



East Claremont Congregational Church Newsletter

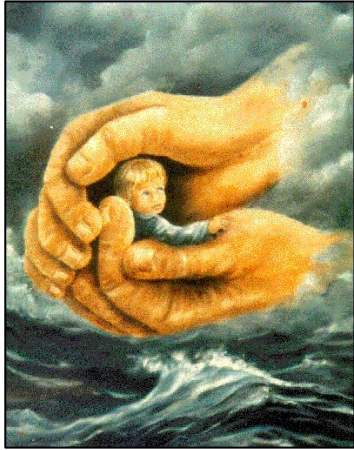
A gospel community on mission!

CHALLENGE – December 2011 and January 2012



Editorial

The fourth term has passed in a haze of learning, exams, trading days and outings. Having said goodbye to the school, the Matrics came back to write their final exams, dressed in uniforms that immediately seemed too tight or too short. Nerves were stretched, but soon they settled into an almost comfortable routine, ending each paper with a buzz of excitement as they shared opinions on the paper they had just finished. Throughout the whole exam session, it was very comforting for students to know that God even cares about things like homework and exams.



Just recently I was a passenger in a car that was involved in a side-on collision with another car, at considerable speed. As the car came to a crunching halt I realised again how faithful God is and how he looks after us even when we don't realise we need protection. No-one was hurt! We cannot possibly know what the future will bring, but we can know that God is with us, no matter what happens to us.

As our school leavers enter the work-place or begin college or university, they can know the presence of a mighty God as they make difficult decisions and encounter problems that seem insurmountable. We wish our Matrics well as they complete their studies and enjoy a well-earned holiday.

Instead of our usual colouring-in competition, there is a craft activity in this Christmas issue of the Challenge. Decorative boxes may adorn a Christmas tree or be placed next to the places of guests at the Christmas dinner table. Hopefully this activity will give our young (and not so young) readers lots of fun!

This issue of the Challenge covers December and January. The next issue of the Challenge will be for February. We wish all our readers a wonderful, peaceful Christmas and a special time of joy as we reflect on the miracle of Jesus coming to live among us as Emmanuel.

Enjoy your Christmas issue of the Challenge!

