

community

The New Apostolic Church around the world

3/2026/EN

One church, one Spirit, and a new leader



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on earth

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The immense potential
of a tiny seed

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A taste of heaven on earth

Dear brothers and sisters,

It has now been a few weeks since I was ordained as Chief Apostle. I am deeply grateful for your prayers, your support, and for all your kind thoughts and messages. Please be assured that I am praying for you all.

This Pentecost meant far more to us than simply a change in the leadership of the Church. Our focus was on commemorating the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and all that He does. He directs our eyes to Jesus Christ and thereby to the truth, which gives us stability and guidance.

In Jesus, we discover who God is for us: not distant, not silent, and not indifferent, but a God who comes, who humbles Himself and becomes human in order to be with us. He shares our life and our sufferings, and even where hatred, violence, and contempt reign, He responds with love: “Father, forgive them.”

For all who look to Christ in this way, our annual motto becomes a promise: “Don’t be afraid. Just believe!” In a time, when many people are unsettled, troubled, and anxious, this is the divine answer of the Comforter—for perfect love drives out fear. May the love of Christ touch our hearts so that fear may lose its hold over us.



■ New Apostolic Church International

You are loved by God, desired, and infinitely precious to Him—just as your neighbour is.

Pentecost brings the language of the heart: a language that unites, uplifts, and establishes peace. Wherever this language is spoken, a little bit of heaven already begins to take shape on earth.

Heartfelt greetings

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read 'Helge Mutschler'. The script is cursive and fluid.

Helge Mutschler

The immense potential of a tiny seed



■ NAC Western Germany

Divine service with the then Chief Apostle Helper
Helge Mutschler on 1 February 2026 in Lindlar, Germany

Luke 17: 5–6



*And the Apostles said to the Lord,
“Increase our faith.” So the Lord said,
“If you have faith as a mustard seed,
you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be
pulled up by the roots and be planted
in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”*

This applies to elderly people, and sometimes even younger people, who may be deeply attached to certain traditions and ways of thinking and have grown accustomed to these throughout their lives. Sometimes one also hears this in relation to older people who must leave their own homes and perhaps relocate to a care home—something which is very, very difficult for many of our elderly members. You do not simply uproot an old tree—certainly not a mulberry tree, the very tree Jesus pointed to as He spoke to His disciples.

Such a mulberry tree is arguably a rather ugly specimen, but an ugly specimen with very, very deep roots. The root system of a mulberry fig runs so deep that transplanting it is simply impossible. It might be possible with huge specialised machinery, but essentially it is as though the Lord Jesus had been standing next to the Empire State Building with His disciples at the time and telling them, “If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to the Empire State Building, ‘Pull yourself up and transplant yourself in the Hudson River.’”

Our Bible text conveys a different sentiment, a different outlook on life. In this idea of uprooting and transplanting a mulberry fig, an attitude of life emerges shaped by the conviction that there is a power that transcends limitations—where the impossible becomes possible. There is lightness, there is joy—something altogether different, of which Jesus Christ speaks.

We must consider the context of this biblical passage. The four verses preceding it, Luke 17: 1–4, are important. Jesus speaks to His disciples and points out to them that there will be temptations and attacks from outside. He tells them that they will be tempted to sin, tempted by whatever means to renounce the true faith. But what is even more serious is that there will be attacks from within. He tells them that they will experience conflicts among themselves, that there may be arguments, and that they could be hurt.

Then He tells them that if your brother or sister comes to you and regrets having hurt you, forgive them. But how many times must we forgive? It is not that easy. Yes, says Jesus, it is not easy. He tells them that they must forgive seven times in a day. Seven is the number of completeness. Jesus did not mean to say: you should forgive once, twice, three times, four times, five times, six times, seven times.

And once you have forgiven seven times, and the brother comes an eighth time, then you should say, “No, I won’t forgive you anymore.” That is obviously not what is meant. It is the number of completeness. Jesus says that we must always forgive and always be willing to forgive.

We know how difficult that is, how impossible it can be to forgive. We can understand why the disciples said to Jesus, “Lord, that is difficult. It is impossible. Please increase our faith that we can do this.” When the disciples asked the Lord to increase their faith, they may have meant: Jesus, we need greater faith. We need better faith. We need more perfect faith, more powerful faith. We need faith that enables us to pray more effectively, to have a greater impact through our faith.

*What matters is not
that you have great
faith, but that you have
even a little faith in
the great God*

Do you know that feeling, that desire? Oh, my God, if only I had greater faith, if only I could pray better, if only I could receive the word of God more deeply in the divine service; if only I could do all this better, more deeply, more vigorously, then I could make sickness disappear through my prayer. Then I could handle my situation much better. Then I would be

able to cope much better with the way things are in this world. It would be much easier for me.

If only I were like the great heroes of faith of ancient times, like Moses. The Israelites had fled Egypt, and now stood on the shores of the Red Sea. Behind them was the Egyptian army, which had caught up with them. On the horizon they could see the chariots and wished themselves back in Egyptian captivity. And then Moses, this hero of faith, appeared and said, “Do not be afraid. The Lord will fight for you.” If only I had such faith—if only I could be a hero of faith like Moses.

This is typical, typical of the world in which we live: always stronger, always more assertive. We must fight our way through. We must climb to the top of podium and claim first place. Because the weak count for nothing. The weak ones back there, the ones picked up by the sweeper bus, are forgotten: they do not count for anything at all. You must fight. And if necessary, you must elbow your way through, show your strength, and fight. It is so typical to apply this to faith as well. And that is exactly where Jesus steps in—into this very situation, into these notions of faith—and says, “If you have faith as a mustard seed ...”



*That is what this message
is about: transcending
the limitations we know.
It is about a new lightness,
a new relationship.*

I am no expert on agriculture, but I have heard that mustard seeds were the smallest known seeds at the time. It takes around 700 of them to make a single gram. They are so tiny that you would need a good pair of glasses even to see a single seed clearly. “If you have faith as a mustard seed ...” Even your very tiny faith—your nearly broken, fragile faith—counts in the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ. What matters is not that you have great faith, but that you have even a little faith in the great God. If you have even a little faith in the great God, you can uproot trees. But you cannot uproot these trees because you are so strong and so great, but because Jesus Christ is great within you, because Jesus Christ is powerful through the weak.

When we speak of faith the size of a mustard seed, we are talking about genuine faith. This is true faith, faith that

matters. Our annual motto is “Don’t be afraid. Just believe!” Yes, but what does “just believe” mean? It is simple, sincere faith—faith like a mustard seed. It is a faith that does not rely on its own strength: I am strong, or I must be strong. But what happens if I am not strong? This genuine faith, this faith like a mustard seed, simply trusts in the Lord Jesus.

Being a believer in this sense and having such genuine faith, such simple faith means to believe in the Lord Jesus. It means believing that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became human; that He lived and carried out His mission on this earth—and that these are not symbols or a collection of nice stories, but real events in history. True faith is believing that the Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross so that He might be where we are, so that we might hear His unequivocal no to sin, but His yes to you and me as sinners. True faith is believing that we can feel and understand that He is with us—in our sin, even in our death. True faith means believing that He died on the cross. This genuine, simple faith believes that He rose on the third day, that death could not hold Him. Genuine faith believes that Jesus ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God, holds all things in His hands, and that He will come again.

This genuine faith, this faith like a mustard seed, is humble, simple, and unpretentious. It does not feel compelled to struggle desperately or rely solely on its own strength. Rather, it is a quiet and humble faith that entrusts itself completely to the Lord Jesus. But what does this look like in practice? What does it mean?



Topic number one: suffering. I recently heard of a case where things were already difficult enough: age combined with a serious illness. Then, to make matters worse, a new devastating diagnosis was added on top of the existing burdens. Sometimes we find ourselves thinking: now I must really kneel down, and surely we can manage to pray this problem away. All we must do is believe properly. But what if that does not work? Oh, I pray for you, sister or brother who are affected by this and in the midst of suffering, that you can still trust in your Lord Jesus Christ just a tiny, tiny bit—despite your many doubts. I pray that perhaps during this divine service, or this afternoon, or next week, a tiny glimmer of hope may come from God right into the midst of your suffering. And may you feel and experience: “Yes, I can let myself go. I am in this terrible situation; perhaps I will never recover, but even so, I sense—I see—a tiny glimmer of hope. I sense that this great God is at work, that the day is coming when there will be no more suffering, no more crying, no more pain, no more tears, and no more death. It’s all right to doubt. Perhaps you can believe just a little bit more—that is enough. Such small, fragile moments of faith count for a great, great deal in the eyes of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ.

