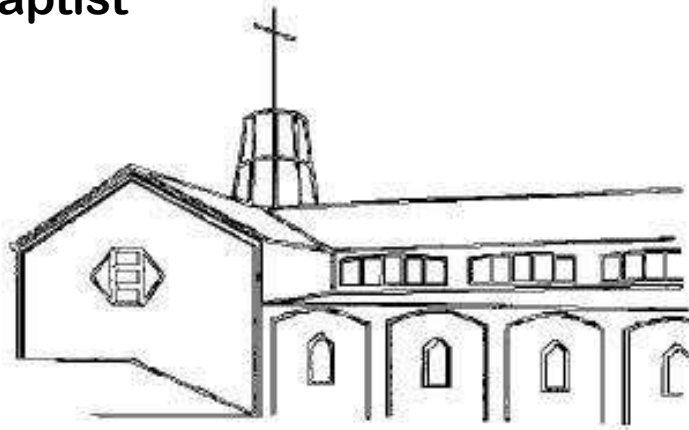


Parish of St John the Baptist
ADVENT 2009



The
LANTERN

*I have loved you with an everlasting love;
I have drawn you with loving kindness.*

Jer. 35 : 3


Rector's letter
Dear People of St John's**Advent - A Fresh Start**

The new church calendar begins this Sunday 29 November with the start of Advent, when we anticipate and prepare for the birth of Jesus. On this Sunday we will have one morning service at 8.00am and an Advent Meditation at 17.30.

Let us use this Advent period to commit ourselves to working on our relationship with God and renewing our faith. In the year ahead we will continue to provide opportunities for spiritual growth, community building and outreach.

As we enter this season we also look back and give thanks to God for this past year. It has been a busy year for the parish but one in which we have been blessed with growth in various areas: the Spirit of Hope has encouraged many people to use the gifts and skills they have; we have welcomed new members; and we have experienced the generosity of many in giving sacrificially to meet our financial needs. I thank you all. I am particularly grateful to my fellow clergy, wardens, parish councillors, lay ministers and those who head up groups and ministries within the parish, as well as our parish secretary, Rose, and verger, Sam, and to my wife, Alison, for all the support she has given me this year.

We continue to work towards creating a parish in where all feel welcomed and included and can become the people God has created them to be. We continue to invite you to invest your time, gifts and money in helping this become a reality. Over this past year the relationships developed, the generosity expressed and the good sense of working together augers well for our parish in new year.

Regional News

Last month we said farewell to the rector of Christ the King, Revd Victor Makhubu. The new rector, Revd Des Solomon, previously an assistant priest at St John's, based at Mariannridge, begins as rector of this parish this month.

A successful Arise and Build/Growing the Church regional conference held at St John's which Edward Pines was instrumental in organising and facilitating. A full report will be available later.

Diocesan Ordination Service 28 November at the Cathedral

Please pray for those ordained as they begin a new phase in their ministry. They are:

Stipendiary Priest/Deacons: Thokozani Mdunge, Mlungisi Hadebe and Thulani Zikhali

Self-Supporting Priests: Vongai Mkaronda, Diane Pickford, Jane Manser, Jenny Mitchell,

Nicolette Reddy, Nompumelelo Mabaso, Sixtus Ndlovu, William Bennie and Zodwa Ndlovu.

Self-Supporting Deacons: Sean Semple, Priscilla Mgabhi, Dabulukusa Hlatswayo, Anna-Maria Dlamini, Muntu Mabotha, Sanele Moyo, Sonnyboy Sibiya and Egburt Sibisi.

Theological Education

We have had the first of our sessions on theological education, a three part series on selected themes on Early Church history which I presented. I was encouraged with the response and the interest parishioners have in exploring aspects of their faith.

It is intended that these sessions will continue to take place next year and in the years to come. Sermons are not the right place to deal meaningfully with theological issues. Firstly, they are relatively short and secondly they usually do not provide an opportunity for people to respond. For me it is a faith affirming practice to be presented with views other than the ones one are familiar with and to engage in critical thinking around them.

Within church contexts my experience is that centuries of reflection on scripture and good theological scholarship tends to be ignored by most Christians. We are the poorer for this. We live in an age when the Christian faith is either being ignored or hotly debated amongst its adherents. And within the worldwide Anglican Church we have our own peculiar conflicts. I think it is increasingly important that we know the basis of our faith. As St Augustine put it: Theology is faith seeking understanding.

We will use the three Sundays before Lent for further theological input: Sundays 31 January, 7 February and 14 February at 17.30. All are welcome. We will provide more details on the theme when it is confirmed. We welcome suggestions from parishioners on topics to be covered during next year during these sessions.

I have been appointed by Bishop Rubin Phillip to be a member of the Diocesan Theological Education and Formation Board and so will be part of the process of promoting theological education within the Diocese, which is being focused initially on clergy. (We include in this publication the Synod resolution on Theological Education).

Interdenominational Christian Care

This body has been set up and is managed by the churches in Pinetown. Their AGM was held on Thursday 19 November. The organisation is doing well in reaching out and caring for the needs of those in our community. I would like to quote parts of the Secretary's/Coordinator's [Marie Roberts] report which highlights some of their achievements over the past year, and which may encourage some of our members to offer their time and talents to this ministry. You may be surprised by the scope of their work:

- The feeding of the unemployed called "Steve's Kitchen" keeps us very busy. Our numbers have been between seventy and one hundred and forty each week day, we have no idea who is going to arrive for food but we do our best to feed everyone.
- Tea and sandwiches continue to be made and served at the Psychiatric Clinic most weeks.

- We continue to work closely with Phakamisa [based that the Pinetown Methodist Church] helping where ever we can with bread, soup and cake for the wandering teacher groups and bread and cake for the many funerals that they have.
- The following organizations receive food aid from Christian Care each week:
 - Mrs Dladla - Khayaletther Centre
 - Wandering Teachers - Phakamisa
 - Candy Floss Creche - Welfare
 - Shamitha Naidoo - Creche [Motala Heights]
 - Joyce - Clinic Support Group
 - Mrs Mvelase - Disabled Children
 - Street Children Feeding - Durban
 - Street Children Feeding - Clermont
 - Iris - Community Worker
 - Eunice - Community Worker
- Christian Care assists Pinetown Child Welfare Clinics and McCords Hospital with food for many functions and support groups.
- Maytime stores in Kloof have been supporting us with food two days a week through the kindness of Hillcrest Aids Centre.
- Checkers and Knowles continue to support us six days a week with a wonderful amount of food.
- Malcolm Maduri supplies 10 fresh loaves of bread a week so that the children from Psychomotor and the Psychiatric patients have nice fresh sandwiches, what a blessing.
- Mike Knowles donates 40kg of mealie meal a month so that guys can have a change from samp and beans what a blessing.
- Christian Care I really do believe we are making a difference in peoples lives thank you so much.

At the meeting we received a report from the Seniors' Day Centre, which has been functioning well but which is underutilized. Do you know of any elderly people, particularly those who are at home during the day, who could benefit from the company and the food that this Centre provides?

I am grateful to Sandy Wallace who has been our church representative on the Centre management committee since its inception a couple of years ago and Ingrid Pines who now serves on that committee and helps out regularly at the Centre. Revd Doreen Böhmer regularly attends the meetings of Interdenominational Christian Care as part of her diaconal ministry within the community. Thank you, Doreen.

Mothers' Union Enrolment Service

We have had a MU branch at St John's since the 1960's. In the 1990's we had a revival of the branch, and now are were experiencing a further revival. Nonhlanhla Nala and Makhosi Cain have provided leadership in this current phase.

On Sunday 22 November, in a service supported by MU members from other parishes as well as members of the men's organisation, St Bernard Mzeki Guild, eight new members were admitted and the newly elected committee commissioned. Canon Theo Ngubane preached at the service and challenged the MU to fulfill its aims of promoting marriage and family life.

This service was the culmination of a long process of preparation by the new members. We are grateful to both Mrs Swazi Thwala and Mrs Flora Ngubane for their assistance in this preparation. We pray for our MU as they fulfil their God-given calling within our parish.

An Interesting Men's Group Evening

On Tuesday 2 November, a retired Methodist Minister, Revd Colin Andrews, who has worked for many years with Men's groups and male spirituality, shared with the newly formed St John's Men's Group. His words were both challenging and encouraging to us. The following are some notes I took from his input.

Men need opportunities in which they can talk deeply about themselves and maintain ongoing relationships with others. Every man is a beloved son of God and needs both the affirmation and guidance of wise mentors and elders.

With the sin of patriarchy leading to violence men need to both recognise and critique their own power so that it can be used for justice and not the domination of others. The real possibility exists for men to collaborate with like minded men of other faith traditions.

