



This issue compiled by
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Connection

Greetings and good wishes.

I hope as you read this that there are some special plans in place to be with people who are precious to you, and to whom you are precious, over the next few weeks. If not, would you consider seeking out another who might be in similar circumstance to you and with whom you might enjoy connection? You might just make someone's day!

Connection with people, history of shared experiences, how we relate and where we fit in, are so much more than mere facts and statistics, are they not? We are made for more and really live for more than mere facts and cold details. In fact, I recall, in my first year of required theological study way back in the 1980's, having a significant segment of an introductory course focus on "facts as interpretation of reality".

Our present technological, scientific and developed world relies heavily on empirical study, logic and measurable "facts". Actually these are less than reality. Most historical facts refer to a past which may be contested and, depending on who records them, might not be exactly the same as that which it represents. Science, as valuable and valid as it is, functions in the realm of measurable data and hypothesis or theory that reaches beyond them, collects, connects, collates and interprets them.

That is why I revel in four gospels which, each in their own way, tell the story and give the details of the life, actions, teachings and experiences of Jesus. Each brings depth and colour to the reality. Without any one of Matthew, Mark and Luke, who record and expound on the life, teachings and doings of Jesus, even where they cover the same event or encounter, we would be so much the poorer. And then there is John, written later and with more depth and detail; especially around Jesus' last week and the Last Supper---four threads of a wonderful tapestry of invitation and exploration of one like us, yet one like no other.

I love the "fact" that Jesus personally came to reveal the fullest picture of the Creator and sustainer of the universe. Not a list of ideas, nor a collection of truths or teachings – but a person who longs to be known and loved and encountered personally. The promise and possibility of Holy Spirit enabling our own awareness and relationship with Jesus, and empowering us to follow Him as disciples, continues the rippling out of light and love meant to ignite hope in an often dark and difficult world.

That the relationship with Jesus requires of me to reach beyond what I can prove, or understand or connect in any human construct is, for me, a source of wonder and worship. God bigger, better and more beautiful than I can conceive or communicate. Yet in advent we dwell on the God who fosters hope through His coming. We are invited to wait expectantly and hope and pray, certain of One who can be trusted.

Then, on Christmas day, especially, we rejoice that He has come as one of us, God personally present, full of grace and truth. Come dear Jesus, come!

(with grateful thanks to Rev Jonathan Hobson of
Walmer Methodist Church)

"The older you get the more you realize you have no desire for drama, conflict or stress. You just want a cosy home, food on the table, and to be surrounded by kind people who make you happy"

Anon

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20th Congratulations Maureen!



Sandra Cornwell with Maureen Gugu

Maureen Gugu, who is a wonderfully committed Housekeeper at Epworth Close, celebrated her 20th anniversary at MHA on 1 December 2019.

We are proud of you, Maureen, and we thank you for the work you do.

Our Editor - Ron Cleland

Ron has been unwell for over a month, spending time in hospital and is now in a rehab centre. He is making solid progress there, and every indication is that he will be home well before Christmas.

Get 100% asap, Ron!!

Blessed is the hand that gives: NIKITHEMBA



On Thursday 5 December 2019 some Staff, Board members, the Carer staff and representatives from EP Caterers handed over wonderful re-usable buckets full of groceries to the beneficiaries of our outreach programme, Nikithemba, in Gqebera township.

As always, the hampers were generously donated by EP Caterers. The extra food provided to the elderly folk, who receive regular care and nourishment from Nikithemba, makes a huge difference to them and to their households, especially at this time of the year when so many others can enjoy festivities and luxuries.

MHA is blessed to have Nikithemba as a part of what we provide and do, in the service of others.



20/20 Vision

Certainly the majority of this Newsletter's readership falls into the "brille en pille" category; we wear glasses and we swallow too many medicines! So we have then probably all come across this expression: 20/20 Vision. It is a term used to express the clarity or sharpness of vision, measured at a distance of 20 feet. If you have 20/20 vision, you can see clearly at 20 feet what should normally be seen at that distance.

Bending this expression a bit, we invited some Staff, Board members and residents to share with readers what their personal "2020 Vision" is, to introduce the "twenty-twenties" decade, which is less than a month away!

We hope that you will identify with some or all of the sentiments and wise words which have been shared.

- ✂ My wish is for MHA to expand into new areas, bearing in mind the objective to provide dignified and affordable accommodation for senior citizens
(Kevin Helm, Board member)
- ✂ My wish is that violence, abuse of women and children would stop, and that we should be grateful for what we have
(Lynné Smitsdorff, Wesley Gardens Manager)
- ✂ I trust that the Holy Spirit will guide me to live out the love and forgiveness towards others that I receive so freely from God.
(Nelmar Windell, Maranatha Frail Care Matron)
- ✂ Life has many different chapters; one bad chapter doesn't mean it's the end of the book.
(Fred Marshall, Irvine Villa Manager)
- ✂ My prayer for 2020 is that the entire MHA family would experience the best of their lives for the rest of their lives
(Alva Wenning/Cassia Gardens)
- ✂ My hope for 2020 is that Christians everywhere, and especially within MHA, will take time out to read carefully: 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 vs 1-24. Then, to take the contents very seriously, urgently, and with great gratitude and praise
(Liz and John Machin, Cassia Gardens)
- ✂ "Be a rainbow for someone else's cloud" (quoting Maya Angelo)
(Lesley Lawson, Board member)
- ✂ Quoting Oprah Winfrey, a leader in the consciousness of gratitude: "Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough"
(Hein Barnard, MHA CEO)
- ✂ My hope and prayer for South Africa is that in the very near future our country will be administered as well as MHA Port Elizabeth. Could we ask for more?
(Robin Wright/Annesley Gardens/Sheariton)