Topic number two: our image of God. Over the years, certain images of God have become deeply ingrained in the hearts of many brothers and sisters and taken deep root like a mulberry tree: God punishes. Or, with God you must do this and that and perform specific deeds in order to enter heaven. But I have the faith of a mustard seed and believe that the impossible can become possible: namely, that together we can develop a different image of God. Perhaps you experienced it last Wednesday or Sunday sitting in divine service and hearing about God being love. And then you might have thought to yourself: I don’t know, my image of God, formed over sixty years, does not seem to be right after all. Perhaps this God is love, after all. Such moments are mustard-seed moments of faith. Hold on to these little moments, and the impossible will become possible. In your heart, roots of a completely different kind are taking hold: namely, those of a God who truly means well, who stands behind you, surrounds you on all sides, and wishes to protect and guide you, who wants to bring you joy and delight, and desires nothing other than to have a relationship with you and share eternal life with you. He is love. I hope you can recognise this in those little mustard-seed moments of faith.



Topic number three: our sin. Sin has taken root. We often know best what sin constantly plagues or tempts us and always makes us wonder, “Why have I fallen for this again?” And then we think, after this service, I will try harder, I will really make an extra effort and pull it out of my heart completely—and I am going to succeed. But we fail to realise that we will never succeed on our own. What we need is faith as small as a mustard seed: this simple faith that trusts in the fact that Jesus Christ said to His Father on the cross, “Father, forgive them.” And that Jesus Christ looks at you from the cross and says, “I have overcome, and I would like to take you by the hand. Let us try again together? I have overcome both the world and sin. Come and bring your little, genuine, and simple mustard-seed faith that allows you to place yourself into My hand. You will see, together we will find our way out of this pit of sin.”

Topic number four: forgiveness. Certain images of other people have become etched into our hearts. For example, a certain colleague or fellow student or neighbour. Come what may, we know what she is like, and we know him, we know the grandparents and the parents. The apple does not fall far from the tree. They were all like that. There is nothing you can do about it. That is just the way they are. They have hurt you and you cannot possibly create a situation of

forgiveness or reconciliation. And then? I have experienced it after a divine service in the case of a brother and a sister. He hurt her many, many years ago. The divine service was about forgiveness, but not forgiveness achieved through one's own efforts: I can do this now. This is the same theme: faith the size of a mustard seed. It means surrendering ourselves into the hands of Jesus Christ and trusting Him to take us by the hand and create a different image within our hearts, so that a different image of our neighbour may blossom there. The two were reconciled after the divine service. I listened; it was actually something absolutely impossible.

I know that the subject of forgiveness is so difficult. Sometimes people do such terrible things. And sometimes the process of forgiveness lasts a lifetime, and other times it simply cannot be done in this life. Let us not agonise but place ourselves into the hands of Jesus Christ. Sometimes the impossible becomes possible, and a broken situation can be mended. Who knows? That is what this message is about: transcending the limitations we know. It is about a new lightness, a new relationship.

Next topic: the situation in society and the fear it instils in us. The issues we have been preoccupied with over the past four or five years have left a palpable sense of fear every-



Last topic: the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. From a rational perspective we say that this is utterly impossible. Some members—and here we must also consider the history of our Church—even feel a sense of dread at the thought. Oh, how I long for us not to approach the return of the Lord Jesus Christ with fear, but for it to create joy within us. Yes, from a rational point of view it is completely impossible. How are we even to imagine it? The return of Jesus, the kingdom of peace, and the resurrection are all things that are so unknown, so incomprehensible. But perhaps we can still say, “Dear Lord Jesus, I can hardly believe it. Sometimes I have serious doubts, and sometimes I am afraid. How-

ever, I will simply allow myself to fall into Your hands.” Then the day will come when we will have no more questions because we will see Him as He is. This morning, the Lord Jesus simply wants to place this deep into our hearts. This is how I sense it: “Don’t struggle so hard, don’t be so tense! Don’t rely so much on your own strength! Trust in My strength instead. I am the strength. I am the future. I am life. I am the resurrection. I am the light and the hope and the future. Simply place yourself into My hands, and then you will be able to uproot trees.”

where. Fear has grown and is everywhere today, deeply rooted in people’s hearts. I wish for all of us—and it seems almost impossible in light of the realities we are experiencing—that we may nevertheless succeed in placing ourselves into the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ and experience a mustard-seed moment from time to time in which we sense that things are moving forward. Everything is in God’s hands. He holds the entire course of world events in His hands, and things are not all going down the drain, nor will everything end in utter darkness. Rather, the Lord Jesus will come, and great things lie ahead for us. I hope that such small moments of hope and light will continue to arise within us.

Next topic: our mission. We see the realities in our congregations. In many places, the pews are growing increasingly empty alongside an ongoing de-Christianisation of society. However, Jesus says, “Go and make disciples of all the nations ... baptising them ... and teaching them.” And we think that this is out of the question—utterly impossible. We cannot simply uproot and transplant these people. It is unthinkable. The point is, let us simply place ourselves into the hands of Jesus Christ and carry out our mission and remain united with Him, as best we can, in simple, humble faith, and do what lies within our reach. This means allowing small moments to flourish such as small acts of kindness, brief prayers for our neighbour, and so on.

CORE THOUGHTS

Faith in Jesus Christ, even as small as a mustard seed, is enough. What matters is not our strength, but what God does and achieves within us. It is precisely in suffering, guilt, fear, and conflict that Jesus invites us to let go and trust in Him. Those who entrust themselves into His hands experience hope and forgiveness and discover that even what seems impossible can become possible.

Recognising the truth in the light of Christ

The many voices around us are loud, powerful, and persuasive, and they all seem to come from God. But which one speaks the truth? A discerning faith and Christ as our model and guide can help us discern the word of God.



■ NAC Panama



“What is God’s word?” With this question, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider began the divine service in Panama City, Panama, on 25 January 2026.

Chief Apostle Schneider appealed to the congregation: “Let us examine all these ‘teachers’, these people who claim to preach God’s word.”

Much noise, but only one truth

In today’s world, many claim to have been sent by God and to proclaim His word. So who is telling the truth? “We must examine their teachings,” Chief Apostle Schneider said.

Just because people cite the Bible does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth. Even the devil came to Jesus and quoted Scripture. And just because someone speaks loudly and convincingly does not mean that they are right. Or just because millions listen to and believe in someone does not mean that they are telling the truth. And just because someone is successful and rich does not mean that they are telling the truth. The devil has the power and possesses the wealth of this world, and can distribute it as he pleases. It is not the truth simply “because their teaching matches your opinion, your feelings, and your desire”.

The test of true discipleship

To recognise true teachers, true disciples of Christ, we must examine whether they are:

- sincere: “Do they practise what they preach?” Or are they like the Pharisees, who did not live according to their own demands.
- loving: “Jesus Christ loved every person without condition.” Whether they followed Him, rejected Him, or even sought to kill Him, He prayed for their salvation.
- peaceful: “Jesus did not use violence or threats, or force sinners to change.” Motivating change through love—that was His way. He spoke the truth and did not care whether His message was accepted.
- pleasing to God: “Many only tell people what they want to hear.” For them, it is important to please others, not God.



The orchestra and choir set the atmosphere

- willing to suffer: “Jesus Christ was willing to suffer in order to convey His message.”

The teaching of the Apostles

Some believe they do not need teachers because they are inspired directly by the Holy Spirit. However, this is not how it works. “The Bible says that the gospel must be preached and heard,” Chief Apostle Schneider emphasised. “We know and believe that the Apostles were sent by Jesus to teach the gospel.” The teaching of the Apostles has been valid since Jesus’ death and will continue to be valid until His return.

The Apostles’ teaching shows us what is necessary for salvation. It is independent of who proclaims it and who receives it. “They all teach the same doctrine,” the Chief Apostle said. And they are also willing to suffer in order to spread the message, motivated by their love for Christ and their neighbour.