Many men experience "father wounds" (from poor relationships between fathers and sons and absent fathers). The Roman Catholic Franciscan priest, Richard Rohr, said in respect of these wounds that "its healing could be the most radical social reform possible."

Homophobia leads many men to fear relating closely to one another. There is a strong need for men to listen to each other. Healing can come about through expressing the pain one has experienced. All great spirituality/discipleship is about what we do with our pain, it is about being real with who we are. Again quoting Richard Rohr: "If you do not transform your pain you will transmit it." If we do not deal with our pain this leads to inflexibility, blame, pettiness and depression (hidden anger); and we will need other people to hate in order to expel our negativity.

The new book, *The Hidden Spirituality of Men*, by Matthew Fox was recommended.

The evening concluded by looking at Jesus, a real man:

1. Jesus never apologises for needing human support. We see this in the garden of Gethsemane. (Men are usually reluctant to ask for help)
2. Jesus wept. (We live in a society that tells us "cowboys/big boys don't cry")
3. Jesus accepted human feelings and expressed them appropriately. There are 27 recorded occasions in the gospels in which he became angry.

4. Jesus was courageous. He confronted violent people; he forgave them; he had compassion for the needy; he loved everyone.

We are grateful to Colin for the insights he shared with us and the direction he has given to the emerging Group.

If you would like to join the Men's Group please contact one of the co-ordinators: Gordon Bell 083 396 7746, Alfred Nala 0766222828 or Edward Pines 083 483 5822.

Spirituality and Climate Change

On Friday 20 November our parish together with the Grail Women's Movement and the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI) hosted a reflection on spirituality and climate change.

It was a privilege to have the afternoon facilitated by Marianne Karsh, a forest scientist by training who coordinates the Ecology Project of the Jesuit Centre, Guelph, Canada (www.ignatiusguelph.ca) where she runs programmes in ecology and spirituality. Marianne gives retreats throughout Canada to religious organisations, churches, and schools. She is also director of Arborvite (www.arborvitae.org), a Toronto-based organisation that creates opportunities for people to nurture their spirituality. We were led in through an experience using symbols as well as interaction in the garden.

The following are some notes I took from her input:

Climate change is about a call to do something different: To take responsibility, to be strong and not ambivalent, to be a guardian - to guard the next generation with honour and commitment, to stand strong in the face of hardship, "to be remade into the new human" (Thomas Berry). It is a call to be co-partners with God in shaping the future of the earth.

It is a call to be in relationship with ourselves, God, humans and creation - the earth, air, water, plants, minerals (everything). We need a spirituality that pervades all aspects of life. We will need prayer, meditation, deeper listening, creativity and visioning. Our relationships are broken - we need to know we are part of a whole; and we need to know that we can make a difference.

How do we experience God in nature? What is your favourite part of nature: a mountain, a night sky, a child's face, a favourite flower? Is there a place you call home? We need to visit these places when hope diminishes and when we hear the cries of the earth and the poor.

All in nature points to God; when we lose a species to extinction we lose one way of knowing and experiencing God.

We need a new story in which there is cooperation, negotiation and compromise. For "we are all in one nest", "we all live downstream", "the myth of separateness is gone" (Thomas Merton).

"Ecological conversion is to increase our spiritual footprint and at the same time lighten our ecological footprint" Colin Brown. There is a sense in which we all need ecological conversion, moving from a lack of trust,

care and hope, and from the need to possess and consume.

Let us know the love of the earth towards us as human beings and the love of the plants towards Earth.

Climate Change And Copenhagen

The following was forwarded to parishes in the Diocese by Bishop Rubin. Those that would like to participate in this international action of bell ringing at St John's are invited to gather at the entrance to our church at 14.45 on Sunday 13 December. On this day in Copenhagen there will be an ecumenical service for delegates in which Anglicans will be well represented -both Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu and Archbishop Rowan Williams will be the key speakers.

World's churches urged to ring bells against climate change

Source: AFP World News / English Date: November 12, 2009

GENEVA, Nov 12, 2009 (AFP) -

The World Council of Churches on Thursday called on churches around the world to ring their bells 350 times during the Copenhagen climate change summit on December 13 as a call to action on global warming.

The leading council of Christian and Orthodox churches also invited places of worship for other faiths to join a symbolic "chain of chimes and prayers" stretching around the world from the international date line in the South Pacific.

"On that Sunday, midway through the UN summit, the WCC invites churches around the world to use their bells, drums, gongs or whatever their tradition offers to call people to prayer and action in the face of climate change," the council said in a statement.

"By sounding their bells or other instruments 350 times, participating churches will symbolise the 350 parts per million that mark the safe upper limit for CO₂ (carbon dioxide) in the atmosphere according to many scientists," it added.

The chimes are meant to start at 3.00 pm local time in each location.

The WCC brings together 348 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican churches representing about 560 million Christians in 110 countries.

The Council of European Bishops Conferences, which gathers Roman Catholic bishops and archbishops, is also supporting the campaign, according to a letter released by the WCC.

The UN summit in the Danish capital on December 7 to 18 is meant to produce a new global treaty to broaden cuts in emissions of greenhouse gases blamed for climate change, but the negotiations are still riven by disagreements. The WCC acknowledged that plans for a bell ringing campaign have stirred controversy.

"In some countries, the question has been raised whether churches have the right to use their bells for what may be considered to be a political campaign," said Guillermo Kerber, WCC programme executive on climate

change. "Those who support the campaign see the care of creation and of people's lives and livelihoods threatened by climate change more as an ethical and spiritual issue that, of course, has political implications, not in a partisan sense but referring to the common good," he explained.

Lent Course

It has been our custom to encourage house groups to use a common course during Lent. Such a course is being prepared for next year by the Diocese with the theme of "The Hospitality of God." If you would like to participate in this course but are not presently part of a house group you are welcome to join an existing one or be part of a new one that will be formed.

8.00am Sunday Services

This year we experimented with making the fifth Sunday of each month a combined 8.00am service. We will not continue this practice next year, but instead have combined 8.00am services on the following occasions

only: Vestry - 14 March; Patronal Festival - 27 June; Confirmation - 29 August; and Christmas - 25 December. Please mark these days carefully in your diary.

WISHING YOU A BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND A NEW YEAR OF GOD'S BLESSINGS

I conclude with a portion of a reading from this morning's lectionary (27 Nov.) - 1 Peter 3:8-9:

Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It was for this that you were called - that you might inherit a blessing.

Yours in Christ's love

Revd Dr Andrew Warmback
Rector



CELEBRATION OF HOPE WEEKEND

Jane Whitby

I hope those of you who attended any part of this weekend were moved in some way. It was a great opportunity of meeting and working with people that perhaps you only say hello to on a Sunday morning. Personally, for me, it was a learning curve.

It started with me, earlier this year, opening my big mouth and suggesting having a flower festival at some stage. I was soon co-opted on to the Spirit of Hope committee. In discussion I realised we did not have the "flower power" for the large flower festival which I had envisaged and so plan B emerged, which was in the end to involve a larger cross section of parishioners. The organisation of the overall

weekend became my job! I am a person who likes all my "i"s dotted and my "t"s crossed when it comes to planning and in my opinion this was not happening as I thought it should but I was constantly being told not to worry, it would happen. Perhaps my faith was being tested? I know that there were times that I did not or could not put my total mind on the weekend due to other pressures. At this stage I must mention Isabel Cress who, among others, kept on saying "Don't worry Jane it will all come together", and so it did with prayer and the support of so many. One really needs only to do one's best and have faith in one another.

I would like to thank EVERYONE most sincerely who had any part to play in the overall weekend but especially to Andrew, Caroline and Sue who did their part in making the services meaningful; to Christopher for the wonderful musical interludes and insights

relating to the music, and to the choir who worked so hard; to Rhea and all her helpers for the craft side, set up, and stewarding; Dot for organising the church groups and for being at the church all day from the Thursday to the Monday; Isabel and Sonia and all their helpers and suppliers for the refreshment side of things; Heather Hubble for the organisation of the demonstrations which I know inspired many. Thank you demonstrators, too, Edward for the Friday supper, cooked single handed, Roy and Austin for the wors rolls, Rose for putting up with an over-crowded office the week prior, Sam for set up and clean up, André for the wood for the displays, and my friend Althea who was "an import" from Holy Trinity Hillcrest, for support and help with the flowers.

I thank God for all our many gifts and talents and for willing, helping hands, may we continue to share them.

SPIRIT OF GROWTH

Richard Clüver

St John's Spirit of Hope has graduated into its second phase. During 2009 we launched a year-long programme of socials, suppers, parties and events, all aimed at bringing parishioners together so as to renew old friendships and kindle new ones. And it has been proclaimed by everyone to have been a great success.

Now it is time to roll up our sleeves and work together with new vigour to put the parish back on the map as a family serving Christ by reaching out into the community. Accordingly, as from January 2010 we have decided to proclaim a new season. It will be known as the ***Spirit of Growth***.