Blessings,
Karen Anderson
Challenge Editing Team

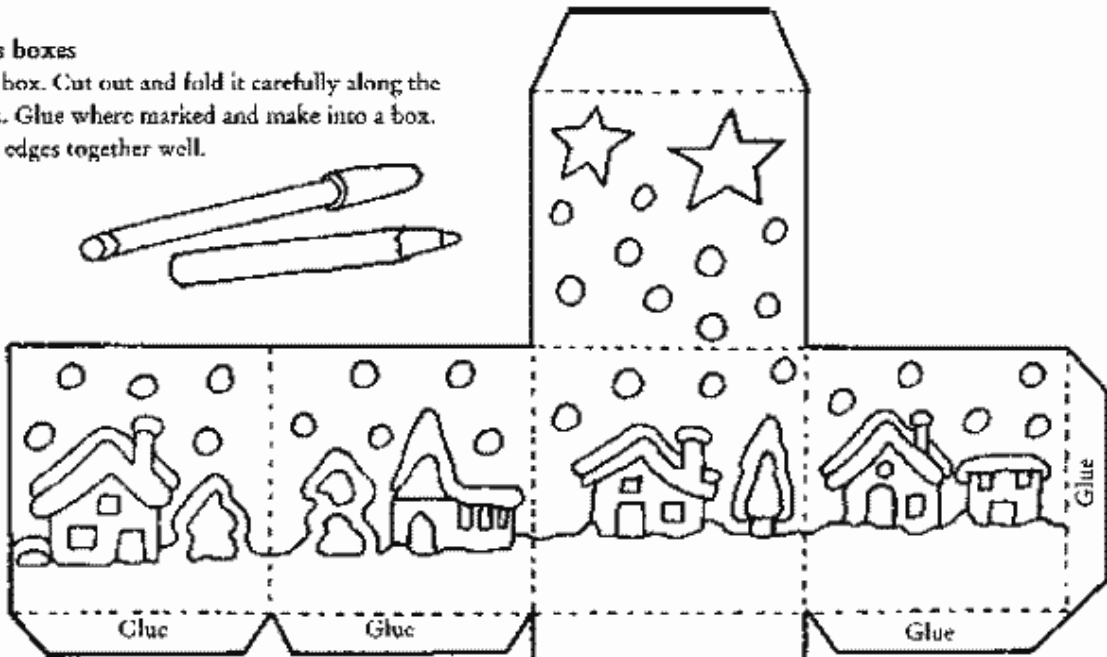


Decorative Boxes

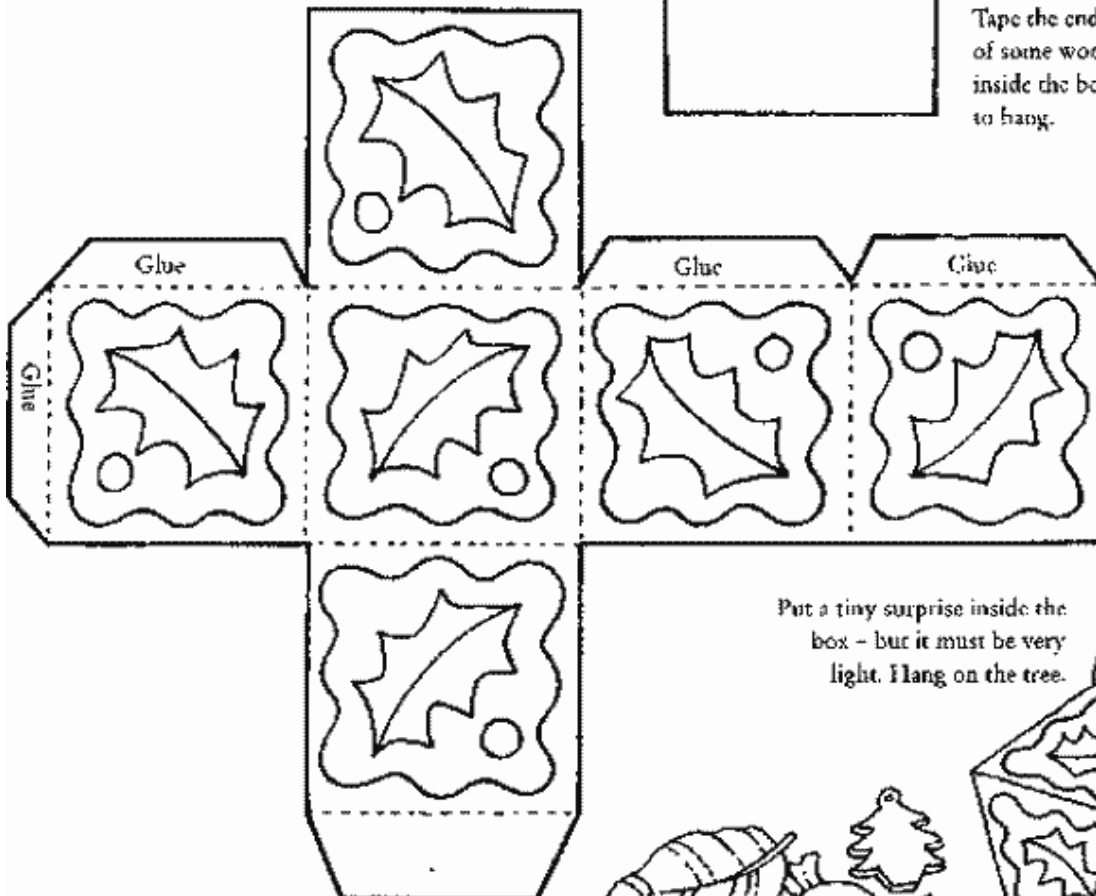
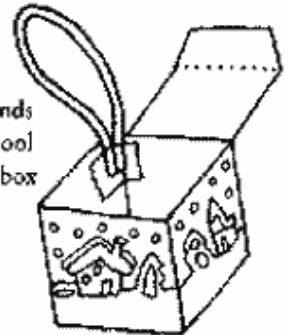
Instead of the traditional colouring-in competition, this year we have a craft activity for the children (and the young at heart). You might like to place little boxes with small gifts (perhaps a sweet?) inside for each person at the Christmas dinner table and give them a delightful surprise!

