionar H. Gevers
- Sep. 20.: Mission Festival Edertal-Mehlen (Bergheim) Hessen-Nord – Rev. E. Hohls

Find out more about the work of the Lutheran Church Mission (Bleckmarer Mission) e.V. on the following channels:

### Germany:

LKM



Subscribe to our newsletter:  
[missionsdirektor@selk.de](mailto:missionsdirektor@selk.de),  
NL in the subject line

### South Africa:

Mission of Lutheran Churches (MLC):



### “Die Brücke” (The Bridge):



Be sure to bookmark the page below! This will give you access to a new video posted every week by our staff in Leipzig. Missionary Hugo Gevers and

his team provide inspiration, present thought-provoking ideas, and allow us to participate in their very important work there. The videos are always uploaded on Saturdays at 6 p.m. It's worth it! Subscribe to the page so you don't miss anything:

### Brazil:

The Instituto Santíssima Trindade children's and retirement home in Moreira, Brazil, publishes a newsletter every three months. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact us: [kontakt@isstrindade.org.br](mailto:kontakt@isstrindade.org.br)

Information about the work of the three “schools for the poor” and the Sonnenstrahl project is available from Andrea Riemann: [lkm-Riemann@selk.de](mailto:lkm-Riemann@selk.de)