Filter everything through Christ

We must test whether the message is truly inspired by the Holy Spirit. “Where the Holy Spirit is at work, He refers only to Jesus Christ.” This means ...

- “... reading the Bible in the light of Jesus Christ’s teachings.” One must not mix a passage from the Old Testament with the New Testament. The gospel is the ultimate truth.
- “... He did not come to change society, but to transform people so that they may enter the kingdom of God.”
- “... to become like Jesus Christ and to be humble.” God is not bound by our prayers or offerings. The wisdom of the Holy Spirit is to accept God’s will and to ask for the strength to remain faithful under the circumstances God has allowed.

- “... salvation is not related to our deeds or keeping certain rules.”
- “... love God and love your neighbour.” The Holy Spirit seeks to transform us so that we can truly love God and our neighbour, and forgive others and accept them as they are.

Even though the Apostles are inspired by the Holy Spirit, their message must also be tested. “That means, think about it deeply. Reflect on what was said so that God’s will becomes our will.” Then we will no longer do God’s will out of obedience, but out of conviction that this is the right path.

“Test everything. The gospel concerns every aspect of our existence,” Chief Apostle Schneider urged. “And hold fast to what is good.”

CORE THOUGHTS

1 Thessalonians 5: 21

“Test all things; hold fast what is good.”

The Holy Spirit admonishes us to strive for eternal life and to follow Christ. Let us trust the teaching of the Apostles and implement them in all areas of our lives.

The courage of humility

God helps at the right time. Modesty, trust, and openness guide us along the way. In a divine service for the departed, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider illustrated what this means specifically.



Top left: A warm welcome is extended to Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider and District Apostle Michael Ehrich

Top right: The congregation in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone

Left: Chief Apostle Schneider at the altar

The message is clear: God wants to deliver all human beings from all evil—not only the living, but also the dead. For suffering does not necessarily end with death. This was the central message of a divine service on 1 March 2026 in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Suffering that lingers

Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider identified specific forms of this spiritual suffering:

- lack of love: feeling unseen or unappreciated
- frustration: failed plans and unfulfilled wishes
- disappointment: hurts, wrongs, and betrayal
- remorse: mistakes that cannot be undone
- resentment: the desire for retribution

The way: listen, believe, and follow

Salvation begins when a person hears God's call, the Chief Apostle continued. But listening alone is not enough; it requires faith and the decision to follow the call.

More specifically, this means that one must acknowledge God's authority, believe in Jesus Christ, to whom all power



The divine service for the departed was broadcast to part of District Apostle Michael Ehrich's African district



has been given, and submit to the law of Christ, namely, the commandment to love God above all else and our neighbour as ourselves.

Grace matters most

Everyone has sinned, Chief Apostle Schneider said. Sin separates us from God and cannot be made up for by good deeds—it must be forgiven. And forgiveness is only found in Jesus Christ. In other words, salvation cannot be earned; it comes solely through God's grace.

Those who recognise this and come to God can be certain that He will welcome them in love, just as the father welcomed the prodigal son. God is faithful and trustworthy. He says what He will do, does what He says, and delivers definitively.

How God works

How does God help? Not in an abstract sense, but in a very concrete way:

- through baptism, which cleanses and admits into the church of Christ
- through baptism with the Spirit, the guarantee to eternal life
- through God's word and Holy Communion, which prepares us for the return of Christ

This is true for both the dead and the living. However, the living continue to be exposed to temptations and adversity; again and again, they fall into sin and are likewise unable to free themselves from it by their own strength.

The access to help and deliverance remains the same, Chief Apostle Schneider explained: approaching God with humility. That means trusting in Him even without fully understanding, sharing His love with others, and striving for unity. And in the end, there is an invitation to recognise and acknowledge our own faults, to ask for God's grace, and to rely on His help.

After all, God knows what we need better than we do ourselves.

CORE THOUGHTS

Hebrews 4: 16

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

God comes to the aid of the humble—those who submit to His will, trust in Him, and ask for His grace. He gives them everything they need for salvation.

A choir and orchestra enrich the divine service



Belief in the resurrection changes everything

Rather than silent devotion, Jesus wants us to act: to go out, bear witness, and help others. Prayer without action falls short of the mission. Chief Apostle Schneider calls for transformation.

Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider celebrated the divine service for Easter with his brothers and sisters in Brisbane, Australia. On Sunday morning, 20 April 2025, just under 900 members assembled in the Royal International Convention Centre.

Understanding the resurrection with our faith

The individual gospels describe the events surrounding the resurrection differently because they were composed by different authors for different audiences. These differences can be explained by the circumstances under which they came into being, but their central message is one and the same, Chief Apostle Schneider said, “Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who died and resurrected for the redemption of humankind.”

What is important, therefore, is not the literal interpretation, but the proper understanding that we can have with the help of the Holy Spirit. For Christians today this means: the resurrection is a reality. Those who hear the call of Jesus, understand His words, experience fellowship with Him in Holy Communion, or live among the believers can also encounter Him today. Faith is not simply knowledge, but a relationship that we can experience with the living Christ, Chief Apostle Schneider explained.

Who Jesus really is

By raising Him from the dead, God confirmed both the teachings and person of Jesus Christ:

- God is the way Jesus revealed Him. Jesus Christ says, “God is the living God, the One who loves the sinner, who desires to save everyone.”

Gathered for a group picture in Brisbane

- Jesus is the beloved Son of God. God cared for His Son throughout His entire life, but His priority was to enable Jesus Christ to enter the kingdom of God as a human being. God also provides for us in our daily lives, but His priority is to help us enter the kingdom of God and receive eternal life.
- Jesus is the man who is fully conformed to the divine will. We want to become like Jesus and enter the kingdom of God as human beings in the same way that Jesus was able to enter the kingdom of God.
- Jesus Christ is Immanuel, meaning “God with us”. Through His resurrection, Jesus showed us that He was still with us human beings—and they were able to meet Him in person. And Jesus Christ is and remains “God with us”—even today. We encounter Him when we listen to His teachings, when we have fellowship with other people, and when we celebrate Holy Communion. And He tells us, “I am praying for you. I am interceding on your behalf.”
- Through Jesus it is God who called the disciples—and who still calls us today. Jesus says: “I want you to enter the glory of God just as I entered the glory of God.”



“We cannot content ourselves by seeking individual contact with Jesus in prayer, worship, and reflection,” Chief Apostle Schneider explained. “Jesus also sends us out today: He wants us to contribute to the salvation of others by proclaiming the gospel and by doing good!”

Faith that transforms

The resurrection of Jesus transformed the disciples. Faith in the resurrection also brings about profound changes in believers today. It makes us:

- courageous. Jesus Christ is definitively the victor. Good will triumph over evil. The devil will lose the battle. That is our conviction. This assurance also makes us confident today.
- insightful. “So it is that we likewise understand the doctrine of Jesus properly—not only as it applies to our lives here on earth. The goal is our resurrection and eternal life.”
- focused. “The power of faith—the power of the gospel—is the truth, not necessarily what we can see or understand.”
- believing. We believe, just as the disciples did—Jesus will come soon. And we want to be prepared for this event. That is the purpose of our lives. This is our goal.
- united. The early Christians were one heart and one soul. “And our concern is likewise to be united, because Jesus wants us to be one.”

CORE THOUGHTS

John 20: 17–18

“Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’ Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.”

The resurrection of Christ confirms His divine Sonship and His teaching. Faith in the resurrection transforms who we are and how we live. Christ sends us out to do good.

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

BASED ON GENESIS 37; 39–41 AND 45–47

Joseph had eleven brothers. Their father Jacob was particularly fond of Joseph and gave him a colourful coat. This made his brothers jealous. One night, Joseph had two dreams. In both of them, he was the centre of attention and was honoured. When he told his brothers about them, they became even more jealous and very angry. They no longer spoke kindly to him.

Some time later, the brothers were far away, tending sheep.

