

# DECEMBER 2018



Dear Friends and Family,

*'Oh, come let us Adore Him, Christ the Lord'.*

As we head into the heat of summer, as we prepare for the season of breakfasts on the beach, swimming in the dams, and lazy hours buried in books, we remember that the centre of this special time is the coming of Immanuel. The Word became Flesh; God entering our very broken world to order to save it. Let us worship Him this Christmas season and find true joy in the story of Bethlehem.

We apologise firstly on the overdue nature of this prayer letter. Somehow in the busyness of life, we realised that we are a couple of months later in getting news out. Sorry. There has been LOTS going on, so do keep reading as we try and share with you some of what has been happening here in Heideveld.

Perhaps the biggest news is that this coming Sunday Alun will be inducted as the new rector of St. Thomas, Heideveld. We have been blessed to work under Gary Bedderson for the last six and a half years. Nonetheless, another of our churches on the edge of the Cape Flats is without a minister as of the end of the year, so Gary and his wife Velma have taken up the call to pastor this congregation. We will miss their leadership, but are delighted that we will be able to remain good friends as they are not moving geographically very far. Ramon Williams graduated from our local bible college, George Whitefield College, with a Higher Certificate in Theology last Thursday. This is tremendously encouraging for Alun and I as we first knew Ramon when he was in youth back in 2006. Ramon, his wife Marjorie and young son Jayden will also be leaving St. Thomas in order for Ramon to take up a position heading up music and youth in a larger church. The number of people from St. Thomas' that attended Ramon's graduation ceremony is testimony to how well loved he is and how much the church supported him – Ramon grew up in the middle of Heideveld and to have someone trained for full time ministry is wonderful. Needless to say, Sunday is going to be bittersweet. We rejoice that both couples are leaving us to take up further gospel opportunities; we are slightly nervous about the big holes it will leave at St. Thomas.

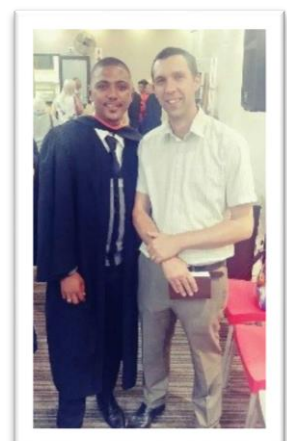
Other highlights at St. Thomas included the continued growth of our senior bible study group – a huge group now meets on Thursday morning with the members really taking responsibility for inviting others. We have had folk join the group this year that have resisted bible study for years, so this is amazingly encouraging. Last

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*St Thomas senior ladies at Ramon's graduation*



*Alun and Ramon*

Sunday we had our carol service, which included the Sunday School, Kids Club, youth, toddler groups and even a couple from the preschool. The church was very full with about 50 visitors – this was wonderful! Crossword Camp starts next Friday so, as camp administrator, Alun is wading through the 100s of the emails that come in at this time. We head off to camp with 10 teens and 6 leaders from St. Thomas (plus Debbie and the kids), excited to study the letter to the Ephesians.

Arise received some exciting news this month! Having been through a testing year financially, our new director Danielle Moosatjie, received an email to say that Arise had won a national award for its family strengthening programme. On 28th November, the staff and board attended an event in Town where Arise was awarded a Gold Award. We would ask you to pray that this recognition will help Arise attract further funding so that the model that we believe is right for our context, can be further rolled out and more families reached with His love. Isn't this ultimately what matters?

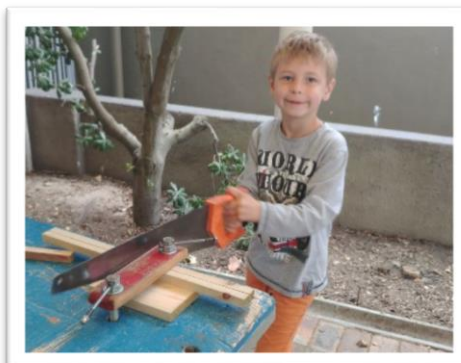
Another urgent matter for prayer concerns some proposed changes the Department of Social Development are trying to push through that will have *mammoth* implications for adoption if passed. These changes only came to light last week and another organisation Arise networks with is working flat out to try to resolve these issues. If adoption providers are not allowed to charge for their services, private organisations and NPOs will no longer be able to play a role in this field. Adoption will shrink dramatically as the state system simply cannot cope with the level of children in the system. Children's homes will get fuller; foster care with no permanency will become the norm. International adoptions won't be able to continue. It is a very serious situation, but one that we pray will be resolved in the best interests of the 100,000s of children in South Africa who would benefit from adoption. Adoption numbers have been falling year on year here for some time, with some senior social workers in the Department vehemently opposed to adoption and maybe particularly transracial adoption. These proposed subtle changes to the children's act would appear to be trying to limit adoption. Arise knows that adoption is internationally recognised as the best option for children that require alternative family; we know that the statistics for successful transracial adoption are as high as those of same race adoption; we equally know the limitations of residential care or temporary foster care. Considering the number of Christian families that have adopted, the spiritual dimension to this cannot be underestimated. Please make this an urgent matter for prayer – we will keep you posted as we learn more ourselves.

Family wise, we are well and eager now for the summer break. Ilana performed in a beautiful Christmas nativity at school tonight where her choir sang several items. We continue to be incredibly grateful to God for opening up Grace Primary as a schooling option for Ilana – she has thrived there again this year. Likhona and Malachi finish up their homeschool years on Friday – it has been a busy year with many highlights like woodwork classes, sports, varied outings and deep friendships with other homeschool families. January will bring a move for Malachi who will join his sister at school in Grade 1. For Likhona and Debbie, it will mean a move onto high school curriculums at home – algebra here we come! Timothy tries to keep up with his siblings. He is quite the little conversationalist and follows his parents in a love for books, with Hairy Maclary and Curious George being firm favourites this month.

As ever, we are so thankful for your partnership with us. We hope to find affordable flights and to be able to visit in June/July next year. It will be a joy to visit with a number of you then, God-willing.

With every blessing,

Alun, Debbie, Likhona (13), Ilana (10), Malachi (6) and Timothy (2)



*Malachi at his beloved woodwork class, Timothy in local park and Ilana and Likhona growing ever taller!*