

methodist homes



MHA
on the
Bay

This issue compiled by Ron Cleland of Irvine Villa
email: cleland@intekom.co.za

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A Christmas Message from our Chairman Odwa Mtati



The world as we know it has changed forever – even more so, it seems, in 2016. Remarkable events took place this year that most of us would never have envisaged: the people of Britain voting to leave the European Union, the people of the USA electing Donald Trump as their next president, and the “Fees must Fall” campaign at South African universities that has united some while polarising others.

While not ignoring all the many other significant events and ongoing circumstances across the globe and on our own continent, of civil war, religious intolerance, persecution, these headline-making events seem particularly to point to people rejecting current frameworks of social, economic and political organisation.

Meanwhile, restrictions on use of natural resources such as water, and natural disasters in all corners of the world, remind us of our human impact on Earth's natural order and resources, and reinforce the need for a new approach to our stewardship of Planet Earth.

This prompts the question of what this means for the concept of leadership in society, for the role of leaders, if the very organisational framework of society is shifting? Where societies no longer rely on traditional notions of leadership, who or what is the compass, the lodestone, the rallying point – and what does it take to care for the most vulnerable in society?

It is a question foremost in our minds as we approach the end of this tumultuous and fraught year, and contemplate the year ahead and how we might re-think our approach to leadership, to better meet the needs of a fundamentally changed world.

As we do this thinking, we are reminded that in December we celebrate the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the ultimate example and role model of servant-leadership. As we re-examine the concept of leadership, let us use His example as our template in working to serve our fellow citizens and some of the most vulnerable in our society.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Let us start a new venture this Christmas. Let's clean our hearts for God's unconditional LOVE to enter and let's focus on giving meaningful gifts, sharing our blessings, opening our hearts and giving a helping hand to those in need.

That is the spirit in which our organisation works, and as the year draws to a close, the Board pays tribute to the staff and management for their continuous hard work in the interests of our residents. From the chair, I also acknowledge the selfless contribution of the Board members.

This season and 25 December especially, is our reminder that God is always with us. So, let us celebrate this Christmas with hope in our hearts, as our Messiah will always be there to guide and protect us.



Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do.

Pope John XXIII

In this issue:

The Chairman's Christmas Message	Page 1
Namaqualand or Maranatha?	Page 2
Wesley Gardens Celebrate Spring Day	Page 2
Long Service Congratulations	Page 2
Fighting the Drought	Page 2
Head Office has a Face-lift	Page 2
Nostalgia or Reality?	Page 3
Two Intrepid Cyclists	Page 3
Aldersgate's New Braai Facility	Page 4
Journey's End – A Caravan Saga	Page 4



NAMAQUALAND OR MARANATHA?

Spring brings with it beautiful blooms, as evident in Namaqualand in 2016, after good rain at the right times.

So too the blooms in our village gardens heralding the arrival of Spring.

Eric Libala, who has tended the Maranatha gardens since 1998, was recently spotted at work, bringing order and beauty to the gardens and lawns there. Thank you, Eric, for the work that you and others do, and for the joy that you bring!



Residents of Wesley Gardens celebrated the advent of Spring on 22 September (Spring Equinox Day), by way of a lunch party. They had decided on an appropriate seasonal lunch of cold chicken and salads, followed by trifle, but hadn't bargained on the downpour on that day! Undeterred, the "Wesleyans" turned up, brollies and all, and enjoyed the tasty lunch prepared by fellow resident Merle Harmer.

Photo by Shirley Payne

Congratulations and Thank you

The following employees celebrated long service with **MHA**, as listed, as at the end of December 2016

5 years

Charmaine Elizabeth Swart	1 Oct 2011	Epworth Close
Plaatjie Hendricks	1 Oct 2011	Maintenance
Sandra Desiree Cornwell	1 Oct 2011	Head Office
Pumzile Mildred Kendle	13 Nov 2011	CP Bradfield

10 years

Zukiswa Jack	2 Oct 2006	Aldersgate
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15 years

Zameka Julia Tawuli	8 Oct 2001	Aldersgate
Xoliswa Gloria Bekwa	3 Dec 2001	Aldersgate

FIGHTING THE DROUGHT



Dave and Lin Jack of Irvine Villa have just installed a 5000 litre tank to capture the rain water off their cottage roof. Their intention is to keep their own gardens watered but also, in addition to the upkeep that they do, to look after the water needs of the beautiful gardens which adorn either side of the Village entrance gate. The Complex Manager, Fred Marshall, contributed some of the fittings, and did the installation. Recent good rains have already half-filled the tank!

