

May 2018

The Challenge

East Claremont Congregational Church Newsletter

A gospel community on mission

www.eccc.org.za

Minister

Rev. Grant Peers
021-6746819
083-6816803
grant@eccc.org.za

Secretary

Gloria Laubscher
021-6710862

Treasurer

Bryan Wehrli
021-6715474

From the editor

Dear Friends

How would you describe the world we live in today? Challenging, fast-paced, dangerous, unstable, immoral? The apostle Paul describes the last days as "perilous times" (2 Timothy 3:1). What are the results? Stress! We can find ourselves feeling anxious and apprehensive about how the challenges of the world will affect us personally. Thinking about these things, we can simply become 'stressed out'.

Remember the Bible is God's instruction manual for life. It provides the answers and gives us comfort, peace and hope for a brighter tomorrow. But can the Bible really show us how to deal with our stress, regardless of our situation?

Philippians 4:8 says : ***Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.***

When negative experiences and situations are coming at you, and when it seems overwhelming, then stop, take a deep breath and simply take time to focus on something lovely and good.

Mark 10:27 : ***But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."***

Hebrews 4:15 : ***For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.***

Whatever trial you're going through, it cannot separate you from the love of God. He understands! Jesus Christ knows what it's like to be human. He loves us.

Ask God to help you learn the lesson He has for you. Ask God to help you build His character through your trial. There is nothing wrong with letting God know you're having trouble and you need His help. He wants you to trust Him—to rely on Him for help.

Love Linda

From the study:

Celebrating 50 years in our church building

In 1968 it would have cost you about 7c for a loaf of brown bread, a liter of milk was 5c, and petrol would cost you 10c per liter. It seems almost unbelievable! Today you are lucky to find a loaf of bread for less than R10,00, milk is about R7,00 in a sachet and petrol has sky-rocketed to R14,48.

This was the same year that ECCC opened a new church building, the same building in which we now meet for our time of worship on Sunday mornings. Up until that time the church had ministered out of the “Small hall” and Craven Hall. These two venues facilitated the many ministries including The Sunday School, The Woman’s Association, The Woman’s Fellowship, The Men’s Forum, Boys’ Gym Club, The Pilgrims, The Young People’s Fellowship, The Choir, The Cradle Roll, An Informal Discussion Group and Membership Classes

The Church took out a bond of R22,000 and managed to pay it back in about 12 years (thought they expected it to take 30 years!)

We are thankful for the faithfulness and hard work of the men and women who had the vision to build a new church building. It is always a great milestone when a church builds a (new) center in which it will worship. It speaks of the permanence, stability, community and the faith of East Claremont Congregational Church.

Change

An anniversary is an opportunity to stop and take stock of where we are in ministry. The world of 1968 is a very different world from 2018 (besides the price hikes!). The church is facing the challenges of the growing secularization of society, a decline in the broad acceptance of Judeo-Christian morals, the complexities of globalization, new communication and social media channels and access to information via the internet. And if anything, the speed of change has only increased over the last 50 years.

But in the midst of all these the one thing that has not changed is the gospel. God is still a God of great love and mercy. Jesus is still the hope and salvation of the world. Men and women still need forgiveness, redemption and restoration. And the Holy Spirit still guides by the Word and by his still small voice.

Vision

The congregation that gathered on the 4th May 1968, when Rev. Ted Sulston opened and dedicated the new building had seen a vision come to fruition. It was a great vision and it is not something that every generation can claim. The plaque outside the church says, “for the people had a mind to work” (Neh 4:6). And they had worked! They had sacrificed, planned and set their hearts on a God-given vision. These saints now stand as a Hebrews-11-kind-of-cloud-of-witnesses calling us to behold a vision that would compel us to similar faithfulness and sacrifice.

What compelling, Kingdom-building vision is God setting before us that would so capture our hearts that we would be ready to give sacrificially of our lives to see it come to fruition? We need the guidance of God’s Spirit as we dream about the next 5 or 10 years. Please pray with me as we seek God’s face for what the Spirit is saying to the church (Rev 2:7) at this time.

