

## SEARCHING FOR SELF-RELIANCE WORKSHOP FROM 15-17 MAY 2015 HELD AT TSHABALALA CONGREGATION FOR THE NORTHERN DEANERY IN THE WESTERN DIOCESE.

The ELCZ Evangelism Programme held a workshop for leadership drawn from parishes across the Northern Deanery of the Western Diocese from 15 to 17 May 2015 at Tshabalala congregation. The facilitators at the workshop were:

1. Rev Nkosikona Dube- Pastor in charge of Zezani Parish. His topic was: **Lutheran identity**
2. Rev Shakemore Shoko- National Coordinator for Evangelism, Self-reliance & Christian Education. His topic was: **The shape of effective leadership.**
3. Rev Munyengetero Mtata- Pastor in Charge of Zvishavane North Parish. His topic was: **Managing a local congregation for self-reliance.**
4. Rev Pamela Simari- Pastor in charge of Bulawayo West Parish. Her topic was: **Commitment.**

Generally, all the topics benefitted the participants. This was enabled by participatory teaching, managed through discussions and group work.



Figure 1: Some of the participants who attended the workshop. On the extreme right standing is the Coordinator and the pastor standing in grey clerical shirt is Dean Nsingo.

One notable learning which emerged, was the realization that the Lutheran Parishes and Congregations in the city of Bulawayo are very unique nation-wide, which can easily be noticed in the composition of hymns in one typical Sunday service. Hymns in the following local languages are common: *Venda*; *Sotho*; *Ndebele/Zulu* and *Shona*, owing to the fact that church members from these languages and cultures are members of each congregation. This then is a context where conflicts are bound to happen as each ethnic group seek to be understood from their own background. It was clear to the participants that as leaders in such congregations, they need skills to manage their own emotions and as well positively manage conflicts to enable all members identify themselves with their local congregations. Relationship building was found to be key in leading local congregations to be self-reliant (Matt 5: 9, 22-24).



Figure 2: Rev Pamela Simari facilitating (She is also the Deanery, Diaconia, Evangelism and Stewardship Chairperson)

Participants learnt that as leaders in their local congregations there need for them to celebrate diversity and create a conducive environment for all members of the congregation to contribute to the well-ness of the congregation. It was also noted the members are leaders in their different capacities away from the Church and this could not be overemphasised.



Figure 3: Some of the participants listening to one of the facilitators

It also dawned to the participants, that even though we are not Congregationalists, the life and breath of the Lutheran church is at the local church. One statement from the workshop was that, **“it was rude for local leaders of the congregation to expect money from members without worrying themselves to know how these people are making a living”**. Siting the growing rate of unemployment in the city and country at large, participants resolved to teach members to survive, through income generating projects which in turn would enable members to have something put before their family and congregation tables, one example given was that those selling tomatoes and keeping broiler chickens need to have receipts to be supported by church members than to buy from multinational-companies like Pick n Pay/ TM which are not personally grateful to the customer as witnessed by serving people in long queues.