

SPEECH BY PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA DURING A CHURCH  
VISIT TO THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SOUTHERN  
AFRICA, MASHAMBA PARISH, COLLINS CHABANE MUNICIPALITY,  
VHEMBE DISTRICT

18 OCTOBER 2026

Programme Director,  
The Leadership of the Church,  
The Clergy,  
Fellow Congregants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ndi Matsheloni, Thobela, Avuxeni, Good Morning, Goeie Môre,

Ndo dala dakalo na u ditukufhadza musi ndo ima phanda havho namusi  
kha hei thembele, vhukati ha vhathu vho tanganywaho nga lutendo, vho  
khwaṭhiswaho nga thabelo, nahone vho vhofhekanywa nga lufuno lwa  
Murena na Mutshidzi washu, Yesu Kristo.

A thiho fhanḡ sa Mulangavundu wa Limpopo fhedzi, ndi hafha sa  
murangaphanda wa vhathu ane a tenda kha uri vhurangaphanda a si  
maanda ane ra vha nao, fhedzi ndi ndila ine ra kona u kwama na u  
shandukisa vhutshilo ha vhathu vha ne ra tshila navho.

This church has always been an important pillar of our communities.  
Through generations, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa  
has provided spiritual guidance, comforted the grieving, cared for the

vulnerable and stood for human dignity, justice and compassion. Its contribution to the social and moral fabric of our society deserves recognition and continued support.

Fellow Congregants, when the foundations of society are shaken, the Church must stand firm. When families are broken, the Church must help restore them. And when hope begins to fade, the Church must remind our people that, through faith, even the darkest night gives way to the light of a new morning.

The Church has never been merely a place where people gather to worship. It is also a place where character is shaped, families are strengthened, children are guided and communities find the courage to rise above adversity.

Programme Director, our communities need more than development projects; they need moral renewal. They need more than laws; they need respect for human life. And they need more than promises of a better future; they need people who are prepared to work together to make that future possible.

We cannot ignore the painful realities confronting our communities. Violence, crime, substance abuse, gender-based violence and the breakdown of family relationships continue to cause suffering. Too many young people face unemployment, uncertainty and hopelessness, while others struggle silently with depression, anxiety and emotional distress.

This is where the Church's role becomes indispensable. Through pastoral counselling, prayer, mentorship, family support and community outreach, the Church helps restore dignity and rebuild lives. It offers a listening ear to

those who feel forgotten and reminds those who have lost their way that their lives still have value.

We therefore need a stronger partnership between government and faith-based institutions. We serve the same communities, share a concern for human dignity and carry a common responsibility to build a society in which every person can live in safety and with hope.

Let us work together to support young people, strengthen families, protect women and children, care for older persons, and assist those battling substance abuse and mental health challenges. Let us also encourage our churches to continue creating spaces where young people can discover their talents, develop their leadership abilities and become active contributors to society.

A safer Limpopo will not be built by government alone. It will be built when government, churches, families, traditional leaders and communities stand together with a common purpose.

Programme Director, as we strengthen our communities, we must also protect the democratic values that allow our people to shape their own future.

On 4 November 2026, South Africans are scheduled to participate in the local government elections. These elections provide an opportunity for citizens to exercise their constitutional right to vote and to participate in decisions that affect their daily lives.

I encourage every eligible voter in this congregation and across our communities to participate peacefully and responsibly. Let us approach this important democratic process with maturity, respect for differing views, and a commitment to peace. Let us reject intimidation, violence and the spread of misinformation.

Our democracy is strengthened when citizens are informed, participate freely and hold elected representatives accountable for the promises they make and the responsibilities entrusted to them. Every eligible voter should have the opportunity to make an independent choice, guided by their conscience and understanding of the issues facing their community.

**As people of faith, let us pray for this upcoming local government election so that they become free and fair.**

As I conclude, I extend my sincere appreciation to the leadership and members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa, here at Ha Mashamba, for your continued spiritual leadership and service to our people.

Ndo livhuwa, Na khensa, ke a leboga.