Your committee which worked together behind the scenes to bring you the Spirit of Hope have some ideas about the kind of projects we might embark upon. However, we believe it is only right and proper that the ideas and decisions should come from you. To that end we will kick off the Spirit of Growth season with a social supper on Friday evening, January 29 at 6.30 for 7 during which you will be asked to suggest ideas.

Some of the ideas we have had are:

A Veggie Tunnel:

It would cost very little to erect a shade cloth "tunnel" in the old Pre Primary garden behind the hall where we could raise cabbages, tomatoes and other fresh vegetables using a very simple hydroponics system. The idea would be to get the process up and running and then teach an unemployed person to run it. We could sell the proceeds to parishioners on Sundays and use the profits to build more tunnels in financially strained areas of the parish like Nazareth. The first person trained would have the responsibility to train the next unemployed person and would then graduate, taking his/her tunnel home with him/her.

Sam's House:

Under Errol Greenslade's mentorship, our Verger Sam was able to build himself a house of brick and mortar as one of our Spirit of Hope projects this past year. It would be a splendid example of Christian outreach if we could use this model to help other underprivileged folk within our parish to similarly house themselves. Errol did it for Sam on his own, but perhaps we could establish a small team to take on such a project.

Guerilla Gardening:

If you are an average citizen of the world, maintaining your lifestyle each year adds one metric ton of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, the principal cause of climate-changing global warming. Multiply that figure by the number of people inhabiting the earth, some seven billion all told, and the result is that we are pumping some 30-billion metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year. If you need an explanation of the problem of global warming, all this CO₂ remains trapped in the earth's atmosphere, effectively forming a blanket around the earth which prohibits it from releasing heat into space -- creating a phenomenon known as the "greenhouse effect". A warmer climate is melting the polar ice caps which in turn raising the levels of the ocean, drowning Pacific islands and changing tidal patterns. Warmer ocean currents are in turn altering rainfall patterns and Africa is being particularly badly affected by this for the result has been severe famine in the Horn of Africa.

Now if you consider that the average tree consumes 20 kilos of carbon dioxide a year, or around three quarters of a metric ton during its lifetime, it follows that if every inhabitant of Space Ship Earth planted 50 trees in his or her lifetime we could absorb all the excess carbon dioxide that humankind's activities are producing and thus eliminate the problem. The problem, of course, is that the average garden is far too small to accommodate 50 trees, so enter a new benign form of urban terrorism, the Guerilla Gardens. All over the world the Guerilla Gardens movement is gaining strength; small bands of concerned citizens who have taken it upon themselves to hijack road verges and unused open spaces upon which to plant trees. The primary object is to soak up carbon dioxide, but they are simultaneously beautifying neighbourhoods.

Thanks to our Rector Andrew Warmback we have a ready source of a particularly hardy gas guzzling indigenous tree, the *Portulacaria afra* or spekboom which some of us could use to convert the road verges of the M19. Research suggests that one hectare of this plant can capture 4 tons of carbon dioxide!

PARISH FINANCES – JANUARY – OCTOBER 2009			
	Actual	Budget	Variance
Dedicated Giving	R519 097	R583 333	(R64 236)
Loose Plate Collection	R39 004	R50 00	(R11 996)
Donations	R56 277	R41 666	R14 611
Total Income	R613 378	R674 999	(R61 621)
Expenses	R679 386	R722 441	R43 055
Deficit after 10 months: R66 008			



GARDENS

Max Gibbons

what is happening to our planet. We must take action NOW to prevent this disaster that is looming nearer and nearer. We owe this to future generations to enjoy a cleaner and more pristine planet.

How many of you planted a tree or shrub on Arbour Day?

According to scientific research, it takes approximately 12 medium to large trees to keep each one of us alive. Greed and lack of education is resulting in forests being stripped. Our Natal coast has had approximately 90% of indigenous bush stripped over the years, our wilderness is destined to disappear through lack of planning or lack of knowledge – not God's plan. The military Bluff area is a classic example of what used to cover our coastline. The coastal bush was there to act as a filter, helping to eliminate erosion.

A number of plants have been planted in various areas in the church gardens. Mrs Jean Senogles assisted me in purchasing plants at the Botanical Gardens indigenous plant sale. Many of these will encourage birds, butterflies, etc, to pollinate plants. The use of poisonous insecticides has eliminated this chain in many places. Our Rector is passionate about using only eco-friendly materials in the garden, thus promoting pollination naturally.

A bed has been created between the car park and graveyard to beautify the area, with the changing of seasons this will be a changing wall of colour.

The 3 large round planters as one enters the church ground, between the 2 halls, have been planted with a "lucky bean tree" (*erythrina humani*), Cape Royal plumbago, and a St. John's Wort. The golden yellow flowers of St. John's Wort is a spectacular sight right now. Next year, when these are all flowering, this will be a sight to behold.

The bed leading to the paper beehive is to be planted with foliage and flowers that can be used for flower arranging. Jane Whitby and I will be planting plants specifically for this purpose.

Sam, the verger, has been very helpful in what has transpired to date. Behind the main hall he has planted a vegetable garden, and has already benefited from some of the vegetables.

Thank you to all who have come forward with suggestions, and also for donations of plants, but I would like to suggest that you discuss what you have to offer rather than just bringing the plants, remembering that we are going the indigenous/water-wise route.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and happy, prosperous gardening for 2010. Please become aware of alien plants and destroy them if you can. God has given us so much in South Africa – let's not spoil it!

I leave you with these words:

*"The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of birds for mirth,
One is nearer to God's heart in a
garden,
Than anywhere else on Earth."*
(Anon)

Sometimes when I arrive at the church grounds with only Rose, our secretary, and Sam, our verger, present, the serenity and peacefulness of the area is profound, especially if St. John's Avenue is virtually traffic free. To me these times are very precious, looking around and marvelling at God's creations, only the twittering or chirping of birds disturb my thoughts.

The 5 huge eucalyptus trees have been there longer than any others. To me they are like grandfathers and grandmothers with a wealth of knowledge locked in. I sometimes think of them as wise old elephants and if they could speak would be able to unravel many mysteries that have occurred over the years!

All trees need attention from time to time – pruning, etc. In the wild, animals do the pruning – this I believe is God's plan. Think about it – veld fires, especially in the Cape, seem to destroy hectares of fynbos, but soon after spring rains, out come the beautiful flowers.

Recently a successful Arbour Day evening was held at the church, and enjoyed by all. These days there is not only the "supposed threat" of global warming, but Joel, Chapters 1 and 2 warns us about

Some years ago, when the Tsunami devastated parts of the coastlines in many Asian countries, St John's people were moved to contribute towards the relief fund. Revd Sue Britton had contact with the Tamilnad Christian Council, based in India, which was heavily involved in the relief effort, and she suggested we should send our contribution directly to them, as we could then be sure that it would be used for the intended purpose. In 2007 a booklet was published in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Tamilnad Christian Council, and Sue recently received a copy. She was very pleased to find that in the listing of acknowledgments "with deep gratitude to the partners in God's Mission", there appears "The Anglican Parish of Pinetown". We are pleased and proud to be included in this list of churches and other organisations from all over the world.

DOES GOD REALLY ANSWER PRAYER?

The consensus among St John's people is a resounding YES!!!

DOREEN BÖHMER

*"The Lord is my shepherd
I will fear no evil..."*

On 11 November our Bible Study group did a study on Psalm 23 to see how we could use this psalm to pray our fear. The purpose of doing this is to discover God's presence in the experience of fear.

Little did I know what that day would bring.

About 15 years ago I gave my testimony at St John's. The three points were:

- I know I am saved
- I know I am going to heaven
- I know I am ready to die

I based my testimony on Romans 10:9: "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved".

Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour.

I have recently read a book: 'One month to live (30 days to a no-regrets life)' by Kerry and Chris Shook (available at CUM). The book's emphasis is on the importance of our relationship with others in our every day life.

I have been part of the Highway Hospice ministry team for over ten years. I am aware that every day is a gift. I have seen how the love and compassion of family, friends and Hospice staff touched patients' lives.

MIMI ROACH

I grew up in a home where the love of Jesus and the presence of the church and the Dominee were never far away and my prayers were part of growing up.

Now as an old lady in charge of the prayer chain I wonder what my thoughts are of answered prayer. But this I have learned, that the act of receiving requests and speaking to others about their hopes and fears and passing on these requests to others on the chain has some sort of a calming affect on me.

Recently I was quite ill myself and the fact that my friends were praying for me was a great help to me. I have asked for the chain to pray for my son Peter over the last few months as he lurched from crisis to crisis in U.S.A. However he sounds cheerful whenever I speak to him and we both feel surrounded and strengthened by the prayers of all.