Christmas boxes

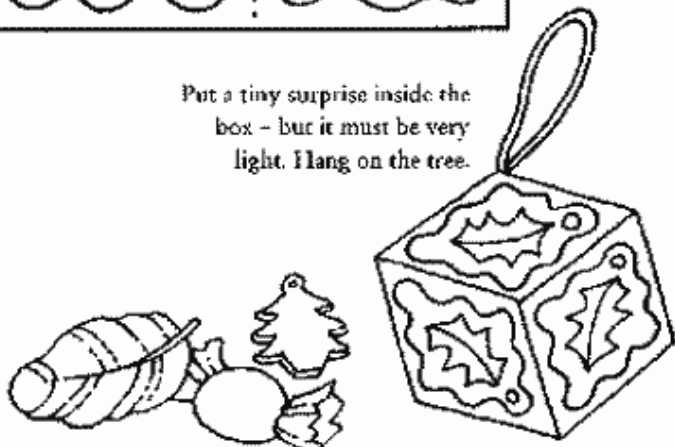
Colour the box. Cut out and fold it carefully along the dotted lines. Glue where marked and make into a box. Press glued edges together well.



Tape the ends of some wool inside the box to hang.



Put a tiny surprise inside the box - but it must be very light. Hang on the tree.



From the study

WWJD to keep Christ in Christmas?

Largely an article by Laura Singleton, 20 Dec 2010



Around the world, retailers are smiling, travellers are packing, hosts are cleaning. Christmas songs are piped over mall speakers, and elves and Santa's populate commercial after commercial. In the midst of the "Ho Ho Ho's", the hustle and bustle, and all those cash registers ringing like silver bells, Christians cry out: "Keep Christ in Christmas!" Ministers protest from the pulpits; we complain about the commercialism; we forgo the Santa decorations and pull out the Nativity scenes. But have Christians forgotten one of the most important ways to keep Christ in Christmas?

Christmas is a time of joy, peace and love. It's also when people dread having to spend hours with unpleasant relatives. At this most glorious season, cars (some with fish decals) cut off others for parking places. To celebrate Christ's birth, cooks morph into monstrous perfectionists for that idyllic dinner no one appreciates. Unbelieving guests, held captive by tradition and hunger, are pummelled by sermon-long prayers that hosts have saved up all year long. And whatever "Peace on Earth" remains stops after the meal, when Certain People retire to the living room to socialise rather than help clean up.



But because we read the Christmas story aloud, or guilt atheist cousin Ed into going to the Christmas Eve service, or play Carols rather than secular Santa songs, we think we've done our job protecting Baby Jesus. I'm thinking we've missed the mark. Assuming you're keeping Christ in Christmas through scripture, fellowship, prayer and gratitude, what else is there? How about acting like Jesus would?

Scripture shows Jesus around a lot of sinners and unbelievers. In these accounts, they don't seem too worried about spilling gravy on Jesus' good table cloth. They don't enter the party defensively in case Jesus brought up last year's Christmas dinner. They don't seem to dread getting cornered by Jesus. Seems like when Jesus hung out with Certain People, they felt loved and seen and recognised. They weren't looking at their watch – they wanted to be with him. It wasn't about perfect decorations, or taking this one opportunity to tell them they're wrong, or judging who's polite and who's a bore. It was Love.

This Christmas, I pray that we wouldn't notice the spills and imperfections, that we wouldn't zealously batter unbelievers with "Grace", that we wouldn't stress out our families with guilt or discord or judgment. I pray that this year, our guests (even the unbelieving ones) would feel welcome and loved and delighted in. I pray that they would want to be around us more because we radiate true joy, peace and love, and we'd start deeper relationship where conversations of faith would come naturally over time.



Benjamin Franklin said, "How many observe Christ's birthday! How few, his teachings! O, 'tis easier to keep holidays than commandments." In this season of awe of the Immanuel, I pray that we'd keep Christ in Christmas by keeping Christ in us, and letting him shine through.

God bless

Grant, Joanne, Seth and Ben



The minister's memo ...

