



February 2016



Dear Friends,

Happy New Year from Johannesburg! I continue to praise God for his work in and through me at Christ Church Hillbrow and your continued partnership in that work.

December and Christmas

Although it might seem strange to many in the UK, December and the run-up to Christmas is quite a quiet time here in Hillbrow. Most of the congregation travel home for the Christmas (and summer) holidays and so the city empties out. Church is quite quiet. Just before Christmas, at the beginning of December I spent a week in Cape Town, attending a friend's wedding and generally relaxing. It was a great time and I was very thankful for that time of refreshment. I was also able to meet up with a few friends and attend a church where I wasn't expected to do anything on the Sunday morning except participate as an ordinary congregant. I was able to switch off completely and have a good rest.

On Christmas morning I was preaching the glories of the incarnation. How God came in the humility of a child and yet he came to save us from our sins. It was joy to be reminded of our humble saviour king, and come and worship him afresh. The day after Christmas I travelled to spend some time with my brother and his family in Clarens. It was a great time even though they have now given me the nickname CUB (which stands for Crazy Uncle Ben - who knows why!). After travelling together back to Johannesburg they spent a few days here. This meant that I discovered some of Johannesburg's 'treasures', a Lego shop and a trampoline park, which I had not come across before.



December, all in all, proved to be a much needed chance to refresh and to prepare for the coming year.

The Council

The start of 2016 really felt like the start of something new. Of particular encouragement has been the new council. Many of them have demonstrated that they truly have a servant heart and are keen to follow their humble saviour in serving in so many different ways. The new council have been a true support to me and very positive as things go forward. Please pray for them, pray for continued unity in mind, selfless love and service and the energy and willingness to serve even when it is costly.

Ministry Apprentice

As you will know, and I mentioned in my last prayer letter, we are hoping to raise funds to employ an assistant minister to help with the work at Christ Church Hillbrow. If you would like to contribute to that either as a one off donation or on a regular basis, please get in contact with Crosslinks and ensure that the funds are marked **Hillbrow Gospel Workers Fund** so that the gift is distinguished from my general Crosslinks fund. In the mean time we have been joined by a part-time apprentice, Sindiso, who has been working with Johannesburg Bible College and felt he would like more church based experience. He has been to CCH a couple of time and as I write it is his first day of work. Please pray for him to settle in quickly and be a great asset to the ministry at CCH. Pray that he might benefit from his time with us learning to know and love the Lord Jesus more and more and being better prepared to serve him.

Preaching

This year the big preaching series, God willing, will be through book of Revelation. I will not begin it until after Easter but I have already started reading and preparing for it. Before then we are going through the next section of 1 Samuel, looking at the reign of King Saul. As I have prepared I have been struck by how our hearts often go after the wrong 'kings' even though the true king, Jesus, is more wonderful and trustworthy than anything we could imagine. Pray for me and others as we preach through 1 Samuel, that we and the church would be gripped by God's word and that we might live under and for his true king Jesus. Pray also for me as I do study and reading on the book of Revelation; that I would be encouraged by the final victory which comes in God's Son Christ and be better prepared to follow and to serve him.

Ordination

I met with the bishop this week and he is hoping that my ordination will be in the next couple of months. Please pray for the bishops as they consider my application and that they would be favourable. And pray for the day, that it might be a great day of rejoicing in God's goodness and faithfulness, and pray that it might be a day which looks forward to a life-time of faithful service. Hopefully next time I write I will be ordained.

Peace

Finally, please pray for peace. I remember the words of the angels at Christmas, '*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all men on whom his favour rests.*' I am very thankful that the last few months at CCH seem to have been a little more peaceful and settled. I have also found my levels of anxiety have not been as high as they have been. Praise be to God and please pray that it might continue, that as CCH increasingly work together for the glory of God we might experience peace with God and peace with one another.

Thank you as always for your prayers, your encouragement and your partnership. If you are able to contribute to the Hillbrow Gospel Workers fund, please do get in touch with Crosslinks. And do drop me a line - I love hearing from you, and what is happening in your part of the world.

God bless, Ben Williamson

(Pictures: Cape Town and the nephews!)

PRAYER POINTS

Praise:

- Some rest and relaxation over December.
- Good start to the year with a servant hearted council.

Pray:

- Continued unity and perseverance within the council.
- For ongoing peace.

Please contact your local Crosslinks office to change your contact details

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