

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

A nostalgic recollection of the 1969 Musical "*Paint Your Wagon*" prompts my spring pastoral reflection this quarter. A youthful Clint Eastwood sang "*I Talk to the Trees*" and Lee Marvin's gravelly voice hardly did justice to the ballad "*I was born under a Wandering Star*".

We have several varieties of trees in our garden at home. The pin oak near our front gate has shed its brown winter foliage. The conifers on our rear boundary wall are shaking off an infestation of aphids. The massive yellow wood near the braai is recovering from a near fatal fungal infection. The leopard trees swaying in the wind, bombard our front roof and gutters with clattering seed pods. Each in its own way reminds one that winter is in recess. We might not talk to the trees but they have much to teach us about resilience and growth. Which prompts the question: what signs of new growth are evident in my life with the coming of spring?

Lee Marvin might have sung about a wandering star all those years ago. However, we may well be living under a shooting star at the moment in South Africa. Rapid change on so many fronts causes confusion and uncertainty. Courage and commitment are required to overcome the temptation to hunker down and circle the wagons. Courage is 'fear that has said its prayers' and commitment 'a long obedience in the same direction'. Both qualities are the fruit of faith. The Apostle Paul reminds us that hope has its reasons, that the opposite of faith is not doubt but reliance on the flesh, our sinful self, rather than God. Real faith can only be built on the ruins of our own self-despair. God responds to faith born of grace and grants us entrance to a "*kingdom that cannot be shaken*" (Heb.12:28) and "*an eternal house not built by human hands*" (2 Cor.5:1)

On a personal note, I'm most grateful that the pastoral vacancy at St Columba's, Hatfield will soon be filled. Craig Morrison from Randparkridge United Church, Presbytery's permitting, is due to commence his ministry there in January next year. God has been faithful throughout the process of calling a new minister. We are looking forward to pastoral stability and continuity after three short term pastorates.

Finally, on a family note, we are overjoyed with Caitlin's recent engagement to Bernie Schommarz.

Accordingly we will be celebrating two weddings in the new year: Jess in February and Caitlin in April. They have confirmed both dates with their minister.

Until next time

Warmest greetings

Alan



We share the joy and excitement of Caitlin Cameron and Bernie Schommarz on their engagement! Congratulations to them both!

TRINITY MARKET

On the 4th of August we hosted a morning market alongside the Anglican congregation. Good food, coffee and a variety of baked, homemade and other assorted goodies were on sale.

Many thanks to everyone who participated by selling their goods and who supported by coming along to enjoy the atmosphere and browse the commodities.

The day provided a wonderful sense of community and allowed for some of our members to share their talents and hobbies. Let's pray that this may be the seed of an event that we can hope to turn into a tradition and build on annually.



SESSION CLERK'S LETTER

It is Spring again, and all around me I notice signs of renewal – in my garden the clivias and jasmine creepers have just flowered beautifully, my tortoise has awoken from her winter slumber and comes to the patio daily looking pieces of apple and tomato to sustain her new burst of energy. After the recent rain, everything just seems awake, fresh and ready for action! There is a sense of enthusiasm around. With quite a warm summer forecast, I wonder how long it will take before we lose this sense of rejuvenation and start to feel weary and bogged down by the oppressiveness of summer heat.

And this makes me wonder if we don't fall into the same trap in our spiritual lives. We go through times of wonder and awe at God's goodness, treading lightly and joyfully, especially if things go well with us. But we so easily slip back into weariness, dejection, pessimism and failure to recognise His presence, grace and goodness in our lives when the road becomes a bit rockier and steeper.

In *Beyond Broken, Finding Power in the Pain*, John Andrews describes his journey through a particularly difficult time experienced by his family. He reminds us that we are not the Humpty Dumpty of the nursery rhyme – he could not be put back together again, but we can. We are never unfixable and broken beyond repair. We have hope and a future in a loving God who wants us to experience His grace, mercy and power through His still and saving voice. Andrews tells of a bird that flew into his patio window and fell down completely stunned, apparently lifeless. But after about ten minutes the bird stood up, shook itself, and flew off. Like that little bird, we can and will fly again. There aren't always answers in the valley and we cannot always make sense of what goes on in our lives, but, says Andrews, he has discovered that in it all, the Lord will never let us go and His love endures forever. May we all hold on to this beautiful truth and rejoice with David in the words of Psalm 138:7-8.

On a personal note, thank you to everyone for the uplifting prayers, messages of support and visits while my husband was recovering from back surgery, and amidst turbulent times at work. Peter is pain-free and able to walk about 7 km per day. He is already talking about hiking another stretch of the Camino! The Lord has indeed been good to us!