Those needing prayer and care



Please would you remember the following people in your prayers:

- Those facing cancer: Melvin Black, Carol Hubbard, Cailin (John and Kate Philip's daughter), Elizabeth Tromp, Phyl Bryant and each of their families
- Paddy Case, Elizabeth Enslin, Penny Hoffman, Christen Pietersen, and Nadia Rinquest – all working/studying overseas for a period of time
- Freddie Du Toit
- Those whom we visit with communion: Sue Herringer, Phyl Bryant.
- Betty Jones who is on oxygen most of the time
- Those who will particularly be missing loved ones over this Christmas period

God Bless

Grant Peers



All Challenge articles are due on the 20th of the month.

*Contributors please note:- Articles for the Newsletter should not exceed an A4 half-page typed or A4 full-page hand written, (250 words). Unfortunately photographs involve scanning so are not usually accepted **unless** they are digital photographs.*

*(Please see the note below regarding this.) **Editing team.***

Digital photographs

For those of you who send articles into the Challenge, if you have any digital photographs relating to your article, please could you send them in JPEG format (jpg) to Melody Graham at the following email address – Melody.Graham@gmail.com.

Did you know.... You can download the transcript of Grant's sermon each week from the church website (www.eccc.org.za). You'll also find the cell group questions for the coming week there.

You can even download the latest copy of the Challenge from the website. Remember the colour copy of the Challenge is much more attractive than the black and white version ... and to have your own personal pdf copy emailed to you, just send a request by email to kanderson@escs.org.za and we'll put you on the mailing list!



Of this and that

HOP ALONG TO SOCIAL MORNING

Join us in Craven Hall on the last Thursday of every month at 10h30



Super Entertainment

Outstanding Fellowship

Caring People

Interesting Guest Speakers

Annual Outings

Lots of Refreshments

For more information, contact Anne Snyders on (021) 671 8732

The Friendship Club

The Friendship Club is a group of women of many ages. We meet on the first Tuesday of every month and take turns in hosting the group.

We meet to discuss matters of interest, the latest news and anything else that may pop up.

We also enjoy tea, delicious eats and the sense of community that having this brings.

If you are interested in joining us, we would love to see you.

Phone **Jill Greer** (021) 671-1664



Elderly lady looking for a room to rent in the Claremont area in 2012:

Please contact Ivy Pick on 021 671 4344

Hire of the hall:

The rate for hire is available on request.

Please contact Jill Greer
on 021 671 1664

It is also possible to borrow the church's tables and chairs (excluding the metal tables) for functions.

Challenge by email?

If you would like to have your copy of the Challenge sent to you by email, please send your email address to Karen Anderson (kanderson@escs.org.za) and we'll add you to the email list.

Once the Challenge is posted on the church website, we'll be able to send you a link enabling you to download and print your own copy of the Challenge.

Church trailer for hire

Contact – Dave Watts – (021) 671-5574

Donations needed for the Maranatha Chatsworth Food kitchen project

Rice, Lentils, Dried beans Soya mince, Sunflower oil, pocket potatoes, Onions, Pepper, Stock cubes

For more information contact Jaqui Sterrenberg



Ongoing requests

Donations of unwanted wool – for blankets for the babies at Little Angels – Hand to **Heather Heiberg** at Church or contact **Rosemary Hacha** on 021 671 4736 or 084 846 2824

Bread tags for wheelchairs – Please don't forget to collect these and put in the glass jar in the foyer of the church. The tags are sold to a recycling company and every 270 kg collected pays for a wheelchair. Sasko and Kwikloc, the tag manufacturers, have also pledged to donate two wheelchairs for every one wheelchair that is "bought" with the tags. Contact **Jaqui Sterrenberg**

Old style rectangular canvas camp cots (with the fixed plywood base on a fold up metal tube frame). Any donations of these are welcome. Any available mattresses would also be a bonus. Please phone 021 785 4049 between 9:00 and 13:00 weekdays and ask for **JP**.

ECCC banking details (for direct deposits):

Account name: East Claremont Congregational Church

Bank: First National Bank

Account number: 50170468844

Clearing Code (Branch code): 201509

Account type: Current account

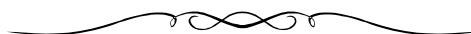


When was Jesus born?