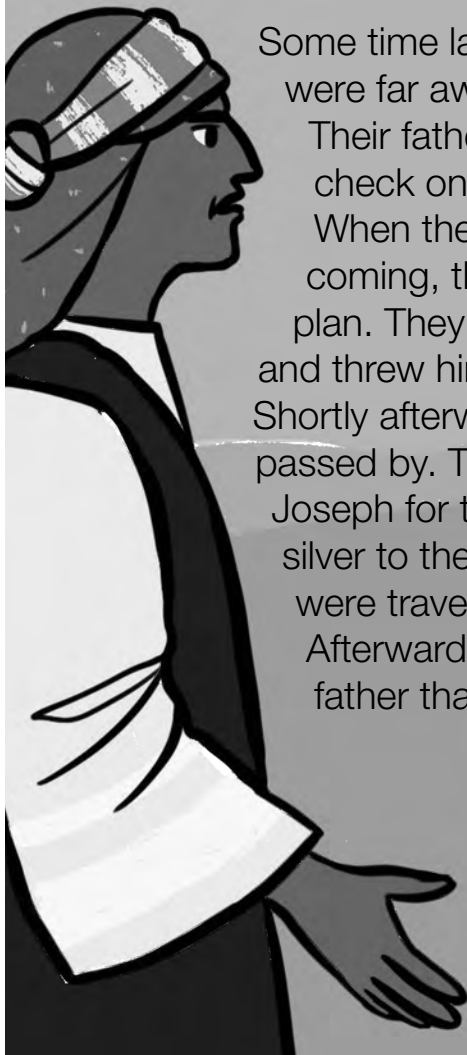
Their father sent Joseph to check on them.

When the brothers saw him coming, they hatched an evil plan. They took Joseph's coat and threw him into a deep pit. Shortly afterwards, a caravan passed by. The brothers sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver to the merchants who were travelling to Egypt.

Afterwards, they told their father that a wild animal had

killed Joseph. Jacob was very sad and wept for many days. In Egypt, Joseph had a very hard time. He even ended up in prison, even though he had done nothing wrong. Nevertheless, Joseph held fast to God. And God did not abandon him. Eventually, Pharaoh heard of Joseph's wisdom and that God helped him to understand dreams.

Pharaoh set Joseph free and made him the second most powerful man in the country. Joseph was to ensure that



enough grain was stockpiled for times of need.

When a severe famine broke out, there was enough grain in Egypt, in fact so much that people from other countries even travelled there to buy grain. One day, Joseph's brothers also came to Egypt to buy

grain. They did not recognise him. When Joseph revealed his identity to them some time later, he praised God. For God had made everything turn out well. Joseph forgave his brothers for what they had done.

At Pharaoh's invitation, Joseph's whole family was able to move to Egypt and was well provided



AT MARCO'S IN ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA, USA

Hi, my name is **Marco**! I am eleven years old and live in the **city of Erie**. Erie is located in the north-western part of the state of Pennsylvania, right on the shores of Lake Erie.

Across the open water lies the Canadian province of Ontario.

We have lived in Erie for three years. Before that we lived in Burundi, which is a small country in East Africa, a very long way from Erie—over 13,000 kilometres!

My family is large. My parents have nine children, so I have four sisters and four brothers. I am the fourth child and also my parents' eldest son.

My youngest brother is still a baby. My father works at a restaurant; my mother stays home to look after us. In the photo you can see me with my **brothers Christopher, Romain, and Christian**.

My brothers and I make a good team. We often do things together, like going to the **theatre**.





I love music. I am taking drum and violin lessons. Here you can see me playing the drums during the **spring concert** at the Neighbourhood Art House.

By the way, Burundi is known for its percussion groups. The **drums** are large and the performances are very athletic. Perhaps that's why my brothers and I like the drums so much.



But I don't just play music. I also love to play football.

On Sundays I like going to church and spending time with my friends from **Sunday School**. In the summer, we often all go to the Lake Erie beach. We have lots of fun.

All that playing makes you hungry. Since living in the US, I have discovered two new favourite dishes: pizza and **macaroni and cheese**. My parents still like to cook traditional

African dishes—mostly with **beans**. I still really enjoy them. Yummy!





■ | Mariya/stock.adobe

Holy Communion: the central act of liturgy

What may sound like set phrases is, in reality, faith put into practice: liturgy blends structure and order with a sense of closeness to God. At its core is Holy Communion. The essay explains forms, gestures, and their significance.

The term “liturgy”, which derives from the ancient Greek word *leiturgeia* (“public service”), describes the established sequence of the divine service, namely the words, acts, and gestures that arise throughout its course. On the one hand, divine service is a service of God upon human beings, a fact that becomes evident in the sermon inspired by the Holy Spirit, the celebration of the sacraments, and the benediction. However, divine service also refers to the service rendered to God by human beings, which is expressed in song, prayer, and profession.

The divine service has its origin in the historical self-revelation of the triune God. Its function is to remind us of this self-revelation of God—in Jesus Christ—but also to allow believers to experience it tangibly through word and sacrament. The individual elements of the divine service—the preaching of the word, the celebration and dispensation of the sacraments, prayer, and blessing—are therefore not arbitrary, but necessary to impart and receive salvation.

In the course of history

The way in which this occurs, and the detailed structure of the divine service, is shaped by the respective era and its particular needs. It is therefore understandable that the external form of such divine services changes over time. While the services of the Catholic Apostolic Church and those of the early apostolic movement that originated in Hamburg had a complex liturgical structure, today’s New Apostolic service is characterised by simplicity and a focus on the sermon and the sacraments.

The model here is the Reformed preaching service with which Apostles Friedrich Wilhelm Schwarz and Friedrich Wilhelm Menkhoff were familiar from their experiences in the Netherlands, and which they introduced to the congregations they served as early as the 1870s. The main objective of these changes, which were adopted by all New Apostolic congregations by the end of the nineteenth century, was to accord sufficient space to the message of the renewed personal occupation of the apostolic ministry and the imminent return of Christ, and to proclaim these elements as simply as possible. In addition, the premises where services were conducted in the early days of our Church were not very well suited to the celebration of a sophisticated liturgy.

Over the course of the twentieth century, New Apostolic divine services became increasingly simpler, to the point that they largely dispensed with liturgical gestures and visible distinctions between prayers, blessings, and sacraments.



■ Kenn/stock.adobe

This changed in the first decade of the twenty-first century, when our Church began to reconsider the liturgy—albeit cautiously. In 2010, an expanded liturgy was introduced, which mainly involved a change to the sequence of Holy Communion and a redefinition of the words of the consecration.

It was in this context that the Church not only rediscovered the term “liturgy”, which it had rather avoided since the beginning of the twentieth century, but also began to show an increased interest in liturgical matters—for example, the theological background of liturgical events and their proper execution.

In the hands of the Apostles

Like the order of the Church itself, the liturgy of the divine service is bindingly defined by the apostolate (Apostles as stewards, *The Catechism of the New Apostolic Church*, 7.4.1). The words spoken during the liturgical process—such as the Trinitarian opening invocation, the specific version of the Lord’s Prayer in use, the absolution and consecration formulas, and even the liturgical gestures—are binding. This requirement is necessary in order to make it clear that the liturgical event is not arbitrary and that it is not simply left up to individual preferences. The believer must be assured that the service is carried out in unity with the apostolate and that the legitimate administration of the sacraments cannot be called into question by subjective and ar-



bitrary changes or additions. We should be aware that every word and every gesture within the liturgical event is important and is related to the teaching and faith of our Church.

Among other things, the recurring liturgical processes (for example, the Trinitarian opening invocation, the absolution, the consecration, and so on) have the function, among other things, of allowing human beings to experience the constant and reliable care of God. In this way, the divine service assembly can feel secure in the unchanging faithfulness of God.

Holy Communion is central

The liturgy of Holy Communion is the central point of the New Apostolic divine service.

In the celebration of Holy Communion, the presence of Jesus Christ in His church is heightened: while the risen Lord has previously been present in a spiritual way in the service, He is now also present in a real way through the power of the Holy Spirit, namely in His body and blood. The risen Lord is therefore present in His glorified body, and shares Himself with His church in sacramental form.

The Holy Communion liturgy consists of two parts:

- The first is a preparatory element which involves confession of sins and the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins. This portion of the liturgy is concluded with the Eucharistic prayer.