God bless
Grant, Joanne and the boys

Minister's memo

Please would you remember the following people in your prayers:

- Those facing cancer: Paddy Case, Fred Ross, each of their families
- Those whom we visit with communion: Sue Herringer
- Ron Wilson who has now moved in to Huis Luckhoff. He has been diagnosed with dementia
- Venetia after the passing of her husband Freddie
- Harry after the passing of his wife Maureen
- Give thanks that they found no cancer in Roy Boltman lungs
- All those who will miss Arthur Hughes after his passing



THE HANDY CORNER

GENT'S HAIRSTYLIST - Rosemary Hacha - 021 761 0934/084 846 2824

LADIES' & GENTS' HAIR STYLIST - Yvonne Legg - 021 671 5908 / 0724141669

ELECTRICIAN/HANDYMAN - Clyde Oliphant - 021 697 5626/072 643 4949

ELDERLY/HOUSE/PETS-SITTING - Janine Alger - 021 683 0598/082 789 1720

ALTERATIONS / KNITTING - Connie Meyer - 021 6715908

UPDATE YOUR WILL, ETC - Gail Bergmann - Tel: 021674506/Fax: 0216711225

E-mail : gbergmann@telkomsa.net



Please also remember our on-going ministries : bottle top collection, bread tags, Bless a Baby, Margaret's House, Shalom



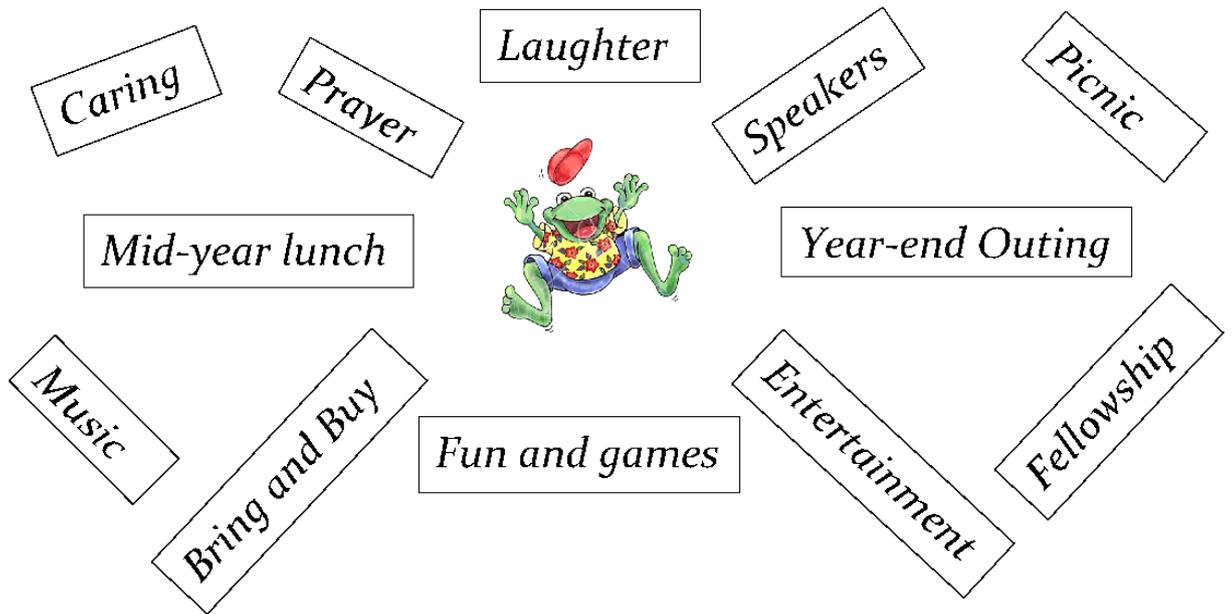
THE HARRY ATTWOOD BLANKET FUND



Please remember that the Blanket Fund is open. It runs for a few short weeks and will make such a difference in someone's life this Winter. Please give generously!

God Loves a Cheerful Giver! (2 Corinthians 9 6:7)

SOCIAL MORNING



Join us at our monthly get-togethers from January to November (refer to the Church Calendar for dates and times or contact Anne Snyders on (021) 671-8732)

HIRING OF CHURCH TRAILER

R50 per day (Donation)
Contact Peter Anderson
Tel: 021671 4688 Cell: 083 422 3490

Donations needed for the Maranatha Chatsworth Food Kitchen Project – Rice, lentils, dried beans, soya mince, sunflower oil, pocket potatoes, onions, pepper, stock cubes.
Contact **Jaqui Sterrenberg**

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**.

WEST COAST APPEAL
Lamberts Bay, Elands Bay, Graafwater, Vredendal
Food, clothing, blankets, household items
Many thanks, Jaqui

FAITH AND FEAR by Nina Brown

Faith and fear cannot exist together. Faith is described in Hebrews 11:1 as being "certain of what we do not see." It is an absolute belief that God is constantly working behind the scenes in every area of our lives, even when there is no tangible evidence to support that fact. On the other hand, fear, simply stated, is unbelief or weak belief. As unbelief gains the upper hand in our thoughts, fear takes hold of our emotions. Our deliverance from fear and worry is based on faith, which is the very opposite of unbelief. We need to understand that faith is not something that we can produce in ourselves. Faith is a gift (Ephesians 2:8-9), and faithfulness is described as a fruit (or characteristic) that is produced in our lives by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23). The Christian's faith is a confident assurance in a God who loves us, who knows our thoughts, and who cares about our deepest needs.