- A. Popular myth puts his birth on December 25th in the year 1 C.E.
- B. The New Testament gives no date or year for Jesus' birth. The earliest gospel – St. Mark's, written about 65 CE – begins with the baptism of an adult Jesus. This suggests that the earliest Christians lacked interest in or knowledge of Jesus' birthdate.
- C. The year of Jesus birth was determined by Dionysius Exiguus, a Scythian monk, "abbot of a Roman monastery. His calculation went as follows:
- In the Roman, pre-Christian era, years were counted from *ab urbe condita* ("the founding of the City" [Rome]). Thus 1 AUC signifies the year Rome was founded, 5 AUC signifies the 5th year of Rome's reign, etc.
 - Dionysius received a tradition that the Roman emperor Augustus reigned 43 years, and was followed by the emperor Tiberius.
 - Luke 3:1,23 indicates that when Jesus turned 30 years old, it was the 15th year of Tiberius reign.
 - If Jesus was 30 years old in Tiberius' reign, then he lived 15 years under Augustus (placing Jesus birth in Augustus' 28th year of reign).
 - Augustus took power in 727 AUC. Therefore, Dionysius put Jesus birth in 754 AUC
 - However, Luke 1:5 places Jesus' birth in the days of Herod, and Herod died in 750 AUC – four years before the year in which Dionysius places Jesus birth.
- D. Joseph A. Fitzmyer – Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at the Catholic University of America, member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, and former president of the Catholic Biblical Association – writing in the Catholic Church's official commentary on the New Testament, writes about the date of Jesus' birth, "Though the year [of Jesus birth is not reckoned with certainty, the birth did not occur in AD 1. The Christian era, supposed to have its starting point in the year of Jesus birth, is based on a miscalculation introduced ca. 533 by Dionysius Exiguus."
- E. The DePascha Computus, an anonymous document believed to have been written in North Africa around 243 CE, placed Jesus birth on March 28. Clement, a bishop of Alexandria (d. ca. 215 CE), thought Jesus was born on November 18. Based on historical records, Fitzmyer guesses that Jesus birth occurred on September 11, 3 BCE.

Extract from an article by Lawrence Kelemen



Thoughts for the month

Whoever lives and believes in Me will never die.

(John 11:25)

'Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens' (Psalm 68:19).

The Lord Jesus Christ delivers us from fear. Apparently, He does so in different ways. Hebrews 2:14 says: 'Through His death.' The Son of God loves me. He saw me with my sins, my failures, and my treason and even so He still loved me. He came to earth to take my sins upon Him. He died my death, went to hell — my hell — and He rose again. That is why Christ can say: 'I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades' (Revelation 1:18). Christ died my death and now He says: 'death is My messenger' to invite you to heavenly glory.

A friend of Joseph Ton was once arrested by the police in Bucharest. One of the officers threatened to kill him, but Joseph smiled and said: 'If you shoot me, I will enter eternal life. You cannot frighten me with that prospect!' He was not afraid to die, for a Christian will never die.

'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' (1 Corinthians 15:55).

'For I am convinced, that neither death, nor life ... will be able to separate us from the love of God ...' (Romans 8:38, 39).

Joseph Ton
in
DAY by DAY
by Jan Pit

Congratulations for **Birthdays** go to the following folk in December and January:-

December

2nd Mrs S Palframan
5th Mrs M Winter
Mr B Wehrli
8th Miss V Mpofu
11th Mr H Attwood
14th Mrs T Dearden
17th Mrs S Herringer
20th Miss L Muller
24th Mr R Wilson
27th Mrs H Heiberg



January

3rd Mr G Clark
6th M R v Rensburg
8th Mrs M v Rensburg
9th Miss N Joubert
13th Dr R Attwood
14th Mrs M MacDonald

Wedding anniversaries for:



December

4th Mr & Mrs R van Rensburg
10th Mr & Mrs M Begg
16th Mr & Mrs R Laubscher
Mr & Mrs G Peers
18th Mr & Mrs J McCahon
23rd Mr & Mrs F Botha

January

2nd Mr & Mrs G Jones

Blessings to all on their Special Days.