With love

Michele Havenga

MINISTRY TO MUSLIMS

On Saturday the 8th of September three of us from the young adult group had the privilege of attending a little meeting at Hatfield Christian Church hosted by the Frontiers Mission group.

Apart from the revelation of some startling statistics, a challenging and exciting message was shared on how The Great Commission and the love of Christ is at work, in Muslim majority countries.

At present there are three South African families living as witnesses in communities where the Gospel has historically had little to no presence. Despite seemingly overwhelming odds, the loving presence of brave followers of Christ in these communities speaks about the power of God to work in what seems like the most unlikely of places. Touching hearts and planting seeds of faith among the nomadic Berbers of Libya, and even in the hearts of Muslims in Mecca.

**“Though I walk in the
midst of trouble,
You preserve my life;
You stretch out Your
hand against the anger
of my foes,
With Your right hand
You save me.
The Lord will fulfil His
purpose for me;
Your love, O Lord,
endures forever
Psalm 138: 7-8**



NEXT GENERATION LEADER'S LETTER

While I was doing my nightly Bible reading and prayers, I was reminded about one of the most beautiful truths from scripture. It was interesting to me how God works within our lives because that same morning we had been discussing this very truth. From 1 Corinthians 10:13, *“And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.”* For many, this is kind of where we end the quote. For many, we take this single verse and apply it to our lives with the understanding that God does not allow negative things (the temptations) to happen to us. Yet as many know, and I am sure many have experienced, negative things do happen. Sometimes, in life, things happen to us that we have absolutely no control over and if you're honest, it sucks and it hurts.

We do not like to be placed in situations where we feel like we have no control over the outcome. We have been brought up to believe that we have the ability to fully control the things of this life. But it simply doesn't work like that. This single verse from 1 Corinthians does not tell us that everything will be rosy because we are Christian. Even if we end the verse as we did above, there is one aspect that we tend to overlook. It says that He (God) will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. What this suggests is that God is in full control and He does allow certain things to happen. How we respond to these negative things is the key because this verse continues to say, *“But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”*

Things will happen; there are things that will be extremely painful to bear and for some of us, we have no idea where to go when these troubles come. And I want to be as clear as possible here, I do not claim to have all the answers but this verse has been an amazing source of encouragement. God is faithful and He will provide a way out. It doesn't mean that He will take these troubles away, He can and sometimes He does do this, but what it does mean is that He has given us something to hold onto. He has given us the firm and solid foundation that is Jesus Christ. He is our hope and our salvation, and He is seeking after each of us. He wants to build us up, not break us down. Cling tightly to the cross of Christ because it is here where our hope will be fully realised.



Join us at 6 pm on Sunday evenings for contemporary worship and our current series on the book of Colossians.

BAPTISM OF BENJAMIN

The baptism of Benjamin Baragwanath was a delightful time of celebration. Not only did Benjamin bring a whole bunch of family and friends to be with him, he also blessed us all with his enthusiasm on his special day!

God bless you, Benjamin!

Over September and October we're doing a series on the Fruit of the Spirit in Sunday School.



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THE CHARISMA KIDS



This winter it was possible to add warm, waterproof jackets to the Charisma children's wardrobes. It is humbling to experience the children's

joy at receiving what could be regarded as a necessity. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve these children who are all very precious to Jesus.

TURN AROUND AND GO BACK TO HIM

A parent's rule when cycling with the children:

“If you stop and turn around and you don't see me, then you know you've gone too far.”

And perhaps God is whispering the same.

If you wake up in the morning and His goodness doesn't cross your mind, then you've gone too far from Him.

If you're facing a problem and you don't think to seek His face, then you know you've gone too far from Him.

If days have gone by and you haven't spoken His words to your children, then you've gone too far from Him.

If you're nursing a hurting heart and you haven't sought God to heal it, then you've gone too far from Him.

If you can't remember the last time you laid your burdens at His feet, then you've gone too far from Him.

If you are consumed with fear and haven't sought His comfort and peace, then you have gone too far from Him.

If the day passes and praise hasn't been sung to Him, then you know you've gone too far from Him.

If you've gone too far, turn around and go back to Him.



CAFÉ TRINITY

We had an eventful day at Café Trinity when Ben Ungermann, runner up Australian Master Chef 2017, visited us. But he didn't only visit! He made us Ginger Ice Cream, plated the deserts and served us! We were delighted to have him as our guest.

And then the following week we had the lovely Charlie-Rose serving us her very own Chocolate Brownies as well as her Granny, AnneckenJonck's amazing Vanilla Meringue Cake.

Café Trinity is always a happy space, and our visitors enjoyed it as much as we do!!

Remember everyone is welcome to come along: Wednesdays 10:00 – 12:00 and Thursdays 10:00 – 14:00.