HEAD OFFICE HAS A FACE-LIFT

The Westbourne Road building was erected in the early 1930's; the windows had become rusted and unsightly, the roof needed replacement, and a new coat of paint was overdue.

The beauty of the "old lady" has been restored! The pictures below show the old and the new frontage; the new windows have transformed the building, and the new façade and signage have given the front a clean and professional look.



The scruffy piece of garden at the rear has been turned into a patio where staff and visitors can relax.



Thanks must go to our General Manager and Maintenance Manager for planning this make-over, and managing the project.



Nostalgia or Reality?



Christmas is the story of God's love for everyone. I think this is why the singing of Christmas carols is so popular and loved by many people. A few years ago I was privileged to read the lessons at the Collegiate Carols, but the point is the Feather Market Hall was packed to capacity and I don't know whether all the people there attended Church regularly. I think not.

I had exactly the same feeling when my wife and I were invited to attend the Christmas Eve service at St Paul's Cathedral in London. As you will know England is a secular country and yet people were queuing from 5.00pm for a service that started at 11.00pm in order to be sure of a seat.

The poetic words set to emotionally charged music can touch us profoundly and trigger feelings we did not know we had. I humbly suggest that many of us have been starved for the reality the carols proclaim. As we sing we know in the deep recesses of our inner being that somehow we are in touch with a spiritual dimension that is real and was seen in that baby born in Bethlehem.

We must be careful though that the deep feelings we experience don't evaporate into nostalgia. I encourage us to believe in the reality of our experience. It is one of the ways the Christ child has of calling us and asking to be born in our hearts.

Some time ago I enjoyed reading a novel called, "The Shack." In it Mac, whose daughter has been tragically abducted and murdered, is having a conversation with Jesus. Mac is reminded that the people who know Jesus are the ones who are free to live and love without any agendas. Mac then asks, "Is that what it means to be a Christian?" Jesus responds, "Who said anything about being a Christian? I'm not a Christian." The idea struck Mac as a bit odd and unexpected. Again Jesus speaks, "Those who love me come from every system that exists. I have no desire to make them Christian but I do want to join them in their transformation into sons and daughters of God, into my brothers and sisters, into my Beloved." "Does that mean," asked Mac, "that all roads lead to you?" "Not at all," smiled Jesus, "Most roads don't lead anywhere. What it does mean is that I will follow any road to find you..." So the Christ born that first Christmas can find us whatever road we are on.

I wish you all a truly special Christmas. What a Christmas gift it would be if we came to know ourselves truly loved by God. It is then that we would be set free to live by the highest values we know.



Rev George Irvine

TWO INTREPID CYCLISTS



Two recent arrivals at Aldersgate, Waldo Schumann and Guy Marshall, have quickly become biking buddies. These are their stories:

Waldo Schumann: In 2008 a friend asked if I would like to join a ride in the Bavariaans. He lent me a mountain bike and it was a really great ride, and so I bought a second-hand bike without any shock absorbers, and that was the start.

I then heard about a race near Bathurst, the "Pineapple Enduro", and decided to enter, to see what racing was about. I found the saddle very hard, and so I arrived at the start of the Enduro in T-shirt and shorts, a bike with no shocks and a foam rubber encased saddle. I was told that the race was "very technical (I had to ask what "technical" meant), but I finished the race in not a bad time, and things then got better because my son gave me his bike which he was not using.

Thereafter I explored the Baakens Valley, riding along any path which looked rideable. The bug had bitten, and long may it keep biting. I have done the "Argus" twice, the "Addo Herald" several times and the "Karoo to Coast" once. It has been nice meeting and riding with Guy, and being able to tell my wife, Loraine, that Guy and I are going to play in the valley!