Heartfelt Thanksgiving

Rev Robin Wright of Annesley Gardens/Sheariton shared a beautiful prayer with the congregation at the MHA Thanksgiving Service at Westering Methodist Church on Sunday 24 November 2019. It is certainly worth sharing again, and with those who were unable to attend the service, and with the MHA family generally:

"We, the most blessed of people, gather this afternoon to acknowledge that you are our God and we are your people, and to say our heartfelt thanks for the gift of Methodist Homes.

We thank you for the comfort and security we enjoy, and the care we experience should problems arise. We thank you for the warmth and affection that is offered in times of need and, when we have been away, for whatever reasons, the wonderful sense of home-coming that is ours.

We thank and praise you for those whose dreams, visions, prayers and courage resulted in MHA. Thank you for the planners, architects, builders, financial experts and others who combined their skills and talents and offered them to your service to bring this wonderful miracle into being.

We who arrived somewhat late in the day are deeply grateful to those who have been before us, who experienced the early days of trial and error and dust. Our beautifully groomed villages with their spotless buildings echo the love and affection of previous residents, and remind us that the process is ongoing and MHA is a living adventure.

We thank you for those who work for MHA. The maintenance team who seem capable of fixing anything, the patient painters who scrape and sand and fill, and we thank you for groundsmen and cleaners who keep our villages neat and tidy.

If we were to use only one word for MHA, **care** would receive many votes. Whether in frail care, bedsitters or cottages we are cared for. And we give THANKS for the care we receive from nursing staff and management at all levels. Thank you for the personal touches of individual people, visitors and carers all giving love, warmth and a great deal of happiness.

Our villages would just not be the same without the residents, and we give you thanks for them. What a rich variety you have placed together under the umbrella of MHA, each one with a role to play, a story to tell, creating the sense of family, of belonging.

Thank you for the opportunity to share memories, common experiences and, sometimes, improbable tales.

We Thank and Praise you for MHA, for the people who have made it possible for us to enjoy our slower lifestyle in security and comfort, and for all who, day by day, make it an ongoing reality."

The Flip Side of Gratitude

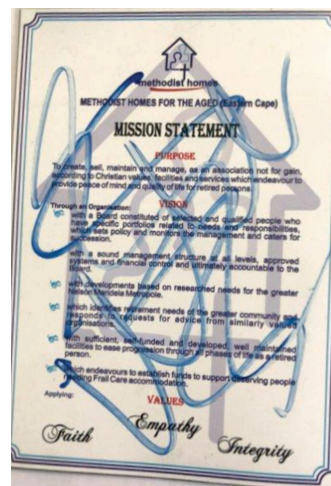
In the past month all residents were given a "fridge magnet" version of MHA's Mission Statement (its Purpose, Vision and Values). From feedback, the gesture was well received. If nothing else, it has provided yet another daily reminder to the Staff and Board of MHA that they have a commitment to those they serve, and that they should do that to the very best of their ability.

Sadly, a defaced magnet (pictured) was anonymously deposited into the postbox of one of MHA's village Managers. It reminded the Management team that it is impossible to please all of the residents all of the time. Far more importantly, it has also emphasized the fact that some residents are unhappy with their circumstances, with what they have received or committed

themselves to by moving to MHA, and with some necessary changes to routine and village life which have recently been introduced to enhance safety and security. Systems are in place, and staff are available, to deal with these concerns, and residents are urged to be proactive in that regard. Bottling up something of concern, or griping, isn't going to help. Neither does the defacing of an enshrined document help in any positive way.

This is neither the time nor place to remind ourselves that some residents carry huge burdens on their back, or to unpack why some folk choose to be unhappy. Here is a universal fact: change is always inevitable, but so too is resistance to change. It is basic human nature to try and keep lifestyles, routines, surroundings and customs intact and constant. People often resist change for reasons such as fear of the unknown, less tolerance to change, real or perceived inconvenience, dislike towards Management or authority, and so on. All of the good which surrounds them, and perhaps looking at the potentially positive outcomes of change, gradually gets blurred and distorted.

A huge amount of energy and resources are currently involved in constantly improving MHA; what we offer, what we do, and how we do it. MHA Board and Management will communicate these changes to you, from time to time. As individuals, as an organization, as a city, and as a nation we are increasingly faced with challenges which could drag us downwards, poison us with negativity, and distract us from playing our parts, however small, in being part of the solution, not the problem. Please don't fall into that trap.





Our beautiful gardens ...



Share a
family
recipe



Smell
the
flowers

Don't complain
at all today



Pick a flower
for one of
your neighbours



Smile at
a stranger



Phone one
of your
family

Get to know
someone
new



Don't talk
- just
listen



Sing in
the
shower



Leave a
happy note
for someone

Laugh
with
someone



Save
water



Be
kind



Invite
someone to
tea & cake

