



February 2015

Dear Family and Friends,

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength'. Familiar words for many, taken from Deuteronomy 6: 5. Jewish men would recite this morning, noon and night. It would remind them that Yahweh alone was their God and would refocus their attention on all that Yahweh had done for them in bringing them out of slavery in Egypt to the land of abundance in Canaan. This morning's sermon from Deuteronomy reminded us that in view of all God has done for us, our love for God should be of total excess. Mindful of the immeasurably blessings we have been given in Christ our obedience should touch every areas of our lives, in a way that clearly shows that Yahweh is the only God. It is a good reminder for us as we start another year here in Heideveld. Maybe it is an encouragement to you too?

Before we inform you of some exciting opportunities coming up for us, let us give you some feedback. First – let us thank you for your prayers for the George Mission last October. It proved to be the highlight of 2014 for us here, as we saw our teens served so capably. We formed a great partnership with a church there and are hopeful to send another team in September 2015. Secondly - the annual Crossword Camp. This was another treat as we were sat under excellent teaching by Justin Mote unpacking the book of Revelation. Alun is now on the Senior Leadership Committee for this camp so was very busy in the days leading up to camp. The benefit, however, was that Debbie and the children were able to come on camp too! Thirdly - the Adoption Conference. It was the biggest and best yet with 132 delegates and many stories of hope. It was particularly encouraging to hear of Christians willing to adopt older children and some even with special needs. It was also encouraging to see how understanding of adoption has grown in our local churches and how God's people are increasing their own knowledge of important issues surrounding vulnerable children in order to better serve their children. The need for families remains colossal, so we cannot afford to be complacent in prayer or action.



Alun and our senior pastor Gary Bedderson are thrilled to have Ramon Williams join the staff at St. Thomas as an apprentice. We first met Ramon 8.5 years ago, when he was a young teen and part of the youth group. Ramon grew up right in the middle of Heideveld and knows the challenges of our broken community only too well. Ramon is taking the next two years to explore whether it

would be right for him to pursue full time Christian ministry in the future. This is very exciting as our long-term vision has always been to raise up Christians from the Cape Flats for the Cape Flats. Alun has both the privilege and the responsibility for overseeing a fair amount of Ramon's training this year – particularly the bible handling aspects which will be focused on the book of Colossians. Ramon and his wife, Marjorie, recently moved onto the church premises and thus live very close to us. Marjorie is also growing into new ministry roles and will be assisting Debbie with the teaching of the grade 3-6 Sunday School. Praise God with us for this couple whose own personal stories are powerful reminders to us of God's saving grace and his power to transform. Pray that they will both grow into and enjoy their new roles.

Although Debbie formally stepped off the staff team of Arise three years ago she continues to be on the Board of Directors and is heavily involved in the Adoption Advocacy and support work. To this end Debbie has two adoption training evenings at local churches coming up in May where she will be speaking on the topic of 'blended families: raising biological and adoptive children in the same family'. She continues to contribute to Arise's ever growing resources on the areas of grief and loss in adoption, transracial issues, attachment, contact in adoption etc... and is leading a seminar for adoptive parents on life-book work later in the term. Doesn't the gospel provide such a wonderful picture of adoption from which all our other adoption work can flow?

January 2015 has been a big month in the Burt household, as Likhona reached double digits, Ilana started Grade 1 and Malachi suddenly became a chatterbox! We were blessed to be able to take a week off camping in Ceres over Likhona's birthday meaning he spent most of the day canoeing on the dam and cycling around the farm. Ilana is adjusting to the larger school environment and gaining confidence and friends each day. The academic climb for Likhona is very noticeable as he moves into intermediate phase. The expectations for Afrikaans are particularly demanding. Pray that he will remain encouraged, makes good progress and has plenty of outlets to use the many gifts God has given him, many of which are not assessed in the classroom! Thanks for those of you who were praying for the last details of Ilana's adoption. Her name change is now reflected on her abridged birth certificate and we spent almost seven hours (sigh!) applying at Home Affairs for her new passport last Saturday. Malachi received his permanent residency as well this month - if you have personally gone through the grind of SA immigration, you will share our joy at having completed all the paperwork! Our youngest son is Fireman Sam obsessed and friends with our new young chickens, 'Sunday', 'Lunch' and 'Nuggets' who were introduced to their coop this afternoon, having spent two weeks in a box in our kitchen!

As we close, we send our love from Cape Town to all of you, around the globe. Wherever you are serving, we pray that the gospel will be made known to you and through you, in order that Yahweh would be worshipped and Jesus Christ glorified.

Every blessing,

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



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