I hear constantly from others who are thankful that prayers are heard and answered and so we gain strength in good times and bad.

DALE SWART

Sometime ago, after having a lot of stomach trouble, I was diagnosed as having a hernia. I decided to go for prayer after a service and Vivienne prayed for me. On returning to the doctor and having another examination (camera, etc.) he discovered the hernia had disappeared! How powerful is prayer!!

For me today, being ready to die is not only being right with God but also being at peace with one another.

I want to take this opportunity to say that I am sorry if you may feel I haven't treated you with respect or said things I shouldn't have.

When I stand before you as your Deacon, and say: "The peace of the Lord be with you always" the words come from my heart.

Bert and I have been overwhelmed by our St John's family's love and concern for us. Thank you very much for your prayers, phone calls, flowers and visits.

I was very touched when our neighbour's son came over to see us. Zuzi took my hand and said: "This hand has life".

Five young men came and took our car and possessions. Praise the Lord they didn't hurt us.

All I can say is that I know Jesus died on the cross, also for them.

To bring healing to the memories (inner healing) I use the words of Psalm 23 and bring to mind a picture of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Did I pray during our ordeal? I only said one word: "JESUS". I believe that was my prayer. I believe that Jesus was with us.

Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

DOREEN GORDON

God has said: "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you." (Heb.13 : 5).

There is so much to thank God for every day. I've been through a difficult time this year. I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis; my hands were swollen and I couldn't bend my fingers or even get a grip on my fork to eat my food.

The worst thing for me was when I agreed to cook for the Jazz Evening. That morning my hands were worse than ever. I prayed and trusted God that He would give me the strength. I couldn't back out on the last day. Carlo, my son, took time off work to help me carry the heavy pots. Thank God it all went well. God makes a way when there is no way: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." (Rom. 8:28)

(Those of us who attended the Jazz Evening can bear witness to how well the cooking went! Ed.)

YVONNE TWEEDIE

On Sunday night, 8 November, our 13½ year old little mongrel had a stroke. He couldn't even stand up. Lots of tears followed. The next morning, off to the vet we went,, plenty of tears again. Dr Bainbridge examined him, gave him an injection, drained his bladder and sent him home. That evening I laid hands on him and prayed for healing. The next morning Clive took him outside, wrapped in his blanket and laid him on the grass. To our delight and amazement, he stood up - still a bit wobbly - shook off the blanket and shuffled down the garden! What a miracle! On returning to the vet, he was called a miracle dog for being healed, and the vet said like Lazarus and the cripple, he 'shook off' his bed and walked. He had a few more injections and medication, and is doing wonders. What a mighty God we serve! Praise the Lord! Alleluia!!

MAUREEN ACHMAD

"Does God answer Prayer?" Definitely: "Yes"!! Not only does he answer prayer - he provides and protects us. I thank God for what He has done in the last 33 years of my life when I gave my life to Him. I refer particularly to the past months of October and November.

Being a faithful tither I decided at the end of September to tithe 100% of my income, keeping it between God and myself, not even letting my family members know of my act. I was unable to provide meals for myself. Lo and behold: two residents relocated to greener pastures and offloaded their groceries and foodstuffs on to me - even prunes and biscuits - luxuries!

My younger brother after being unmarried for 9 nine years with his wife suddenly gave his life to the Lord and married on 19 October 2009. My eldest brother in Cape Town gave his life to the Lord. My nephew and his wife gave their lives to the Lord and were baptised.

On 29 October I celebrated my 60th birthday. It was such a beautiful day with many wishes and gifts and the gifts are still coming in. I'm trusting for three score and ten - eighty if my strength holds!

I therefore encourage you with these words: "Every person's life is a fairy tale written by God's fingers" (anonymous).

"May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed": Psalm 20:4.

NICKY BOSMAN

God is so wonderful, we just cannot fathom the depths of His love and the help that He gives us!

2 weeks ago my one and only kidney gave up the ghost. I was rushed into Entabeni where my doctor told me that the kidney was blocked and had gone into hydro-nephrosis and that I also had a severe kidney infection. I would have to undergo a procedure in which a wire is put into the kidney, which is then held open by a stent. This would be done under local anaesthetic in the X-ray department, but it was possible that complications may occur, in which case I would be taken to theatre and might wake up with a bag in place of the kidney. I would have then have to have home dialysis. This was the worst news I had had for a long time. The day came and Caroline (Beech) came to pray and to anoint me, and many of my friends were also praying for me.

I was lying on the x-ray table when the doctor did one last scan. After staring at it for a while, he said "Your kidney has started responding to medication and to do this procedure will be too risky so I am sending you back to the ward." Well, I screamed "PRAISE THE LORD" all the way back to the ward, and the nursed joined in! This is the miracle God has given me, His healing touch, and I must go out and tell everybody that God does do miracles, even today! I cried, I was so happy that I did not have to have the procedure, am able to keep my kidney and need no dialysis.

I cannot tell you why God has given me this miracle, I am not special in any way, but I can tell you that God does do miracles and we must put our trust in Him every day. It is with open eyes that we must see the miracles He performs in people. Some may say this is not a miracle, but I know it is and it's about time we recognise God's hand in this and not our own. I say if we keep the faith then we will see, it's like asking and we will receive. God is so good, He really is!

I hope that you will see the miracles in your life that God has given you. It really makes us strong to know that God is there for us no matter what.

(This testimony was first published in The Bell, August 2009.)

INGRID PINES.

It was about this time last year that I began to experience a very scary time, seeing cupboard doors rolling towards and away from me, and the same with the shower floor! My G.P. treated me for an imbalance in my middle ear, as by this time I was losing my balance all day, especially in the early morning. The medication didn't touch sides, so he sent me to an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist, who diagnosed crystals in my inner ear, and showed me a manoeuvre to do twice a day to stop the dizziness, but this did not help, either. A month later he sent me for a MRI scan of the brain, and to the astonishment of us both, it showed that I had a benign growth, what is called a Acoustic Neuroma, lying alongside the brain stem, hence the focal seizures!

I was sent to see a neuro surgeon, who offered me a six hour operation which would be very dangerous due to the position the tumour was in, and said that I would be one hundred percent deaf in my left ear, and have facial palsy too! This I said no thank you to, so the next offer was to see an oncologist. I said "But it's not cancer!", to which he replied, "No, but they will still give you radio surgery." I had a fibreglass face mask made, and then screwed down to a template on the table, to ensure I was kept perfectly still, and irradiated for half an hour. At this time I was also taking huge doses of epileptic medication; this, of course, stopped the focal seizures straight way, which was such a relief.

Six months after this I was sent for a further MRI scan, and this time it showed that the tumour had already shrunk by four millimetres! The oncologist was very surprised to see this, saying that most tumours take a year to eighteen months to stop growing!

So the way I look at it is that the power of prayer is wonderful – **God is good all the time.**

EDNA STEVENS: A GIFT FROM GOD

I have just turned 83, and find that God still answers my prayers and allows me to do things for others. Earlier in the year, thinking about the party for orphans that St John's helps with, I felt that more should be done for the older children, as the bulk of the presents are usually for the younger children. Last year soap and other toiletry items had been collected, but this year I hoped something different could be found. I had R600 available that I had been given for the children, and when I heard of a bargain place in Pinetown, I was able to spend R500 on good quality T-shirts which I have passed on for the Christmas Party. The R100 that was left will be spent on biscuits for the party.

I first met Jesus at the Full Gospel Church many years ago, and He has lead me throughout my life, and He has blessed my desire to do good.

EDDI & DELYSIA WOLFF

The answer to the question "Does God answer prayer?" can be either "Yes" or "No" - it all depends on the prayer. If you're praying for something that will benefit you or someone else while at the same time your request will bring glory to God, then you can rest assured that your prayer will be answered maybe not immediately, but certainly when He feels it needs to be answered. Then there are the times when the Lord answers prayer instantly.

If, however, you pray for your Lotto ticket to be the winning ticket, our Heavenly Father will most certainly turn His face aside and listen to other prayers. There are many prayers recorded in the Bible and when you look at them closely you can distinguish between answered and unanswered prayer.

Recently I came across a short prayer that should be prayed by all of us on a daily basis:

"Heavenly Father, every time I look at me, I seem to see only me in me.

Lord, I would ask that You push most of me out of me, so that there is more room for You and Jesus in me. Amen."

In Delysia's and my case there are many prayers that He has answered and I'll just mention three.

Our daughter Heidi, who was confined to a wheelchair for the 40 years of her life, fell out of her chair and ended up with a fair lump on her head. We took her to Crompton Hospital for a checkup and her doctor said that she should stay in Hospital overnight for observation since she was prone to epileptic fits. She did have a massive one in the early hours of the morning but, when Delysia went to see her the next morning Heidi was fine and insisted she come home. At times Heidi could be quite stubborn. The doctor told Delysia that, if he discharged her before lunchtime, there would be a saving to us. Since I was out on some construction site Delysia couldn't get hold of me (this was before Cell phones) and she was worried about how she could get Heidi out of the car at home.

