

Module 2: “From the text to the sermon” (homiletics) - how to understand a Biblical text, making the message your own and applying it.

Module 3: “The Church year as a framework for reflection on faith” (dogmatics) dealt with the meaning of the Church Year, its liturgical seasons, the fundamental teachings of the Bible and the Hymnal as the book of faith and confession.

Module 4: “The presentation from the pulpit” - practical tips for preaching, and assessment of the course as a whole. Many questions arose. One was how lay preachers would be accepted.

The Cape Church invited lay preachers into service as voluntary co-workers in their congregations in terms of the Biblical call to “preach the Gospel to all nations”, the Lutheran concept of the “Priesthood of all believers” (see 1 Peter 2,9), and articles in the Augsburg Confession: Art. 5: “To obtain this faith God has instituted the Office of the preaching of the Gospel and the administering of the Sacraments”.

Art. 14: “It is taught among us that no one should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments without a regular call”.

On conclusion of the course nominations were sent from Church Committees to Church Council for approval, and at least 13 of the participants were installed into office in their congregations. The duration is for an initial period of three years, which can be renewed.

“The lay preacher training has been a wonderful exercise in fellowship, learning and exposure to the needs of the congregation. It is quite an experience to preach, after sitting in the pews on the “receiving end” for many years. One gets to appreciate the effort and scholarship that needs to go into every word of a sermon. An important lesson learned by some of the lay preachers is that the preacher needs feedback. Body language alone is insufficient and not easy to read! Let me therefore end with this plea: Tell the preacher tactfully from your heart your response to the sermon, what you thought of it.”

*Christian Johl, St. Andrew’s, East London*