Kerrin Begg

LET YOUR
FAITH
BE BIGGER
THAN YOUR
FEAR

“I like your Christ,” said Mahatma Gandhi, “but I do not like your Christians.
Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.”

Submitted by A. Snyders

Trusting God to Write Your Story - Tayler Beede

Submitted by J. Sterrenberg

But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! (Luke 12:28).

Friend to Friend

There I sat, terrified and confused, in a row of church chairs. Awaiting my surgery the next morning, knowing that I had a haemorrhaged tumour in my head. I didn't know if everything was going to be OK, and I didn't understand it. People gathered around me, prayed for me, tried to keep me distracted, but I felt numb. As though my whole world had simply stopped spinning.

My friend at church whispered to me, "God doesn't give a story like this to just anyone."

Fast forward a year and a half, and there I laid, numb and silent, in my parents' bed. For days. I just couldn't shake the news. I was going to be a mom and then . . . I wasn't. There was nothing I could do to change it, and I couldn't believe it.

People would come and go, say words that I didn't really hear, nor would I remember. And I remained mostly silent. One day a friend climbed on top of the bed with me, with tear-filled eyes, and again the words were spoken to me: "This is part of your story now."

But I didn't want it to be.

I had written out a story for our lives and this wasn't part of it. It didn't include the loss of a baby and a brain tumour all before the ripe age of 22. This isn't what I dreamed of when I was a little girl. It's not what I ever hoped or prayed for.

But it's my story.

I had carefully laid out my plans. I had dreams for our future on our wedding day. I had crafted the perfect path in my head.

But I'm not the author.

And so, sometimes I just have to take that tight grasp I have on my dreams, and let go. Even when it hurts, even when I only want to grasp tighter to my carefully laid plans--on the good days, the bad days, and everything in between.

If I truly trust God with my life, that means I trust him with every aspect. Each and every word, sentence, and chapter. Even when I feel like I can't bear to flip the page and see what happens next. Even when I think the next page is going to be wonderful and it turns out to be downright awful.

It's all part of what makes our faith so scary and yet so beautiful. And because of our faith in Christ, we know that in the end he will redeem all of the scary and seemingly hopeless patches.

Even though I've been through some tough times, I love looking back and seeing what God has already brought me through. The hopeless times. The tiring times. The exciting times. Because the truth is, though many of these chapters haven't been what I had always hoped for, a lot of them are filled with blessings I also didn't deserve.

I remember a couple days after I found out about my miscarriage and was deep in the pit of grief and decisions, my grandpa showed up for a surprise visit. And I'm glad he did, because his words still ring true with me--*"there are better days ahead, kiddo."*

Three months later I got that positive pregnancy test, and I then faced a scary pregnancy full of tests and hospital visits. But today, as I write this, I watch the baby monitor and see my sweet baby boy sleep. My healthy, 16-month-old little blessing, who wouldn't be here had I not gone through the past few years of trial after trial. And I am thankful for him all the more because of it.

You see, in this life you will wander through phases that are difficult, and phases that are absolutely beautiful. So if you're in the midst of a rough patch, keep trudging on. It gets better. God does have better days ahead for you. Just trust Him.

Let's Pray

Lord, some phases of life can be difficult and feel so hopeless, while others are so full of joy. I pray that You would strengthen me through the hard times, and that I would praise You in the good times. I pray that through it all, no matter what, I will boldly place my life in Your hands and trust that You will bring everything together for your good.

In Jesus' Name,
Amen.

Now It's Your Turn

What helps you get through the tough seasons in life? Do you have any particular Scriptures that have been encouraging for you?

When I am
afraid
I put my
trust
in you.

Psalm 56:3

Thoughts for the month

Ecclesiastes 7:20

Ask the Right Question

Why do bad things happen to good people? I've asked it and you probably have too. Yet it's possible that that's the wrong question. We have a congenital sin defect. We're living on pure grace and borrowed time. When Adam fell, he took creation with him (Genesis 3). In this life, we can't shake of all the consequences of that cataclysm. The world is broken. Terrible, inconvenient things happen. It's not fair but it's true.

So the question to ask – resting and wrestling with the sure hope that God sees things we don't and will judge the world with fairness and righteousness when He rolls up all of history in His glory – is not "Why?"

The question is "What now?"

The truth is, no one ever got over suffering by having it explained. Suffering is generally irrational. It manifests in our lives as something that lashes out at random and is indiscriminate and mysterious. But mysteriously – wondrously – it holds the power to change our hearts.