All the way she prayed "Lord, help me when I get home Lord, help me". When she got home and drove into the yard she was still praying. She stopped the car at the front door, got out and, when she looked up, she saw Eugene, our son, driving through the gate. She was flabbergasted and asked him "What brings you here?"

"I don't know" he answered, "I just got this overwhelming feeling that something was wrong at home. I couldn't get an answer from your phone, told the boss I was coming home and here I am."

That was instantly answered prayer and Eugene, without knowing why, answered the Lord's nudging.

On another occasion, Eugene and Val (then his fiancée and now our daughter-in-law) went to Cape Town for the annual camp with the RSCM (Royal School of Church Music). Val was a member of the Choir. Val flew back and, since money was short, Eugene decided to come back by Translux bus. I went to pick him up at the station and sat there for an hour, but no bus. The staff at Translux offices were in a flap and when I phoned home, Delysia was in a panic. She'd heard on the radio that there'd been a bus accident outside Harrismith. No further details were available.

We couldn't get anything from the Harrismith Police or Hospital and Val's uncle offered to drive us (Val, her mom

and I) up to Harrismith since everyone told me that I was in no fit state to drive (they were probably right).

On the road we prayed continuously and I asked the Lord to give me a vision – is Eugene OK, is he in Hospital or "Please Lord, **NO**" is he in the morgue? (Twenty-six people died in this accident when the bus plunged off a bridge and landed upside down in a river)

The Lord answered my prayer and gave me a vision of Eugene lying in a ward all bandaged up and with a silly grin on His face. With confidence I told Val, her mom and uncle that "he's banged up but OK".

When we got to Hospital, worked our way through the bureaucracy and finally got to the ward, what I saw was like a re-run of what the Lord had revealed to me behind my closed eyelids while we were driving - identical.

Does God answer prayers??? Oh yes indeed. Praise Him, Hallelujah.

On 4 February 1999, our house was flooded out when the Umbilo River tore through it during the floods. Delysia and I were caught totally by surprise and the water rose so fast that the front door exploded inwards before I could open it. While we were fighting our way out of the house, we were panicky and praying "Lord, help us" but, it wasn't until I prayed "**Lord, this is beyond us and I place ourselves into Your hands**" that a peace and calm descended over us and the going got easier as we got to our gate which our neighbour had struggled to get open. This was "**The peace that passes all understanding**"

In December of the same year, while we were part of the performance of **Godsense** at St John's, it again came down in buckets and we faced our second flood. We dashed off home, threw clothes and bedding into our cars and wanted to dash off. My car wouldn't start and, while we watched the river rise alarmingly, we threw everything that was in my car into Delysia's as well and left. After the first flood, our Neighborhood-watch leader told us to come to them if we ever felt threatened again. Delysia argued that we should go to them but something compelled me to do otherwise and I insisted we go to Eugene, which is what I did. It wasn't easy because many roads had been closed by then.

Eugene and Val were living in a rented house halfway up Field's Hill. When we got there I did not like the look of one of their big trees and we left the car in the road. When we got to their place, we had to get them out of bed; they were fast asleep. We arranged to sleep on some foam mattresses in the lounge and while we sat and had a cup of coffee we heard a soft *Whoosh* at the back door. Eugene and I went into the kitchen, Eugene opened the back door and an avalanche of mud came roaring in. Eugene and I had to dive through the serving hatch into the lounge to escape.

We then went in search of their cat and when we tried to open the bedroom door, it only opened wide enough to let us through sideways. What we saw horrified us – the back wall had been pushed over by the mudslide and had pushed their piano onto their bed crushing it completely. We found the cat, grabbed some clothes and went into Durban to Val's mom's tiny flat.

Had we not gone to Eugene and Val and woken them up, they would have been crushed.

Thank you, Lord for nudging us.

Let's never forget that we serve a great God who concerns Himself for His children - us.

Amen

PRESS STATEMENTS RE THE VIOLENCE IN KENNEDY ROAD, DURBAN

The Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town has lent his weight to the Bishop of Natal's condemnation of recent brutality in the Kennedy Road shack settlement of Durban. 'I share Bishop Rubin Phillip's view that it is a profound disgrace to democracy, that militia have been allowed to drive out the leaders of the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement, and many hundreds of families with them' said Archbishop Thabo Makgoba.

'When we remember how much we suffered, and how hard we struggled, in order to ensure that an armed minority could no longer exert oppression and deny freedom of speech, of opinions and of dissent, it is completely unacceptable that such intolerance should rear its head again in a different political guise' the Archbishop said, strongly endorsing the statement issued by the Bishop of Natal, who also chairs the Kwa Zulu-Natal Christian Council. 'I too shall be making political representations' he added, inviting others to take up Bishop Rubin's proposals for supporting the displaced, whether through political action, through material support, or through prayer for all those injured or bereaved. 'The people of our country deserve better than this' he said. 'Political leaders and the police must ensure that democracy and the rule of law are upheld.'

Issued by the Office of the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, 1 Oct. 2009

The full text of Bishop Rubin's Statement dated 29 September 2009 is carried below.

Democracy Under Attack in Kennedy Road, Durban

I was torn with anguish when I first heard of the unspeakable brutality that has raged down on to the Kennedy Road shack settlement. In recent years I have spent many hours in the Kennedy Road settlement. I've attended meetings, memorials, mass ecumenical prayers and marches. I have had the honour of meeting some truly remarkable people in the settlement and the work of Abahlali baseMjondolo has always nurtured my faith in the power and dignity of ordinary people. I have seen the best of our democracy here. I have tasted the joy of real social hope here.

The achievement of our hard won democracy was a great moment of shared grace. The militia that have driven the Abahlali baseMjondolo leaders and hundreds of families out of the settlement is a profound disgrace to our democracy. The fact that the police have systematically failed to act against this militia while instead arresting the victims of their violence and destruction is cause for the gravest concern. There are credible claims that this militia has acted with the support of the local ANC structures. This, also, is cause for the most profound concern.

I have shuddered to the core as my thoughts have, with those of many others, turned to the attacks on democratic politics unleashed by apartheid and its allies in the 1980s. Once again people have been beaten, had their homes destroyed, been driven from their community and killed for their political views and practices. Once again an armed minority have used violence to implement a ban on a democratic organisation favoured by a majority. Once again there is just cause for deep concern about the role of the police. Once again we in the churches are looking for safe houses for activists, accommodation for political refugees who have fled with nothing more than the clothes on their backs, doctors for the injured and lawyers for the jailed. Horrors that we all believed to have been buried in our past now stalk the present. This is unacceptable. There can be no compromise on this score. I will take my anger and my fear for the future of our democracy to the highest levels of leadership in our country and to our sister churches around the world. I encourage others to do the same.

In 2007 I was part of a group of church leaders that issued a statement testifying to the brutality and political intolerance that the Sydenham Police had unleashed against Abahlali baseMjondolo in our presence. It is clear that the Sydenham Police should not be allowed to police Kennedy Road or to investigate the crimes that have been committed in recent days. A credible and independent force needs to be deployed as a matter of urgency.

It is equally essential that all of our political leaders take immediate steps to distance themselves from the actions of the militia that have seized control of the settlement, that they call party members who have been complicit with this militia to account, and that we all affirm that Kennedy Road and its residents have the same right to democratic practices as everywhere else and everyone else in South Africa. This includes the right to dissent.

Of course my condolences go out to all those who have lost people whom they love and on whom they depend. It seems that some among the militia that launched the attack on the elected leadership of the settlement may also be among the dead. If, as may well be the case, the militia has been exploited by local elites determined to roll back the development of a vibrant popular democracy then we will pray for their own healing and for a turn away from violence and lies and towards life and truth.

On 18 Nov. 2009, Bishop Rubin issued the following statement:

Grave Concerns about the Detention without Trial of the Kennedy Thirteen: This Travesty Must End

After their 6th inconclusive bail hearing today, it is now abundantly clear that the legal process for the Kennedy 13 is a complete travesty of justice. They are scheduled to appear again on the 27th November. By that time, some of accused will have been in prison for 2 months without trial - two months in prison without any evidence being presented to a court and without a decision on bail. This is a moral and legal outrage that amounts to detention without trial by means of delay. In our view, it borders on unlawful detention. I am, tonight, issuing a call for their immediate release - justice has been delayed far beyond the point at which it was clear that it had been denied.

