

# FEBRUARY 2019



Dear Friends and Family,

One abiding memory of the 2010 World Cup here in South Africa was the jingle *'make the circle, bigger, bigger, bigger'*. Sung full gusto and with fast movement, this lively song is a great reminder of our context and our mission. Living on the Cape Flats, which is by nature a lot more communal, people are often popping over for meals or the loan of a car or to borrow a board game, and we remind ourselves to look beyond the immediate family to embrace others. It is a constant challenge to share our lives with those who need to be welcomed into the circle of family. Alun has just finished a four-week series on 'Who we are at St. Thomas'. He reminded us that **'We are a redeemed family of disciples who are called to make disciples'**. Our call then, is to make the circle, bigger, bigger, bigger – as we share the gospel both in word and in practical action.

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It has been about six weeks since Alun took over formally as rector of St. Thomas. Whilst we definitely have some gaps to fill, we rejoice that these are problems of life and growth. The Lord has been gracious in allowing us some real encouragements early on. One thrill this January has been the handover of leadership of our Thursday night bible study group. Alun knew that he needed to delegate some of his work and has been working on raising up three men to lead the studies on an alternating basis. This group was formed nine years ago under our then minister Christiaan Snell, when the idea of studying the Bible in this format was very new. The men are now on our council and keenly working alongside Alun in discipleship and other areas of leadership. The group now consists of about 14 core members and the group moves around homes – two thirds of the time in Heideveld and a third of the time in Kuilsriver (about 20 minutes drive from Heideveld, where six of our members now reside). Debbie still attends this group and is encouraged to see the members inviting their friends and family.

Our music group seems very threadbare with the move of Ramon, who led our musical worship so capable for so long, and our drummer to other churches. Nonetheless, we have recruited a couple of new singers and are looking to raise up some younger musicians. To this end, we have implemented a monthly extended practise, and other members of the church stay and braai while we go through the music – a chance to build fellowship as well as try and improve the music.

Our youth has boomed this year with a large cohort of grade 7s joining us. We are blessed with a very strong team of leaders at the moment with two male and two female leaders. For years Alun has been plugging away at raising leaders who love the Lord and are mature enough to lead groups to disciple the teenagers. Just this morning, our son Likhona was invited to go for a Gatsby (a quintessential Cape Flats takeaway) and join his small group at the church to continue a discussion on Matthew 5. Dillon, their leader, approached Alun last night saying their discussion at youth on Friday was so good that he wanted more time to continue it. Isn't this wonderful? As parents of older children now, it is a tremendous answer to our prayers to have other role models who love the Lord and model what discipleship looks like in Heideveld.

Please do be praying for St. Thomas Preschool, which began in our building in 2016. Since this time, we have been battling to register with the Department of Education, vital in order to secure funding and important in establishing ourselves as a quality preschool in Heideveld. We are now down to the last hurdle and would so much like to be registered by June. As rector, Alun is now the principal of the school, until such time as we have funds to appoint a full-time principal. They are so many, many ways we would like to take this school

forward, but we need this piece of paperwork. For now, we are grateful for 20 little people that make up the class of 2019 – children that are safe, fed and are taught.

Thank you for your faithful prayers and support for Arise, the other key ministry happening on our premises. We marvel at God's provision for us as an organisation. Last May, we were very seriously looking at the prospect of the Family Centre side of the work having to close due to a lack of funding. Today, not only is the centre open, but it is thriving! We have new groups operating and a train-the-trainer programme about to begin, whereby our professional staff will be running accredited courses for social workers and psychologists, on the material that they have pioneered. These courses will take place in four cities across our country this year. We trust that not only will they help to move towards greater sustainability for Arise, but also allow our model to be replicated in other resource-poor communities around South Africa. Please ask us if you would like to see Arise's annual report for 2018. May you be as encouraged by it as we are! You will notice that our name has changed from Arise Cape Town to **Arise Family** and our website and facebook page are now active under this name. I reported in our last newsletter on the concerning amendments to the Child Care Act and their awful implications for adoption. At this stage I have nothing more to add other than we know of professionals that are busy fighting this. Please do make this an urgent matter for prayer. Pray for truth to be made known, and for this bill to be prevented from coming to pass.



The school year has started and we have adjusted to a new normal. Likhona's home-schooling has included a heart dissection, a Chinese meal out with Dad (we are studying China this term), a new writing co-op with boys of similar age and plenty of sport. We are grateful to have found a curriculum that suits his learning style and is stimulating and comprehensive. Malachi is warming up to school; it is quite a large adjustment after nearly seven years at home with Debbie. He enjoys sport and a hobbies club in which he made a bird feeder. Having been shy for years, he is now considered the 'loud' member of the class – sigh! Ilana continues with the same teacher and class. She has lovely friends at the moment and enjoyed a trip to the beach last week – this is an answer to our prayers. She also loved the opportunity to attend a church kids camp at a partner church where she joins their Friday night club. Growing up, for sure! Timothy has rekindled the presence of Fireman Sam in our house. More often than not, wearing his yellow fireman hat, Timothy loves to reconstruct different rescues with his toys! His highlight of the week is when another home-school family come to our house on Friday mornings and he plays with their toddler. He misses Malachi and we are still working out how best to provide for him. Timothy enjoys Daddy dates on a Tuesday when Alun is off and together they have enjoyed walks on the mountain, bike rides in the park and a visit to a city vegetable 'farm'. Since early December, we have had a widow from St. Thomas staying with us. Pray that we might be able to bring some comfort to this faith-filled lady who lost her husband so suddenly. Pray that we might be able to help her as she begins to move forward to a new chapter of life on earth.

We shall be in the UK from **11 June–16 July** and look forward to catching up with many of you. We are needing to borrow a car that can accommodate the six of us, ideally from about 25 June-16 July. Failing this, we are crucially needing a large vehicle from **27 June-9 July**. If you are able to assist us with this, please could you email [debbierburt@gmail.com](mailto:debbierburt@gmail.com) Many thanks.

As ever, we are thankful for your partnership and pray that you are encouraged by the knowledge that under God, the gospel continues to go out and disciples made in both the UK and South Africa.

With every blessing,

Alun, Debbie, Likhona (14), Ilana (10), Malachi (6) and Timothy (2) x

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