THE HANDY CORNER

GENT'S HAIRSTYLIST - Rosemary Hacha - 021 671 4736/084 846 2824
LADIES' & GENTS' HAIR STYLIST - Yvonne Legg - 021 671 5908
BUYING & SELLING OF MOTOR CARS, BAKKIES & LDV's - Ron Wilson - 084 608 8925
SELLING OR BUYING A HOME? Diane Hosty - 082 775 2777. (Referrals paid)
TO SELL OR BUY COMFORTABLE HOMES - Elizabeth Tromp - 021 671 5846. (Referrals paid)
VALERIE JEAN'S CATERING SERVICE - Valerie Jean Oliphant - 021 697 5626/072 234 9579
ELECTRICIAN/HANDYMAN - Clyde Oliphant - 021 697 5626/072 643 4949
ELDERLY/HOUSE/PETS-SITTING AND CARING - Janine Alger - 021 683 0598/082 789 1720
HOUSE-SITTER OR WATCHER also CLEAN & FIXIT - Steven - 072 328 2673
ALTERATIONS / KNITTING - Connie Meyer - 021 6715908

*Any member who wishes to have their name placed on the above list,
please let the Editing Team know before the 20th of the month.*

Tea Roster

/December/January

The Morning Tea after Service will be run as usual by the Home Cell Groups.



Any nice little bits and pieces for THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH? Do let us have them by the 20th of the month

Do we have a record of your birthday or wedding anniversary?

Even if you are not a member of the church but you attend regularly, drop us an email at kanderson@escs.org.za and Melody.Graham@gmail.com

and we'll ensure you get your birthday wish.

Flower Roster

December

4th TBC
11th G Laubscher
18th B Glazer
25th A Snyders

January

1st M Ditchfield
8th H Scholtz
15th E Roos
22nd K Begg
29th C Meyer



Flowers and More in Belvedere Business Park have very kindly agreed to give our ECCC members 20% discount on flowers bought there for the Church. They will of course need to show the **Challenge List** with their name on it when buying.

Dear "flower arrangers"

Thank you very much for serving the Lord in this way with your beautiful arrangements provided every week - they are much enjoyed and appreciated by all! The flowers are usually taken by Grant to someone in need, so if they could be left as a donation in the church on the Sunday, they will provide a further blessing during the week.

Thank you and God Bless you all

Elaine

Children Are Quick

TEACHER: Why are you late?

STUDENT: Class started before I got here.

TEACHER: Maria, go to the map and find North America.

MARIA: Here it is.

TEACHER: Correct. Now class, who discovered America?

CLASS: Maria.

TEACHER: John, why are you doing your math multiplication on the floor?

JOHN: You told me to do it without using tables.

TEACHER: Glenn, how do you spell 'crocodile?'

GLENN: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L'

TEACHER: No, that's wrong

GLENN: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

(I Love this child)

TEACHER: Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?

DONALD: H I J K L M N O.

TEACHER: What are you talking about?

DONALD: Yesterday you said it's H to O.



Out of the mouths of the Babes – Explanation of God

'One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.'



'God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.'

'God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.'

'Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren't any who come to our church.'

'Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work, like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him. But he was good and kind, like his father, and he told his father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said O.K.'

'His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important.' 'You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.'

'You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God!

Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.'

'If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared, in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids.'

'But...you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases.

And...that's why I believe in God.'



Message from the Youth Pastor

Recently I've been reading, "The Battle for a generation" by Ron Hutchcraft. It's an amazingly insightful book, which I believe that God has used to show me how to more accurately share the amazing news about Jesus and explain it relevantly to teenagers.



This excerpt was taken from a chapter where Hutchcraft expands on 12 Sentences that define a generation, under the heading, "Relationships matter most to teenagers"

"The number-one priority for modern young people is relationships. They will do almost anything to get one - and then to keep it. When a young person gets something that looks like it might be a decent relationship, he or she will pay almost any price for it.

"Relationships have become number one because deprivation creates value. Whatever you are deprived of is what you tend to value. For example, the depression generation values what they didn't have - houses, cars, jobs, money. They made sure that their kids would have all of that, but the generation that have followed value something that they haven't had.