Ordinarily in a case with such serious charges as those put to the Kennedy 13, it is in fact extremely easy for bail to be denied. Usually all that is required is that the prosecution provide the court with some evidence showing that they have, at least, a prima facie case to make in the trial itself. That the prosecution has still not presented any such evidence, despite the magistrate's repeated concessions to give them more time to do so, indicates to us that the police simply have no case to make. What is being pursued in our courts in this instance is a political agenda against Abahlali baseMjondolo.

The Kennedy Thirteen were arrested in the aftermath of the September attack on Abahlali baseMjondolo in the Kennedy Road settlement. Abahlali baseMjondolo is highly respected for its courageous commitment to the equality of all human beings irrespective of their origins or position in society. Their recognition of the spark of the divine in every human being has been a prophetic voice calling us to conscience and grace in the moral wilderness of a country that is losing its way.

In April 2007 I visited the Kennedy Six in Westville prison where they held to a hunger strike for 14 days before the murder charges that had been trumped up against them were dropped. In November that year I, along with other church leaders, witnessed and denounced shocking police violence against Abahlali baseMjondolo.

In 2007 I had to put aside some of my exuberant faith in our new democracy as I came to understand that the days of police violence, police lies and wrongful arrest were still being used to silence those with the temerity to speak truth to power. I realised, with a heavy heart, that the days of the political prisoner were not yet over in our country.

The attack on Abahlali baseMjondolo, and the response to the attack by the police and some figures in the eThekweni Municipality and the Provincial Government of KwaZulu-Natal, have been met with grave concern across South Africa and abroad. It is patently clear that there was a political dimension to the attack and that the response of the police has been to pursue that political agenda rather than justice.

I, along with many other church leaders as well as academics and human rights organisations, have called for a genuinely independent and credible inquiry into the attack on Kennedy Road. That call has not been heeded. It has become abundantly clear that the state has taken a political position on the attack and that it has forfeited any claim to neutrality in this matter.

The Kennedy Thirteen have come to court on six occasions to ask for bail. On each occasion a group of people, sometimes wearing ANC colours, some drunk and some armed, have been at the court to demand that bail be denied. The behaviour of these people has been appalling. They have openly made all kinds of threats including death threats. Clergy are amongst those who have been threatened and the apparatus of justice has been allowed to degenerate into what looks to all intents and purposes like a kangaroo court.

On six separate occasions the magistrate has postponed the bail hearing to give the police another chance to gather some evidence that could link the Kennedy Thirteen to a crime. On each of those six occasions the police have failed to produce any evidence linking the Kennedy Thirteen to any crime. Today the bail hearing for the Kennedy Road Thirteen was postponed until the 27th of November.

There were between thirty and forty clergy present at court today, all of us deeply disturbed by this travesty. We are all committed to see this matter through.

I am, tonight, issuing a call for the immediate release of the Kennedy Thirteen from prison on the grounds that justice has been delayed far beyond the point at which it was clear that it had been denied.

In light of the fact that this is quite clearly a political trial in which the rules that govern the practice of justice are not being followed, I am now calling for people of conscience outside of the state to join us as we set up an independent inquiry into the attack on Kennedy Road on 26 September; the subsequent demolition of the houses of Abahlali baseMjondolo members, the ongoing threats to Abahlali baseMjondolo members, the role of the police, politicians and courts in this matter.

Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. (Hebrews 13:3)

The Lord will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not despise their plea. Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the LORD: "The LORD looked down from his sanctuary on high, from heaven he viewed the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death." (Psalm 102: 16 – 20)

Bishop Rubin Phillip

Diocese of Natal, Anglican Church of Southern Africa
Chairperson, KwaZulu Natal Christian Council

**THE RICH YOUNG MAN: Sermon preached by Revd Sue Britton on Sunday 11 October 2009,
based on Mark 10: 17-30**

Some parts of the bible are difficult for us to read without feeling guilty, aren't they? Today's gospel reading is one of these passages.

Here comes this rich man to Jesus, with a genuine question: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He strikes us immediately as a person who is really trying to live a good life, who is trying to understand the ultimate meaning of life, and looking for wisdom from a person who clearly somehow has gained the reputation for being able to help people reach deep within themselves to find the truth.

So Jesus' response strikes us as quite sharp and challenging, almost unkind. "Why do you call me good? No-one is good but God alone." It's almost as though Jesus was impatient with this well-dressed, obviously well-educated, wealthy man who had come running up just as Jesus was setting out on a journey, and had flung himself down on his knees in perhaps a slightly theatrical gesture, drawing attention to himself among the crowd of mostly ordinary poor folk with their children who usually surrounded Jesus.

And instead of some new pearl of wisdom, as perhaps was expected, Jesus, recognizing that this was someone who would be familiar with the Torah, the Jewish law, simply repeated to him the familiar commandments by which any faithful Jew would have tried to live - what we know as the ten commandments.

And the nameless man responded quite humbly that he had kept all these laws since his youth. And because he had made such an effort to stop Jesus, begging on his knees for an answer, we can tell that this rich man was really struggling. He had obviously discovered that neither keeping the letter of the law nor his wealth had met his deepest desires for a life of meaning. Something was missing.

A life focusing on himself, even focusing on the scrupulous observance of the law, had not brought the deep satisfaction that he expected, that would really connect him with God. His was a deeply spiritual need. What was life really all about? And how could he tap the deep well that would nourish his true being, God within? How could he transform his individualistic ego and uncover his real God-given self?

And unexpectedly Jesus, looking down at this rich man struggling to find God, loved him. It was as if Jesus saw through the outward appearances into that kneeling man's heart. Jesus understood his genuine cry for a way of life that would bring true satisfaction.

Jesus invited the rich man to leave his many possessions, turn away from his wealth and join Jesus' band of disciples, moving from place to place around the country, going where love and forgiveness and healing were needed, reaching out to the poor, the suffering, those pushed out of society for whatever reason.

And this dear man whom Jesus loved was shocked. Whatever he had been expecting to hear from Jesus, it was not this. Shocked, distressed, grieving at this radical invitation, he got up and went away.

And Jesus, no doubt also grieving, reflected to his disciples on what had happened, with one of his most difficult sayings: "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a

needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

But, in response to his disciples' whispering to each other: "Then who can be saved?" - here came Jesus' loving answer, offering hope to everyone: "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

And I like to think that this man, sincerely seeking the real meaning of his life, did come back, did join the followers of Jesus eventually, did find his true self and a way of dealing with his wealth which did not cut him off from God, but which enabled him to draw ever closer to God.

Because that's what the gospel is really all about, isn't it? Its an upside-down gospel, good news which much of the world today would consider bad news.

For Jesus understood what a problem it could be to be rich, just as it's a terrible problem to be too poor to live a decent life. And he constantly taught about attitudes to money - in fact there are more references to money in Jesus' words in the gospels than there are to prayer, which often surprises people.

What Jesus was teaching both by word and example was that those who own more than enough to meet the needs of themselves and those of their families, and who don't find ways of sharing their wealth *'should be pitied because it is they who are going to find it very difficult to live in the world of the future (the kingdom of God) where everything will be shared.'* [Nolan]

So we don't have to feel guilty about how much money we have or resentful about how little. Whatever our assets, whatever our income or lack of it, we need to find a way of using whatever we are, whatever we own, whatever we receive in keeping with the spirit of how Jesus himself lived, in keeping with those who followed Francis of Assisi, as Andrew reminded us last week.

What God calls us to through this story is a more simple lifestyle and a way of giving what we are and sharing what we have with those around us, particularly those who have too little love or bread. It is also a challenge to work for a more just society, where wealth is more equitably shared, where access to education and work is more equitably shared, where there is sufficient for all to live a good life.

The striking women workers fifty years ago knew what they needed when they sang: "We march for bread and roses." They knew they were striking for a decent wage, but also for respect as women and workers, the freedom to feel good about earning their own living and the love that could be shared when people feel secure in themselves. We all need bread and roses.

That is what brings deep satisfaction. That is the real meaning of abundant life offered us by God through Christ, through God's amazingly rich and diverse creation all around us, through the love we experience that stretches us and expands our own creativity and capacity. That is what brings the spirit of hope to the world.

For the modern world's rush to spend, to accumulate more and more possessions, is not only destroying our environment and killing the world, our only home, it also breeds in us dissatisfaction, envy and greed. And it grinds into the dust those

who cannot keep up with the frenetic pace, those who are pushed to the margins because they are not competitive enough, or clever enough, or well enough connected to push through the throng and get to the top.

What the rich man who came to Jesus was looking for, what he called 'eternal life' - was real meaning for his life and a deep connection with God within: it was the values that are far beyond money and that cannot be bought with much gold, the

joy of sharing and loving, the happiness of tasting simple food and appreciating the beauty of the world around without rushing through it in a frantic scramble for more, more, more. He was looking for a way of giving more than receiving. He was looking for clarity and simplicity and beauty. He was looking for bread and roses, for himself and to share with others.

