Northern Synod

TASK TEAM COMMUNICATION

Report

1. Assignment

To reflect on how to improve the communication in the Northern Synod.

2. Task team

Task team leader: Dewald Roux

Task team members: Hannes Bezuidenhout, Rikus Delport, Carli Fourie, Paullet Grobler, Paul Grobler (ex officio), Dewald Niemandt, Rehan Rheeder, Lizl-Louise Schoeman, Nioma Venter, Lizette Wessels.

3. Execution of the assignment

The approach included the following steps:

- Understand the current situation by conducting a survey to determine how communication is presently utilised and which communication preferences exist.

- Use the outcome to make recommendations to the task team.

- Task team members discuss the outcomes and make further recommendations.

- Implement action to support the survey, the recommendation, and the task team's input.

Database

At present there are the details of 400 interested parties on the Synod's database, of which 266 have confirmed or updated their information, and

have also given the Synod permission to communicate with them via a preferred channel.

Synod's newsletter

The *Verskil* newsletter has been sent from the database since 17 October. Congregations and other service organisations actively participate in the compilation of the contents and are encourage throughout to provide input.

Social media

The Synod's Facebook and Instagram pages are active, and especially the Facebook page is visited regularly.

Synod's web page

The information on the Synod's web page is being systematically updated and links to the various pages are then shared with interested persons.

4. Recommendations

Altogether 24 recommendations were made, and they are summarised below.

TECHNOLOGY

Improve accessibility, platforms and digitalisation.

- Optimise "WhatsApp" as primary channel.
- Retain "email" for formal communication.
- Develop and maintain "an accessible, navigable website".
- Provide a calendar, contact information, youth material, and corporate management information.
- Newsletter technology that allows interaction and streamlined sharing.

PEOPLE

Skills, responsibilities, and culture

- Establish ownership by ministers, leaders, and church offices.
- Segmentation of communication according to the preferences of the communication channel, role, and age
- Enable congregations to filter content, in order to share only relevant content with church members.
- Training in digital platforms, and reputational risk management
- Establish a culture of timely responses and involvement.

PROCESS

Rhythm, policy direction, and predictability

- Develop a 3-year communication plan as well as a communication policy.
- Create clear predictability about content, frequency, and channels.
- Early-week communication for deadline-driven tasks
- “WhatsApp” warning for urgent emails
- Clean up content: Focus on relevance and prevent overloading.

5. Closing word

The Northern Synod’s communication must be technologically smart, people-centred, and process-driven to ensure better networking and collaboration.

The technological foundation has already been laid to make an effective and focused communication system possible. This system will be refined

and improved throughout to ensure easy access to information that is well-organised and available in a user-friendly format.

At the same time, change management and aspects of involvement are purposely handled to ensure that all interest parties are included and experience the value of the new approach.

The process has now transitioned into a day-to-day implementation phase in which communication processes are established and improved under the direction of the Communications Officer, Elmarie Jooste.