- It is with the words “And now we shall celebrate Holy Communion” that the main portion of the celebration of Holy Communion begins. It continues with the consecration of bread and wine, which effects the real presence of the body and blood of Christ. The actual communion portion, that is, the dispensation of the consecrated wafer by the ministers to the members of the congregation, occurs after the consecration.

On the path to forgiveness

In a brief address, the officiant draws attention to the significance of repentance and of Holy Communion. Addressing the element of repentance is necessary in order to correct inaccurate perceptions. What is essential here is to ensure that the act of repentance is not reduced to a mere event within the liturgy, but rather to make it clear that repentance—as the acknowledgement of one’s own inadequacy and total dependence on God’s grace—is a necessary component of the Christian life of faith.

In the Catechism 7.4.1 we can read: “The Apostle ministry, the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5: 18–19), admonishes repentance and leads human beings to the redeeming act of God which was accomplished in Jesus Christ.”

Forgiveness of sins does not occur automatically, but can only be attained through repentance. The essay “Thoughts concerning forgiveness of sins” (DSG SE 2/2015,) incorporates the following statements on the subject:

“To obtain forgiveness of sins requires intensive preparation. We must

- undertake a thorough self-examination and become aware of our mistakes.
- confess our sins before God. This not only means that we must recognise our mistakes, but also acknowledge our guilt.
- feel remorse. Let us bring to expression our resolve to do better.
- resolutely pursue the path of reconciliation with our neighbour.”

Repentance and absolution are essential prerequisites for partaking worthily of Holy Communion.

The hymn of repentance and the Lord’s Prayer

The congregation remains seated while singing the hymn of repentance because, in this context, being seated is an

expression of self-reflection. For this reason, care should be taken to ensure that the congregation sings a hymn that addresses human sinfulness and the need for repentance.

If the congregation is to observe a moment of silence instead, it is important that they first learn the purpose which this silence serves: for example, to ask for forgiveness for violations of God's will and to ask God to strengthen their willingness to forgive.

The fact that the Lord's Prayer is spoken by the congregation before the absolution and the consecration of Holy Communion has to do with the fact that in the New Apostolic liturgy it is understood as both a table prayer ("Give us this day our daily bread") and as a prayer of repentance ("Forgive us our debts").

The officiant invites the congregation to join together in prayer with words to the following effect: "Let us rise and join in the prayer which the Lord Jesus taught us." The reference to the fact that Jesus Christ taught this prayer to His own clearly illustrates the significance and binding nature of this prayer. Those who join in this prayer speak it with Jesus Christ and commit themselves to applying the requests and statements of the prayer to their own lives.

The absolution

The binding text of the absolution is as follows: "In the commission of my sender, the Apostle, I proclaim unto you the glad tidings: in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, your sins are forgiven. The peace of the Risen One be with you! Amen."

The officiant begins by pointing out explicitly that the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins is made on behalf of the Apostle and is directly linked to apostolic authority. Sins are forgiven by God. The proclamation serves to reassure the sinner that God is gracious and forgives sins.

The previously cited essay on the forgiveness of sins goes on to mention: "The Apostle proclaims forgiveness, however, it is God who forgives. The authority of the Apostles with respect to the forgiveness of sins is not automatic. The

proclamation of the forgiveness of sins through an Apostle alone will not suffice in order to wash away sins. Forgiveness only takes effect when the sinner is repentant and willing to reconcile. The authority with which the Apostles proclaim forgiveness of sins is largely founded upon their commission to properly proclaim the word of God and the commission to properly dispense the sacraments. If they trust in the authority of the Apostle ministry in faith, sinners have the certainty that their sins have indeed been forgiven. The Apostles act as messengers of Christ: through them, Jesus Christ Himself proclaims the absolution to the believers" (DSG SE 2/2015).

The essay goes on to note: "God can forgive sins quite independently of ministry and church! However, only those who have received the pronouncement of forgiveness of sins through the apostolate can be certain that their sins have truly been forgiven."

Repentance and forgiveness of sins are only the preparation for the worthy celebration of Holy Communion. In the liturgy of Holy Communion, all the steps following the forgiveness of sins focus on encounter, fellowship, and salvation. The next part explains why this is the case.





One church, one Spirit, and a new leader

The New Apostolic Church has a new Chief Apostle. On Pentecost, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider ordained Helge Mutschler as his successor. Hundreds of thousands of members followed the live broadcast from South Africa.

The church as the body of Christ—with many different members functioning best when working together—was the theme of the divine service in our Tafelsig church in Cape Town, South Africa. The sermon was based on 1 Corinthians 12: 13: “For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

Towards the end of the divine service, brothers and sisters in our Tafelsig church, along with congregations receiving the broadcast, watched with deep emotion as Chief Apostle Schneider ordained his successor, and Chief Apostle Mutschler then went on to retire his predecessor.

Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider had led the international Church since 2013. His ministry built upon the Catechism, which had been drafted and introduced under his predecessor, Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber, as the first normative and most systematic description of New Apostolic doctrine. Under the chairmanship of Chief Apostle Schneider, the District Apostle Meeting clarified the remaining issues, particularly those concerning our concept of ministry.

His ministry was also shaped by efforts to prepare the Church organisationally for a changing world and to strengthen international collaboration. Above all, however,

his focus was on his commitment to direct the faithful towards Jesus Christ in word and deed and to prepare them for His return.

Chief Apostle Schneider had been considering a potential successor for quite some time: an Apostle who was initially appointed District Apostle Helper for Northern and Eastern Germany in 2021. What even the District Apostle himself did not know at the time was “that his assistant would never become his successor”. The Chief Apostle hinted at this during a divine service for ministers in Hanover, Germany, in August 2025.

“I prayed for a long time. I wrestled with God,” Chief Apostle Schneider said on Pentecost 2025, shortly before assigning Apostle Mutschler as Chief Apostle Helper and designating him as his successor. “God has answered this prayer. Today I can announce with absolute certainty whom God has chosen as our next Chief Apostle.”

Helge Mutschler, born in Tübingen in 1974, holds a doctorate in law. Before entering the service of the Church full-time, he was the managing director of the Lower Saxony Chamber of Tax Consultants. He received his first ministerial mandate in 1994. In 2015, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider ordained him as an Apostle. Helge Mutschler is married and the father of two children.

Already during the 2025 Pentecost service, Helge Mutschler had set a spiritual course. When he served the congregation, he spoke of Pentecost being “the beginning of the language of the heart”. May the Holy Spirit open our eyes to God, to our own worth in God’s sight, and to our neighbour. He said that in a divided world it is important to do good and make peace through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The first clues as to who this new man actually is were provided in an interview published on nac.today, the news portal of the New Apostolic Church International, immediately following his assignment. “This thing is so big,” Helge Mutschler said regarding his being called as Chief Apostle Helper. “I have no other option than to put all my trust in God.” Because: “I accepted this call with a very clear inner yes, grounded in faith and trust in God.”

Things that are important to him, include

- pastoral care. “I would very much love to see a renewed passion for pastoral care.” Because: “Pastoral care unites. And where there is connectedness, that is where the comfort and joy of heaven begin.”
- diversity. “Like a colourful field of flowers. That is how varied a community can be. How wonderful it is when

we can say, ‘I see you and I respect you, even if you’re different.’ Because I am also different from you.”

- dialogue. “Diversity only works through dialogue. Dialogue is about moving together through differences without wanting to remove them.”

The new Chief Apostle is, however, well aware of the ups and downs of our life of faith: “In a difficult phase of my life, I distanced myself from God and blamed Him. This went on for a while and then something wonderful happened. I felt that this God, from whom I had turned away, was staying with me. I was completely amazed by this God, by His grace... and I still am.”

In profile: Helge Mutschler

Helge Mutschler was born on 8 August 1974 and grew up with three siblings in Freudenstadt, in the Black Forest region of Germany.

After graduating from high school and completing his civil service, Helge Mutschler began studying law at the University of Hanover in 1995. Following the successful completion of his studies and admission to the bar in 2003, he took over the management of the Lower Saxony Chamber of Tax Consultants. In 2005, he earned his doctorate in law.

Helge Mutschler has been married to his wife, Ann Juliette, since 2007. The couple live with their children in Hanover, the capital of the federal state of Lower Saxony.