As we continue on the way of Christ that we have chosen, may this also be what we seek as we follow Jesus. Amen.

PROVINCIAL STANDING COMMITTEE: RESOLUTIONS CONCERNING THE ENVIRONMENT

At the meeting of Provincial Standing Committee on 1 October 2009, the following resolutions were passed:

1. Climate Change

This PSC:

Recognizes that humanity and all life on the Earth - our home - is in a precarious position because of the continuing carbon emissions from the burning of fossil fuels, resulting in disturbing changes to the planet's climate.

Further **recognizes** that we Christians have a responsibility to the Creator God we worship, to care for Creation.

Furthermore, following the latest scientific evidence **believes** we cannot allow temperatures to rise by 2 degrees.

Therefore **calls** for a reduction of CO₂ emissions to a target of 350 ppm (parts per million in the atmosphere), ensuring that emissions will have peaked by 2015 in all countries then to decline to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

PSC therefore **calls upon**:

1. All our parishes and members to take all steps possible to reduce their carbon footprint.
2. And encourages all parishes to mark and make known the "350.org" campaign, asking parishes to inform their members, and where appropriate hold events and ring their bells 350 times to raise awareness and promote lobbying at all levels of government and in business and industry to take meaningful steps to reduce carbon emissions
3. The governments of Southern Africa to implement steps leading to the reduction of carbon emissions by 2015 at the latest.
4. The governments of the world to take urgent and meaningful action to ensure the well-being of all life on Earth to stem climate change, in accordance with the latest scientific findings, when they meet at the UNFCCC in Copenhagen in December this year.

2. A Season of Creation

This PSC

Gives **thanks** for the publication of a "Season of Creation", an ACSA liturgical handbook on creation care, and encourages the Dioceses and Parishes of ACSA to mark and keep the season of creation annually;

Recommends that, following the call of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the World Council of Churches, this be kept during September, culminating with the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on the 4th October."

3. Eco-Congregations, The Earth Charter And Safcei

In order to encourage and help the Church fulfill its God-given environmental responsibilities, as enunciated in the Anglican Communion's 5th mark of mission:

"To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the earth";

and in line with the four principles of the Earth Charter:

1. Respect and care for the community of life

- Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.
- Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love.
- Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable and peaceful.
- Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.

2. Ecological integrity

Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.

3. Social and economic justice

Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative.

4. Democracy, non-violence and peace

- Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels, and provide transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making and access to justice.
- Treat all living beings with respect and consideration.
- Promote a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace.

This PSC **encourages**:

Parishes and Congregations to become Eco-congregations;

Dioceses and Parishes to become members of Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute, the implementing agency of Eco-congregations, and to support SAFCEI in its lobbying work for a more just and sustainable future for the planet;

Dioceses and Parishes to invite members of SACFEI and the ACSA Environmental Network to explain the call to "Eco-Justice" - that is ecological sustainability, social equity and economic justice - to Synods, Conferences and Parish Councils.

Dioceses and Parishes to promote and embrace the Principles of the Earth Charter.

Bishop of Natal

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Ref/TK

14th October 2009

To the Clergy of the Diocese

Dear Friends

2010 LENTEN APPEAL (NDDF)

For the first time in the history of this appeal, I think, we will be appealing for a project that is situated outside our diocese. We are doing so not because we do not have our own projects, but because we believe God wants us, for 2010 at any rate, to share our resources with others, the stranger – the principle of the tithe. It is also an act of hospitality.

We have identified a worthy project, the building of a church in the Diocese of Niassa, our Link Diocese. Bishop Mark van Koevering whom many of you have met is the Bishop there.

Enclosed is a sample copy of the poster (which I designed!) which you will receive, along with the special envelopes and the information brochure, in January.

Please build this appeal into the parish plans for Lent 2010.

I should also tell you that Professor Ron Nicholson is working on a Lenten course based on the theme: Hospitality.

Keep well

+Rubin

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The following motion was passed at the Diocesan Synod in support of theological education:

Motion: The Ongoing Theological Education of Present and Future Clergy

Proposed: The Revd Canon Dr P.C. Wyngaard
Seconded: The Right Reverend Dr H.C.N. Ndwandwe

diocese for both the stipendiary and self supporting ordinands as well as the newly ordained clergy.

The following is the Synod Motion/Resolution.

This synod

Notes the report of the synodical commission on clergy presented at synod in 2006;

Gives thanks to God for the progress in implementing some of the recommendations in the area of pre and post ordination training;

Furthermore also gives thanks to God for the Colenso House of Studies in Pietermaritzburg; and welcomes the new development of sending capable ordinands to read theology at the University of KwaZulu Natal whilst residing at the Colenso House of Studies.

Nevertheless recognises the need for further development of the theological education and training processes in the

Therefore resolves to:

1. Support the standardisation of a training syllabus for members of FOV (Fellowship of Vocation).
2. Sustain the ongoing standardisation of training for self supported ordinands as well as sending church supported ordinands to the College of Transfiguration in Grahamstown.
3. Encourage the development of a comprehensive training process for both the self supporting and stipendiary newly ordained clergy. This is to include both an educational as well as a skills component.
4. Maintain the excellent Rectors' Training Week.

MORE MEMORIES

Irene Scogings

When the Revd Peter Clarke came as rector of St John's in 1957, he called a meeting to start a choir, as he wanted a Christmas Carol service. I attended that meeting, as David (my husband) had said he would look after the children to enable me to attend choir practice. We soon thought about robes, and wore shin-length surplices and mortarboards, robing at the then rectory and walking across the road to the church.

My voice is cracking now and I have had to give up singing here at Doone Village, but I am so blessed to have had 70 years of choir singing, mostly in church choirs. Thank You, Lord, for the gift of a voice to sing Your praises!



MEDITATION

Contributed by Revd Caroline Beech

"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Corinthians 12.9

The great American president, Abraham Lincoln, once said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had no where else to go." All of us, indeed all human beings, know this feeling well. Only our reactions differ. Some share their burdens with loved ones, others seek professional help, others brood, others commit suicide and others turn to God.

Those who turn to God find that when they are lowest, they meet a solid foundation that keeps them from sinking lower. For what is so wonderful about God is that when we do sink to our knees we find that we have something to stand on. When we finally run out of our own power, we can rely on God's power. We know that the best thing that could ever happen to us is to reach out at our lowest point - and then find God.

We find him most powerfully when we are weakest.

Fairydene Retirement Village

Fairydene Village Shareblock Ltd. Reg. No. 86/03131/06

18 Stapleton Road
SARNIA. 3610

Tel: 031 708-3315
Fax: 031 708-5350

Frail Care and Respite Facility

Who are we? Our Facility is situated within the secure surrounds of the Fairydene Retirement Village in Sarnia and does not only cater to the residents of our village but is **open to all** who are in need of care – be it short term or for longer periods. We offer a friendly and caring environment where all is done to ensure that those in our care are comfortable and get personal attention. The facility consists of one single-bed, two double-bed and one four-bed wards. This makes for an intimate and close-knit environment where staff can better serve the residents.

Why use our Frail Care? Our facility is ideally suited for the care of:

- Post-operative patients who need rest and care while they recover from the procedure.
- If you need a home for an elderly member of your family who cannot cope on his or her own any more and you haven't the space or time around the clock to care for them, let us do so.
- If you are caring for a loved one at home and you need to go away for an emergency or you need to get away for a while from the stresses that care-giving brings with it, bring your loved one to us while you unwind and restore yourself.

We offer

- 24 hour care given by Nurses under the control of a day-time on-site Sister and a night-time Sister on call. (Our total staff complement is 17)
- Breakfast, a full 3 course Lunch, a light Evening meal, morning and afternoon teas and other refreshments as and when required.
- Washing and ironing of personal attire.
- Visitor's safe parking in the complex. At night the complex is patrolled by Security Staff.

Our Daily Rate is an all-inclusive R 285.00 per day (Personal medication and toiletries excluded)

UKUKHUTHAZA AIDS SUPPORT GROUP

All the members of this group thank God for the wonderfully generous parishioners of St JOHN'S, for their continued, faithful support of our mission. Not only do we receive regular donations of money, but full food parcels appear every month at the altar. Good, second-hand clothes are frequently passed on, and very much appreciated are the large amounts of children's and babies' clothing that we have been given for the orphans. The faithful knitters hand in blankets, beanies, jerseys, etc. that they have made. The AWF hold weekly mini-cake sales and donate the proceeds. The list goes on and on, and we cannot thank you all enough.

We are trying to get overseas funding, to enable us to do more, and undertake more ambitious projects, but so far we have had limited success. It is a difficult process, and the collection of data and compiling statistics is a key area. This process is under way, and we are hopeful that next year things will start happening! In the meantime, we rely heavily on St John's parishioners, who never let us down! We are very grateful that we are all able to help in some way the sadly afflicted people less fortunate than we are.

