OCTOBER 2022 – OCTOBER 2026

Activities of the Synodal Service Council (SSC)

1. Introduction

The Synodal Service Council (SSC) was elected at the session of the synod in October 2022 to function as decision-making body on behalf of the Northern Synod until and at the session of 2026.

The SSC conducted this assignment within the framework of the approved vocational statement of the Northern Synod (NS), as well as other strategic decisions by the synod.

2. Composition

The SSC consists of a minister and a church council member from each presbytery. Representatives are elected for a term of four years. Currently there are sixteen presbyteries, namely:

Daspoort, Derdepoort, Krokodilrivier,
Louis Trichardt, Midde-Afrika, Northam, Pietersburg/Polokwane, Pietpotgietersrus,
Pretoria-Noord, Pretoria-Oos, Rustenburg, Sentraalmoot, Sesmylspruit, Suidoos-Pretoria, Waterberg, Wonderboom.

The SSC therefore has a total of thirty-nine members: Thirty-two representatives from presbyteries and seven members of the moderamen.

3. Meetings

The SSC held eleven meetings in Pretoria in the past term. Meetings usually were held in a church complex near to Synod House. The majority were held at Harmonie Oord and a few at Universiteitsoord and Lynnwood. Meetings lasted from 9:00 to 15:00.

4. Executive Committee

The moderamen served as the executive committee and met thirty-three times in the past term.

See the attached feedback in Annexure A.

5. Task Teams

The SSC did its work chiefly by means of task teams. During the term there were thirty-three such teams. Should task teams were included whose assignments were repeated, there were in fact fifty-one task teams.

About two hundred and ninety persons served on the task teams, of which about ninety were not ministers. These teams' work is completed, and they reported back to the SSC during the term.

Delegates to the synod may take note that these reports have been included in the Agenda Section A. The reports are not, however, part of the decisions of the session of the synod.

The information on how task teams are composed and how they function has also been included in the Agenda Section A.

6. Church Order

The Legal Task Team have proposed modifications to the NS Church Order. These have to be approved at the session of the synod.

See the attached proposals in Annexure B

7. Synod House

The Synod House was housed, since the unbundling of the four Transvaal Synods shortly after the turn of the century, in a former rectory of the erstwhile Harmonie Congregation in Sunnyside. The whole of the Harmonie campus, which was owned by the Synodal Commission for the Mission of Mercy, was sold in 2025. In August 2025, the Synod House moved temporarily to Huis Piek in Nieuw Muckleneuk.

Since April 2026, the NS's Synod House is housed at 330 Alpine Road 330, Lynnwood. The Synod has entered into a ten-year lease with the Congregation Lynnwood for the use of this property, as the congregation is not currently using the house as a manse.

The central staff of the Northern Synod's Diaconate (SCMM and CSC) are also housed here from now on.

Several possibilities for a Synod House had been considered. The accessibility of 330 Alpine Road via the highways, N1 and N4, was eventually the determining factor in the selection.

8. Staff

During the term there were the following changes in the permanent staff working for the Northern Synod:

- Hermien Swart died unexpectedly in her sleep at the beginning of 2025, on the eve of her retirement. Elmarie Jooste was appointed in her place as communications officer.

- Sandra Grobler, the financial officer, reached retirement age in 2026, but is still employed on a contractual basis.

- Paul Grobler's contract after his retirement in 2024 expires at the session of the synod. The SSC has called Rhan Rheeder in his place. He will be known as the Chief Executive Officer and will be confirmed at the session of the synod. He takes office on 1 November 2026.
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9. Congregations

There are about one hundred congregations in the Northern Synod.

Three of these are in a state of doleance (or formal ecclesiastical dissent), of which two have indicated that they might break ties with the DR Church. The relevant presbyteries are trying as far as possible to accompany them pastorally.

10. Ministers

The NS currently has about one hundred and fifty ministers who serve in congregations in permanent full-time posts, term posts, part-time posts, tentmaker posts, and bridging ministry posts.

In the past term

- thirty-seven ministers retired, of whom many were afterwards appointed to contract posts.
- forty-four accepted calls. A few received demission but have not been in the ministry.
- eighty-one inductions took place.
- three serving ministers died:

  Pieter Berrangé (Monumentpark-Wes);
  Derick du Toit (Villieria);
  Rinus Wasserman (Kerk-in-Suid).

11. Communication

The NS communicates officially by means of *Verskil,* the weekly newsletter. This is why e-mails are seldom used. For urgent matters messages are sent via WhatsApp. There is also a Facebook page.

The *Verskil* contains news about, among other things,

- congregations;
- ministers;
- synodal activities;
- training opportunities.

Church offices, ministers, congregants, as well as other interested parties, can unfortunately not automatically receive the *Verskil* due to the current legislation pertaining to the use of people's personal information. Each person must first contact Elmarie Jooste, our communications officer, by e-mail to register (elmarie@noordsin.co.za).

Regarding news from the SSC, it is important to note that this is the responsibility of the presbyteries' delegates to the SSC. It is their responsibility to give feedback to the congregations about task team reports, other activities of the SSC, and decisions.

12. Camp Sites

The Northern Synod currently owns only two camp sites. Magaliesberg, situated near the Hartbeespoort Dam, is managed by a synodal task team. The presbytery of Pietpotgietersrus manages Badseloop, just outside Naboomspruit. The property, however, belongs to the synod.