At just 20 years of age, he received his first ministerial mandate as a Sub-deacon. Further spiritual responsibilities and ordinations followed. In 2015, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider ordained him as an Apostle at the age of 41.

Six years later, in 2021, he was appointed District Apostle Helper for Northern and Eastern Germany. In this role, he cared for congregations in Germany as well as the New Apostolic Christians in Great Britain, Ireland, Northern Europe, Russia, and Central Asia. His assignment as Chief Apostle Helper on Pentecost 2025 answered the question of succession in the leadership of the international Church.

Scissors, a ribbon, and a promising future

The excitement had been building for months: the youth centre in Guinea-Bissau was finally completed and inaugurated with a divine service, traditional dances, and a shared meal.



NAC Guinea-Bissau

The scissors for the opening ceremony are in the basket

A little girl gazes expectantly into the camera. Her black braids, adorned with colourful heart-shaped beads, frame her face. In her small arms she carefully holds a large basket lined with a white cloth. Nestled inside is a pair of scissors, soon to be used to officially open the new youth centre in São Domingos.

Encounter, education, enthusiasm

The youth centre in the small town of São Domingos in north-western Guinea-Bissau serves as a gathering place for young people. It is designed to help them broaden their horizons in both their faith and their career paths. Around five hundred active New Apostolic young people live in the town and the neighbouring villages.

The young people were able to gain a first impression of their new centre in mid March last year. Although the building was not yet complete, a youth weekend was held

there. Many pitched their colourful tents inside the unfinished structure, bringing life to the construction site.

From the very beginning, they showed great interest in the project. “The young people are very motivated,” reported Apostle Dimitrios Diniz (Portugal): “Many are asking for specific ways to get involved.” Now that the construction has been completed, the Church plans to offer seminars, youth meetings, training sessions for the ministers, educational programmes, and courses in digital communication at the centre.

A home for young people

Construction began in spring 2024. Logistical challenges, incorrect measurements, and difficulties in importing the building materials from Portugal delayed the project's completion. Funding was provided through the #jugendbewegt initiative and contributions from the New Apostolic Church of Western Germany.



Dedication ceremony: Apostle Dimitrios Diniz cuts the ribbon



A choir provides the musical setting for the dedication service



At the heart of the youth centre is a seminar building with seating for eighty people. Equipment has also been supplied. Three desktop computers, a printer, eighty chairs with integrated folding tables, a projector, and a screen were purchased and installed. The building is powered by solar panels. An adjoining structure houses sanitary facilities with eight showers and eight toilets.

Outside, a large sports field offers space for football, volleyball, and basketball. Although the 4,000 square metre site is fenced in for security reasons, District Apostle Stefan Pöschel (Western Germany) emphasises that “the youth centre is not intended to be an anonymous place”. Rather, we want it to be “a home for our young brothers and sisters, a place where they feel welcome and accepted”. Young people from neighbouring villages are also warmly invited to visit.



Traditional dances and a communal snack bring the dedication ceremony to a close

God's name is to be there forever

On 27 September 2025, the long-awaited moment finally arrived: Apostle Diniz officially opened the youth centre by cutting the white ribbon. He then conducted a divine service, attended by 464 young people, and dedicated the new building. His sermon was based on 2 Chronicles 7: 15–16: “Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.”

Traditional dances and a communal snack brought the dedication ceremony to a joyful close following the divine service.





District Apostle Stefan Pöschel conducts a divine service in The Gambia



In the midst of life

How are our sisters and brothers in The Gambia faring? District Apostle Stefan Pöschel was able to get a first-hand impression during his recent visit. One thing is clear: life is not easy for them.

The District Apostle visited several congregations in the small West African country in mid March. He was accompanied by Lead Apostle Tounkang Mané, who is responsible for the region, Apostle Gert Opdenplatz, and Bishop Pascal Strobel.

Challenges in the congregations

During a meeting with district and congregational rectors, it became clear that the congregations in The Gambia are subject to significant external influences. This is reported on the website of the New Apostolic Church in Western Germany. Traditional beliefs, social expectations, and economic challenges shape the daily lives of many members. This can lead to people's faith coming under pressure or in having to compete with other ideas.

At the same time, the congregations face the task of providing long-term guidance, particularly to young people. The desire for stability, a supportive community, and clear spiritual guidance was emphasised during the discussions. The ministers see themselves as having a role of great responsibility, one that requires both pastoral sensitivity and a clear spiritual focus.

Challenges in the region

Beyond The Gambia, concrete challenges have emerged across large parts of West Africa that





Ministers in discussion with District Apostle Pöschel (left)

are having a noticeable impact on church life, the New Apostolic Church Western Germany explains. In several countries in the region, unstable socio-political conditions make daily life difficult for the members and congregations. Travelling to divine services is sometimes fraught with risks, and external circumstances can limit regular pastoral care.

In addition to this, the congregations face increasing competition from other religious groups. Some of these organisations attract members by offering material incentives or concrete offers of support. As a result, young people in particular find themselves caught between conflicting expectations, which also has an impact on the stability of our congregations.

Assurance of support

At the same time, it became clear that many congregations are openly living their faith under these circumstances and continue to be committed and involved. The willingness to take on responsibility and hold fast to their beliefs and support church life remains undiminished despite the external influences they face.

District Apostle Stefan Pöschel expressed his appreciation for the ministers' dedication. He assured them of his prayers and thanked them for their commitment under often challenging conditions. "I keep you and your congregations in my prayers and am grateful for all that you do here," the District Apostle said. He made a point of mentioning that the Regional Church would continue to accompany and support the congregations in West Africa.

From a temporary shelter to a new home

For seven months, a newly established congregation in Portugal gathered for divine services in a garage. Now, the congregation has moved into its own church—and the members are delighted.

In May 2025, a new congregation was founded in São João da Azenha, a small town located between Lisbon and Porto in Portugal. In its beginnings, the congregation consisted of five families who had moved to the area from São Tomé, an island country off the coast of Central Africa.

For seven months, the young congregation gathered in the garage of a local Priest for divine services. "We now have a core group of 32 members," Apostle Dimitrios Diniz reported in June last year, noting a clear upward trend. It soon became evident that the garage could only serve as a temporary solution. Then, in December 2025, the congregation found a permanent home. New premises were permanently rented in the village of Sangalhos, located in the district of Anadia. This marked an important step toward the stabilisation and further development of the congregation. "It is a young congregation with great growth potential," explains Apostle Diniz.

Currently, the congregation consists of 48 members and is served by three Priests and one Deacon. Ministers from the Portugal-North district oversee the congregation. Across the country, Portugal now has a total of 21 New Apostolic congregations, comprising some 5,400 members and 57 ministers.

The dedication service for the new premises in Sangalhos took place on 21 December 2025. Apostle Diniz conducted the divine service and, for the dedication, read from 2 Chronicles 6: 20: "... that Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where You said You would put Your name, that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place."





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| A greater emphasis on serving

The Church's "Serving and Leading" guiding principle has been updated. New content and additional chapters address key developments of recent years and reinforce the concept of serving.

For several weeks now, the revised version of the "Serving and Leading" guiding principle has been available online on the Church's website nak.org in English, French, Spanish, and German. The policy was officially approved at the District Apostle Meeting in Wiesbaden in June 2025. What exactly has changed?

A policy adapts to changes

"Serving and Leading" of the New Apostolic Church was introduced in 2001. It serves as a uniform and binding foundation for the actions of ministers. The policy is also aimed at members who perform a service in the Church without a ministry, including children and youth leaders, Religious Instruction and Confirmation teachers, choir and

orchestra conductors, and leaders of working and project groups.

Until 2025, *Serving and Leading* covered the following key topics: requirements for those entrusted to lead, authority, leadership style, delegating, communication, overcoming conflicts. However, much has changed over the last 25 years. In 2006, the Vision and Mission statements of the New Apostolic Church were published, followed by the Catechism in 2012, and the revised *Guide for Ministers* in 2022.

These four foundational works are now reflected in the new "Serving and Leading" guiding principle, whose wording has been carefully harmonised with the Catechism in

particular. Besides, in the past, the policy placed greater emphasis on the aspect of leading than on serving. The policy has therefore now been revised to better reflect and integrate these points.