DON'T FORGET....
Advent Meditation
Sunday 29 November at 17.30

FLOWERS IN CHURCH

Jane Whitby



- ☼ Do you enjoy the floral arrangements in church each week?
- ☼ Do you miss them if there are none?
- ☼ Do you know how much flowers and oasis cost?
- ☼ Do you know there are only 12 people who put their names on the flower roster to do these flowers?

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

- ☼ We can give a donation towards the costs - a box of oasis (20 blocks) costs R150.00 wholesale. Flowers can cost in the region of R300.00 for the three altar vases.
- ☼ Perhaps you have a celebration, anniversary or a person you would like remembered in this way.
- ☼ If you would like to be part of this ministry we would welcome anyone wanting to join the flower group.

YOUTH

The final youth meeting for this year will be on Friday 27 November. Youth meetings on Friday evenings will restart on Friday 15 January and young people from grades 8-12 are encouraged to attend.

The youth are encouraged to attend the two fundraising events on Fridays 4th and 11th December. Informal get-togethers may be arranged during the holidays.

THE MARRIAGE COURSE

Some of our members attended the Marriage Conference held on 24 November at St Agnes' and obtained materials for us to run the course at St John's. We intend running this course next year over an eight week period with one session per week. It is designed to enrich marriages. Details of this course will be provided early next year.

FUNDRAISING

We have two remaining events planned for this year:

Friday 4 December: Potjiekos with 60's music, 19.00 in the church hall;

Cost: R60 per person; R30 per pensioner or young person

Funds raised from this event will be given towards parish maintenance.

Friday 11 December: The inaugural Rubin Phillip Peace Lecture given by Bishop Rubin Phillip. 19:00 in the church hall

Cost: R120 per person; R90 per pensioner or young person (includes dinner)

In this event we will be trying to make up the deficit we have remaining at the end of the year.

STOP PRESS!!!

We have booked Gcina Hlope, one of South Africa's foremost storytellers, for a fundraising event on Friday, 12 February. Please diarise this date NOW!

RECIPE BOOK

The Diocesan Environment Committee has published a book called *Afro Veg: Traditional vegetable, nutritional benefits and recipes* by Mary Kleinenberg. It is for sale for R70.00. Please enquire at the parish office.

UNWANTED ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

St Martin's Home in Clark Road, Durban, will be happy to accept any kind of unwanted electronic equipment, no matter how old or in what condition. They are starting a skills course for the children in the home, and need it for instruction.

For more information, please contact Revd Ronnie Alexander at St John the Divine, phone 031 2013782.

DEADLINES: The next issue of THE BELL will be published at the end of January. Please send your articles / notices to the parish office before 17 January. The Vestry issue of THE LANTERN will be published at the end of February and will contain important reports for the Vestry meeting to be held on 14 March. If you are the leader of a group, or a member of Parish Council, please submit your report to the parish office BEFORE 10 FEBRUARY 2010.

2009 at ST JOHN'S



BAPTISMS:

- THAPELO BULELENI KHOZA - 8 MARCH
- MURPHY JANE KIDWELL - 17 MAY
- GABRIEL SIYABONGA SHELEMBE - 12 JULY

WEDDINGS:

- || NIKKI SMITH & SHAUN RICH - 3 JANUARY ||
- || MANDLA TWALA & NTOMBELE SHOZI - 24 APRIL ||
- || ZAMA MTSHALI & SIBONELO DLAMINI - 2 MAY ||

MINISTRY:

- 21 JUNE- ROBYN SAVAGE & MAKHOSI CAIN licensed as LAY MINISTERS
- 20 SEPT.- MALCOLM ROSENBERG licensed as LAY MINISTER
- 20 SEPT.- JABULANI NGIDI professed as BROTHER in the ORATORY OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

PETER BRIEN and REG BARRY retired as lay ministers this year

DEATHS:

- MAVIS GIYOSE - 12 FEBRUARY
- PHYLLIS SINCLAIR - 18 FEBRUARY
- MARY-ROSE DRAKE - 26 FEBRUARY
- DAPHNE EDITH COPPIN - 15 MARCH
- STELLA MARGARET HALLAS - 21 MARCH
- CAROL JOY BUNDY-PALMER - 1 MARCH (In Johannesburg - Memorial service at St John's)
- CLAUDINE LORD - 30 MARCH
- JOHANNES WILHELM STROEBEL - 19 APRIL
- MARGARET IRVING WILSON - 17 MAY
- EILEEN DAPHNE (TIM) SHARP - 20 MAY
- LESLIE BERNARD HEALE LUGG - 15 MAY
- ERICA CRICHTON STEVENSON - 31 MAY
- PATRICIA MARGARET WILLIAMS - 23 JUNE
- ALFREDA CAIN - 26 JUNE
- PATRICIA BROKER - 22 AUGUST
- SHAUN MICHAEL JACKSON - 2 SEPTEMBER
- MAVIS SIMONS - 8 OCTOBER
- ANNA KLOKE - 16 OCTOBER
- ELAINE GWENDOLINE RICHARDSON - 14 OCTOBER (Funeral in Johannesburg - Internment at St John's)
- NOLISWE BLISS MKHIZE - 13 MARCH 2009 (funeral in the U.K. - internment at St John's) (Her mother Zelpha Z. Mkhize has joined the church).

MOTHERS' UNION

On Sunday 22 November, the following ladies were admitted as members of the Mothers' Union at St John's:

- Solani Sylvia Buthelezi (Vice Leader),
- Makhosi Cain,
- Dolly Doris Dlamini,
- Jabulisile Msomi (Vice Secretary),
- Lungile Ruth Methula,
- Nompumelelo Vivian Mmbo, Maureen Achmad (Secretary),
- Bonisiwe Sibisi (Treasurer).
- Nonhlanhla Nala, an existing member, is the Parish Leader.

DATES TO REMEMBER**DATES for 2010****January**

Wednesday 13 Schools return
 Friday 29 – 18:30 Spirit of Growth planning meeting
 for the whole parish

February

Friday 12 Gcina Hlope fundraising event
 Tuesday 16 Shrove Tuesday
 Wednesday 17 Ash Wednesday

Diocesan Lent Course: Hospitality of God**March**

Friday 5 Women's World Day of Prayer
 Sunday 14 **Vestry meeting + Water Liturgy**
ONE SERVICE AT 08h00
 Friday 26 School Holidays
 Saturday 27 Palm Cross making - 14h00
 Sunday 28 Palm Sunday

April

Thursday 1 Maundy Thursday
 Friday 2 Good Friday
 Diakonia Service 6.15am
 Children's service 10.00am
 Meditation 12.00 noon
 Sunday 4 **EASTER**
 Monday 12 Schools return
 Tuesday 27 Public Holiday – Freedom Day

May

Saturday 1 Workers' Day
 Sunday 2 Harvest and Parish Picnic
 Saturday 8 Parish Leaders' retreat
 Thursday 13 The Ascension
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity/Renewal:
Ascension to Pentecost

Sunday 23 Pentecost
 Sunday 30 Comrades marathon

June

Thursday 3 Corpus Christi
 Sat/Sun 5/6 World Environment Day
 Wednesday 9 School Holidays
 Wednesday 15 Public Holiday - Youth Day
 Sunday 27 Patronal Festival
ONE SERVICE AT 8.00AM

July

Sunday 11 Mission to seafarers
 Tuesday 13 Schools return

2009**November**

Sunday 29 **ADVENT SUNDAY**
ONE SERVICE at 08:00
 17:30 Advent Meditation

December

Friday 4 Potjiekos & 60's sounds
Friday 11 Dinner with Bishop Rubin
Sunday 13 Ecumenical Advent Vespers
 16:00 at Mariannahill

Sunday 20

16:00 Carol Service

Thursday 24

16:00 Children's Christingle service
 23:15 Midnight Christmas Eucharist

Friday 25

08:00 **CHRISTMAS DAY**
 Eucharist

August: Month of Compassion, Sunday Schools, Disabilities

Sunday 1 Prisoners and those who minister to them
 Monday 9 Public Holiday - Women's Day
 Saturday 21 Women's Breakfast
 Sunday 22 Theological education Sunday
 Sunday 29 Confirmation
ONE SERVICE AT 8.00AM

September: Prayers for the religious life/Vocations

5 Sept – 3 Oct Season of Creation
 Friday 3 Arbour Day
 Thursday 23 School Holidays
 Friday 24 Public Holiday - Heritage Day

October

Monday 4 Schools return
 Sunday 24 Stewardship Sunday
 Bible Sunday

November

Monday 1 All Saints
 Sunday 14 Remembrance Sunday
 Mission Sunday
 Sunday 28 Advent Sunday
 Diocesan Patronal Festival

December

Saturday 25 Christmas Day