"In order for Mom and Dad to get cars, house, money and clothes, they had to leave the kids. Consequently, the kids of recent generations have been deprived of a relationship. They have been deprived of closeness and love, belonging and relationships, so they'll do anything for closeness.

"An adult who is willing to be a trusted friend can profoundly influence a teenager's life- especially if that adult can point a teenager to the only Relationship that will fill the hole in their heart."

I shared this because I believe with everything in me, that our Family at East Claremont is able to touch the lives of many other teenagers in the same way that they loved and influenced me while I was a teenager.

The Friday afternoon and evening programs will definitely attract kids and teenagers, but if we have any hope of keeping them, they need to be introduced to something much more exciting and meaningful to them. They don't need modern youngsters who are in tune with what is happening technologically, they don't need someone who dresses fashionably; what they really need is someone who is willing to show them some love.

Pray with me that God may use you express the love and acceptance of Christ to the teenagers whom we come into contact with. The simpler the way, the better.

Much love

Nick Thomson
Youth Pastor




Income and expenditure

The Income and Expenditure statement will be available on request from the treasurer or as a hard copy at church meetings.



Church directory

Description	Person/s responsible	Tel. No.	Cell. No.
Church Office		021 674 6819	
Minister	Rev G Peers	021 683 9680	083 681 6803
Secretary & Wayside Pulpit	G Laubscher	H: 021 671 0862 W: 021 674 1820	
Min Secretary (church)	B Anderson	021 671 4688	
Min Secretary (deacons)	N Thomson	H: 021 683 6787 W: 021 674 2077	082 588 9374
Treasurer & Tithing	B Wehrli	021 671 5474	
Children's Church Superintendent	N Case	H: 021 683 6787 W: 021 674 2077	082 588 9374
Social Morning & Craft class	A Snyders	021 671 8732	
Challenge Editing Team	K Anderson M Graham	021 671 4608 028 254 9638	083 698 3236 072 219 6380
Youth Pastor	N Thomson	021 674 6819	078 744 4333
Mission awareness / Outreach	J Sterrenberg		083 461 8147
Mission awareness / Pastoral	P & B Anderson	021 671 4688	083 422 3490
Regional Council Rep	P Anderson	021 671 4688	083 422 3490
Flowers	E Roos	021 671 1227	072 811 5467
Friendship Club / Celebration teas / Hiring of hall	G Greer	021 671 1664	
Library	M Jones	021 671 2483	082 707 7931
Worship Group	Mike Begg	021 685 2293	
Bible Fellowship / Cell groups	C Macallan M Jones	021 671 5574 021 671 2483	082 707 7931
Birthdays & anniversaries	M van Rensburg	082 673 1826	
Love Loaves	W Kalis		082 575 7169
Cleaning Dept	C Meyer	021 671 5908	
Property Steward	P Goliath	021 703 2106	
Property Steward & Memorial plaques	D Watts	021 671 5574	
Garden	R de Villiers S Palframan	021 671 5658 021 671 4409	
Organ	J Ross	021 696 6105	
Social & Fellowship events	S Palframan	021 671 4409	
	D Hosty	021 761 4468	





The next two months at a glance

December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 Childrens' Church Play	5	6 Carol singing @18:00	7	8 Cell Group braai	9 Youth Camp Term end	10 Youth Camp
11 Communion Sunday Youth Camp	12	13	14	15	16 Public Holiday	17
18 Carols in the Park @ 18:30	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 Christmas Day service @ 8:30	26 Day of Goodwill	27	28	29	30	31



January 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Communion Sunday	9	10	11 Term begins	12	13	14 Maintenance party
15	16	17 Deacons Meeting @ 19:30	18 Training for Ministry @ 19:30	19	20	21
22 Church Meeting after AM service	23	24	25	26 Social Morning @10:30	27	28
29	30	31				

A HAPPY
NEW YEAR

What's happening each week:

(Cell groups and Youth groups take a break during the school holidays)

Sunday - 9:15

Morning Family Service
with Children's Church

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Cell groups: Morning and evening

Thursday - 19:00

Prayer meeting in Church Lounge

Friday - Youth

Junior 17:00-18:30

Senior 19:00-21:30