New chapters, new inspiration

All the existing sections have been harmonised to reflect the Vision and Mission statements as well as the Catechism. The foreword and the summary have been updated. In addition, the individual chapters have been reviewed, edited, and expanded to include clear practical guidance. Three new chapters have been introduced.

The chapter on “Authority” describes how the Church understands authority: Jesus Christ is the head of the church. Church leadership is also defined from this Christ-centred perspective. In this context, it is explicitly stated that the Chief Apostle, together with the Apostles, leads the Church and is the highest spiritual authority. He thus holds a leading position within the circle of the Apostles. At the same time, *Serving and Leading* distinguishes between external and inner authority. External authority relies on the decision-making power conferred upon leaders on the basis of their position within the Church order. Inner authority, on the other hand, grows from spiritual, human, and professional skills, from credibility and reliability, and from the convincing example that leaders set by practising the teachings of the Church. Only when this inner authority becomes apparent can leadership build lasting trust, foster acceptance, and contribute to the fulfilment of the Church’s mission.

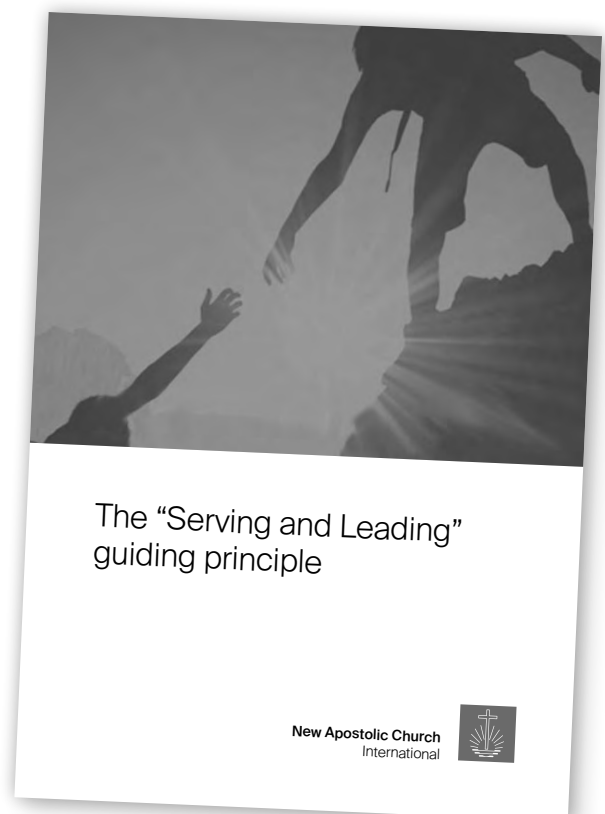
The chapter on “Delegation” encourages ministers to consciously delegate tasks and responsibilities. This allows for the sharing of responsibilities, encourages participation and supports the fulfilment of the Church’s mandate. Delegation is more than simply assigning tasks: it frees up time for core leadership tasks, strengthens the sense of responsibility among those involved, and helps to make targeted use of existing talents and skills. Delegation requires that tasks be clearly defined, that competencies be carefully assessed, and that those entrusted with responsibilities receive appropriate support. Even if certain responsibilities are delegated, the responsibility for leadership remains with the person delegating the tasks. Three new chapters have been added to the new guidelines:

- Serving is described as the very essence of ministry and church. Serving God and our neighbour belong together

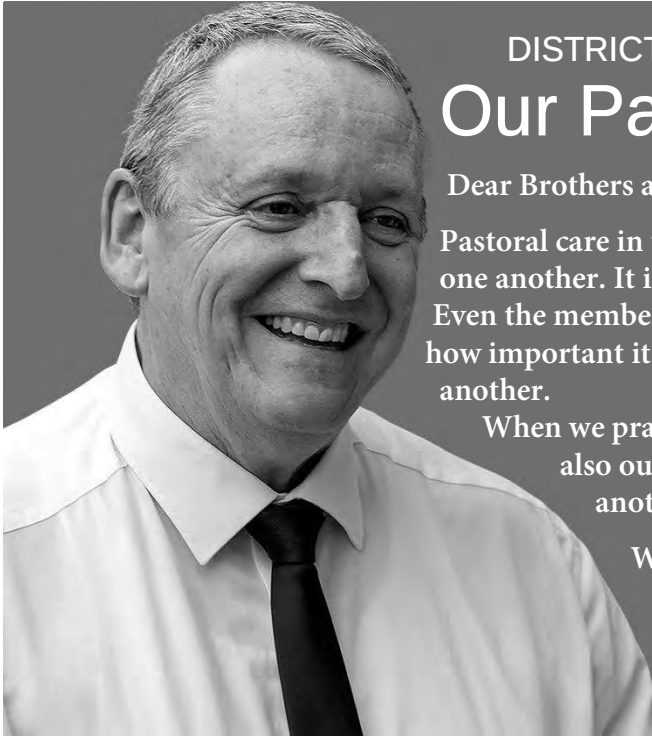
and always correspond to the example of Jesus Christ; spiritual ministry can only be performed in connection with Christ, the apostolate, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Participation and representation: The focus here is on the benefits and impact of involving Church members, but also on representing Church regulations, and the Church in public, and advocating for the needs and interests of the congregational members by the leaders.
- Guiding message for implementation: The guiding message for implementation emphasises the spiritual attitude: mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, and forgiving one another. But above all these things is love that holds everything together and gives the policy its true inner strength.

The 16-page brochure emphasises that it was created to foster transparency and trust, while also promoting appreciation, motivation, and identification.



The new brochure, published 2025



DISTRICT APOSTLE MARTIN RHEINBERGER: Our Pastoral Responsibility

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Pastoral care in the congregation is rooted in our fellowship with one another. It is not the sole responsibility of the ministers. Even the members of the first Christian congregations understood how important it is to be there for one another and to pray for one another.

When we pray to God together, we share not only our words but also our hope and comfort. Let us therefore support one another and fulfil our pastoral responsibility together.

With warmest regards,
Yours


Martin Rheinberger

CAMEROON: Accompanying, Comforting, Hoping

Being there for one another during times of hardship is part of a dynamic pastoral care that extends beyond the ordained ministers, for every New Apostolic believer is a missionary. On Sunday, August 2, 2026, District Evangelist Marc Nkouli visited a brother from the Awanda congregation who had been ill for months, to strengthen him and celebrate Holy Communion with him. Our ailing brother was overjoyed; he realized he was not alone in his suffering and found both comfort and strength. Through faith in our Lord Jesus, the hope for his recovery remains alive. To bring to life our Church's vision—a Church where believers feel at ease—we must recognize that such a feeling comes from being loved by our brothers and sisters. We all long to feel valued, heard, and taken seriously. When we experience this, it gives us reassurance, a sense of security, and the comforting feeling that we are not alone. Let us reach out to our brothers and sisters to show them our love and the love of God.



District Evangelist Marc Nkouli with the brother after Holy Communion

EQUATORIAL GUINEA: Hope at the Malabo Rehabilitation Centre

On Monday, March 9, 2026, Lead Apostle Oscar K. Nwanza and Apostle Salvador Mitogo Obiang visited the residential rehabilitation centre in Malabo. Many residents attended the divine service conducted by the Lead Apostle the previous day.

During a tour, the Lead Apostle learned about the centre's work in treatment, guidance, and reintegration and spoke with the young people, whose artistic talents and beautiful voices impressed him. He offered words of strength and hope, encouraging them to look to the future and remember that God loves them, whatever their circumstances. The young people also asked why things created by God can cause harm. "Everything was created for the benefit of human beings, but misuse can have harmful consequences," the Lead Apostle explained.

He encouraged them to examine all things and remain faithful to the Christian creed and the ten Articles of New Apostolic Faith.



A warm welcome to the Lead Apostle and Apostle Mitogo Obiang



The brothers and sisters gather around the brother in the center.