Guy Marshall: As a teenager I cycled from Linton Grange to Grey High School and back every day for four years, and to Church and Scouts every weekend, but not again until I was 54. I entered my first "Argus" and "Herald" races in 2000. On my 7th "Argus" I achieved my goal of finishing under 3hr 25min. In 2014 I then bought a mountain bike to ride mostly on gravel roads. I cycle two road and two mountain bike rides each week.

On moving to Aldersgate I met Waldo who has introduced me to cycling in the Baakens Valley on single tracks, which is a much more technical and strenuous task. The beauty of the valley can be seen best from the many cycle paths.

In the past 18 years I have cycled 122,500km on my road bike and 3,000km on the mountain bike. That is the equivalent of three times around the circumference of our planet Earth, and it has helped keep me fitter, thinner and less stressed. You see a lot more on a bike than in a car, and I have enjoyed every moment being aware of the beauty of God's Creation.



**Waldo and Guy
off on an early
morning
mountain bike
ride.**





ALDERSGATE LAUNCH THEIR IMPRESSIVE NEW BRAAI FACILITY!



Saturday 1 October 2016 witnessed the opening of their new Braai - the rain certainly didn't dampen the feeling which was evident right from the start, and continued until the 75/80 "odd" residents staggered home later in the evening.

A huge "Thank You" must be said to the three main builders – residents David van der Merwe and Basil Hawtrey, and Carel van Niekerk (David's son-in-law), who worked so hard for about four months, for the benefit of current and future residents of the Aldersgate community. Thanks must also go to others who assisted them in the project, and to the many supervisors passing by who were always on hand to offer advice!

The sun came out just in time for Rev George Irvine, in his inimitable way, to declare the new facility open, and cut the ribbon. Then the rain poured down again, and the cooks got to work (and, no, the roof didn't leak!).

We mustn't forget the big contribution made by Joan Hawtrey, Joyce van der Merwe and her daughter, Deirdre. These ladies sacrificed and supported their husbands in this project, and then put everything together for the very special evening. Thank you too to all the others who contributed time and talents.



Basil Hawtrey overseeing, Carel Van Niekerk doing the work, and David van der Merwe assisting.

Article submitted by Barbara Robertson of Aldersgate

JOURNEY'S END



Aldersgate residents Lawrence and Sheila Rother have had caravanning in their blood for 42 years. Their last caravan was a Jurgens, with two double beds, onboard toilet, gas stove; fridge and microwave; it was virtually a second home on wheels.

On 24 October 2016, at the entrance to Addo Elephant National Park, one of the caravan's wheels jammed, the axle broke, and the resultant damage caused by the wheel rendered the caravan beyond economical repair.

The Rother's, who are now in their 80s, and who knew that they were gradually reaching a crossroads as far as their caravanning days were concerned, were understandably distraught that such a crucial part of their leisure and pleasure had been destroyed in the blink of an eye, and forced upon them.

**The Rother's
caravan
before
calamity struck**



They had wanted to part company with their trusty caravan in their own time, but they are grateful that they were uninjured, and that no other damage was caused.

Lawrence and Sheila have kept a meticulous log book of their journeys across South Africa and Namibia since 1974, and their road map showing all the routes taken looks like a spider's web! They have towed their caravan over 90000 kilometres and, as proud members of the Caravan Club of SA, they have attended over 200 rallies organized by CCSA's head office, and 187 organized regionally.



Their "brag board", which was recovered from the damaged caravan's door, proudly shows off the circular and triangular badges, giving testimony to their attendance. In 2005 the Rother's were chosen as CCSA's national "Caravaners of the Year", in 2010 they won the regional award, and in 2015 were bestowed with Honorary Life membership of the association.

Lawrence admits, sadly, that "a book, not a chapter, has closed". They do, however, have wonderful memories from their caravanning days (a distance of more than twice around the Equator!); the sights and sounds, the shared interest, the camaraderie, and the freedom which they enjoyed for so long.

On a positive note, the Rother's say that they will now be able to spend more time within the Aldersgate community, which has been so supportive during this traumatic time.