The little ones delight the brother with a hymn

GABON:

A visit of consolation that transforms hearts

On Sunday, August 23, 2026, following the divine service, members of the Nzengayong and Owendo congregations visited a brother to offer comfort and support. Having undergone a double leg amputation a few months earlier, he received donations to help him start a small business and regain a measure of financial independence. Ministers, brothers and sisters, and Sunday school children took



Young sisters actively engaged in pastoral work

part in this gesture of fraternal care, which also touched his family and neighbours. Through the Gospel message and Church magazines, they bore witness to the fact that pastoral care extends beyond the church walls.

The initiative was a practical expression of our pastoral responsibility: to comfort, support, and care for one another while sharing the message of Christ's return.

GUINEA:

Fellowship and a Pastoral Visit

In one of our congregation, a brother was going through a difficult time following a stay in hospital. Without waiting for an official visit from the ministers, several brothers and sisters spontaneously organized themselves to visit him in turn, pray with him, and assist him with everyday tasks. Each visit became an opportunity for fellowship, including a time of prayer and the sharing of God's word. The visits also brought encouragement to the brother and reminded him that he was not alone in his difficult circumstances. Gradually, he regained hope and comfort, not only through the practical support he received, but above all through the constant presence and care of his fellow believers. This experience was a touching expression of living fellowship and reminded the entire congregation that pastoral care is not reserved for the ministers alone. It is the responsibility of all believers to care for one another, to offer comfort and encouragement, and to bear one another's burdens in times of difficulty.



Brothers and sisters join the sick brother in prayer

IVORY COAST:

Leading by Christ's Example

During the ministers' seminar in Danané, 624 km from Abidjan, in July 2026, the focus was on our tasks and responsibilities. A memorable moment illustrated the pastoral model of Christ that we were studying.

While discussing the Good Shepherd, our attention was drawn to a herdsman driving his cattle from behind. We immediately went outside to photograph the scene and show it to the participants. This provided a vivid and practical illustration of the topic.

The picture led to reflection on how a minister guides the congregation. The participants recognized that a shepherd should go ahead of the flock rather than drive it from behind. He leads the way and sets an example of where to go.

The experience reminded every minister of the importance of leading with humility and by personal example, following Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd. In this way, pastoral responsibility becomes visible in everyday life.



The shepherd leads his flock by walking with them



Lead Apostle Oscar Nwanza and Apostle Kpegasin during a family visit to a retired District elder's home



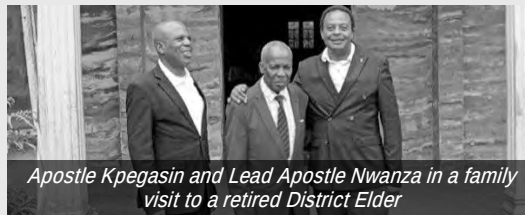
Lead Apostle Oscar Nwanza and Apostle Kpegasin visit a District rector and his family after a divine service

NIGERIA:

Caring Across Generations

One practical expression of pastoral responsibility in our congregation is the care shown to elderly members. Some are no longer able to participate in congregational activities as they once did. Members therefore make time to call them, visit them, and ask about their needs. During visits, there is often time simply to talk, remember

experiences, and pray together. These moments are valuable not only to the elderly members but also to those who visit them. Younger members especially learn that every generation has an important place within the congregation. In this way, pastoral care becomes a shared experience between generations.



Apostle Kpegasin and Lead Apostle Nwanza in a family visit to a retired District Elder

GHANA:

Care for the Weak and Elderly

Following a special divine service for seniors and the elderly in the Madina Congregation, some ministers and members reached out to some seniors who were unable to attend the service and have struggled with old age or ill health.

Each was served Holy Communion and embraced with love and fellowship. The soul care team carried out these visits with joy, and the recipients expressed heartfelt appreciation for the gesture.

The outreach was led by Shepherd Jones Kyere and Community Evangelist Edward Avevor (rtd) and accompanied by some brothers and sisters from congregation. Together, they embodied the congregation's commitment to "Do Good" by showing compassion and strengthening bonds of faith and community.



A visit to the retired Priest Attakumah

SIERRA LEONE:

Strengthened in Faith and Fellowship

During the visit of Lead Apostle Saa Marc Leno to Sierra Leone, he met with ministers, young people, and members in congregations across the country. His visits provided opportunities for fellowship, encouragement, and pastoral guidance. Through personal encounters and his messages, he strengthened the members in their faith and encouraged them in their daily lives. He encouraged the ministers to care for the congregations faithfully and to remain grounded in the doctrine. The youth were encouraged to live according to the Gospel and prepare themselves for future responsibilities in the Church. His sermons focused on faith and love for God and humanity, encouraging the members to prepare themselves for the return of Jesus Christ. His visit was thus an experience of fellowship and active pastoral care for the congregations.



Lead Apostle Leno strengthens young people and ministers in fellowship



The sisters gather around the sick brother during their visit to his home



Maize and firewood as practical support for the brother and his family

TOGO:

No One is Forgotten in Times of Need

When a brother from the Kpové-Kédjihoé congregation in Togo had been unable to attend divine service for about two months because of illness, several brothers and sisters decided to visit him at home. Their visit was an expression of fellowship and pastoral care, reminding him that he was not forgotten.

They encouraged him with the words of Psalm 109:26: ***“Help me, Lord my God; save me in accordance with your***

unfailing love.” Together, they prayed for his healing and recovery, entrusting him to God’s care.

The brothers and sisters also brought maize and firewood to support him and his family in their daily needs.

In this way, they demonstrated that pastoral care is expressed not only in words and prayer, but also through practical help and loving fellowship.

BENIN:

Being There for One Another

Being there for one another is an active expression of fellowship. It means sharing one another’s burdens, offering support in times of need, and keeping the flame of hope alive in an increasingly troubled world. Christian love becomes visible through practical acts of care in the congregations.

In Benin, this fellowship takes many forms. In Avagbodji, members rebuilt a hut destroyed by strong winds for the congregation’s choir leader. Their support helped him and his family overcome a difficult situation and showed that no one should face hardship alone.

In Atchoukpa, the young people organised a blood donation drive, offering practical help to people in need. Such actions strengthen fellowship and show that it is not merely spoken about — it is lived.



Brothers and sisters rebuild the choir leader's hut after the storm

LIBERIA:

Pastoral Encouragement

During Lead Apostle Marc Leno’s visit to the Samieta congregation in the Lofa/Voinjama District, the members were filled with joy and gratitude. His visit strengthened fellowship and encouraged the congregation in their faith. In his message, he reflected on the healing of the blind man (Mark 8:22–26) and encouraged the members to trust in God’s love, even when they cannot yet see the way clearly. Just as the man’s sight was restored gradually, faith also grows step by step. The Lead Apostle encouraged the members to remain patient and persevere, trusting that God is at work.

The visit was also an experience of active pastoral care. Through his words of encouragement and fellowship, the Lead Apostle strengthened the members’ faith and reminded them that they are not alone on their journey of faith.



The Sunday school children warmly welcomed the Lead Apostle during his visit

DISTRICT APOSTLE AREA: Divine service with the District Apostle

On 26 July 2026, District Apostle Martin Rheinberger conducted his first divine service for his entire area of responsibility.

The divine service took place in the Albstadt congregation and was transmitted to Southern Germany and around 30 other countries. The divine service was also broadcast via livestream on YouTube.

Bible text: "Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely. He said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' " (Mark 12:34)

Core thoughts: District Apostle Martin Rheinberger pointed out that, notwithstanding the differing circumstances of life and expectations of the members, all congregations share the same foundation: to remain steadfast in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayer. The Apostles' doctrine is much more than instruction or teaching in a purely intellectual sense. It is spiritual nourishment that strengthens and refreshes us through Christ. In this way, our divine services can become a place where our souls find peace, comfort, and rest. The Bible text also reminded us that our love for God involves both our hearts and our minds. Our faith is not something we are meant to live out without reflection. Rather, we are encouraged to understand our faith more deeply and to discover the connections within it. The Catechism can help us on this journey and enable us to gain a deeper understanding of our faith. Love for our neighbour—and also a healthy love and acceptance of ourselves—is an essential part of Christian faith. We should therefore be careful not to put people into categories too quickly or to define them by their present circumstances. Instead, let us give one another room to grow, to change, and to develop spiritually. God continues to work in every human being. Apostle Herrmann and Bishop Metzger were also called upon to contribute to the sermon.



New Apostolic Church
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