So what now?

D. Reyburn

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 lmattwood2@gmail.com and we'll ensure you get your birthday wish.

Congratulations for Birthdays go to the following folk in May :

- 01 Che Matthews, Reuben Rinquest
- 08 Peter Anderson, Violet Black
- 10 Joanne Peers
- 11 Ron Mitchell
- 12 Steve Palframan
- 16 Elaine Roos



Blessings to all on their special days



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 gift, they will provide a further blessing in the week.

Serve the Lord in a life of holiness

MARK 9:33-10:12 What should our

attitude be to other Christian ministries and other Christian churches?

Divisions among followers of Jesus started very early on! The disciples started arguing about who was the greatest (9:33–34). In this context, Jesus speaks to them about the characteristics of a life of holiness.

1. Humility

Jesus tells them not to compete to be number one. It is always a temptation to compare. Envy and rivalry are great dangers. Jesus says if you are going to compete it should be to get the last place. If anyone wants to be first, they 'must be the very last and the servant of all' (v.35). Leaders are called to humble service.

2. Love

'He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me"' (vv.36–37). Love and welcome everyone, even those who are unable to do anything for you – the very young, the weak, the poor – in doing so you are loving and welcoming Jesus.

3. Tolerance

Jesus tells the disciples not to dismiss or judge others who do things 'in Jesus' name' just because they are not part of your group (vv.38–39,41) or do things in a different manner to how you do them. It is a mistake to dismiss other Christians, other denominations or other organisations because they are *not 'one of us'* (v.38).

4. Discipline

We sometimes tolerate sin in our own lives but are intolerant towards other people's sin. Jesus teaches us to be tolerant towards others, but intolerant about sin in our own lives (vv.42–49). Of course, Jesus is not speaking about literal maiming. Rather, he uses figurative language about what we do (with our hands, v.43), places we go (with our feet, v.45) and what we look at (with our eyes, v.47). Be disciplined, uncompromising and radical about sin. It is often sin that leads to division. Jesus calls us to be ruthless about living a life of holiness.

5. Peace

Jesus tells them not to argue but to be at peace. Jesus longed for his disciples to get along with one another, to stop arguing and to 'be at peace with each other' (v.50). Later, he prayed that we may be one in order that the world would believe (John 17:21).

6. Faithfulness

Jesus calls us to faithfulness in marriage. He points out that Moses' permission of divorce was a *concession* and not a *command*. God's intention for marriage is life-long faithfulness. Husband and wife are so closely united that they become one flesh: 'So they are no longer two, but one flesh' (Mark 10:8). This is the origin of the wonderful words in the marriage service, which follow the joining of hands and the exchange of vows: 'Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate' (v.9).

Lord, help me through the power of your Holy Spirit to live a holy life and to develop the characteristics of humility, love, tolerance, discipline, peace and faithfulness.



A Prayer for the Year Ahead

Dear God,

We thank you that you know our way and you have a plan. We thank you for all this past year has brought, for the struggles as well as the blessings, because we know that you work through all things and will use them for good somehow, and for your glory. We confess our need for you again, for the fresh filling of your Spirit. We ask that you would make all things new, in our hearts, in our minds, in our lives, for this coming year. We pray for your refreshing over us and for your deep peace within.

We ask for your wisdom, for your strength and power to be constantly present in us. We pray you would make us strong and courageous for the road ahead. Give us ability beyond what we feel able, let your gifts flow freely through us, so that you would be honoured by our lives, and others would be drawn to you. We ask you to keep our footsteps firm, on solid ground, helping us to be consistent and faithful. Give us supernatural endurance to stay the course, not swerving to the right nor to the left, nor being too easily distracted by other things that would seek to call us away from a close walk with you.

We ask for your hand to cover us and keep us distanced from the evil intent of the enemy; that you would be a barrier to surround us, that we'd be safe in your hands. We ask that you will be our defence and rear guard, keeping our way clear, removing the obstacles, and covering the pitfalls. Lord, lead us on your level ground. We pray that you would give us discernment and insight beyond our years, to understand your will, hear your voice, and know your ways.

We pray for your Spirit to lead us each step of this New Year. We ask for you to guide our decisions and turn our hearts to deeply desire you above all else. We ask that you will open doors needing to be opened and close the ones needing to be shut tightly. We ask that you would help us release our grip on the things to which you've said "no," "not yet," or "wait." We ask for help to pursue you first, above every dream and desire you've put within our hearts. Keep your words of truth planted firmly within us, help us to keep focused on what is pure and right, and give us the power to be obedient to your word.

We ask for your miraculous provision for every need, we ask for your grace and favour. We pray for your blessings to cover our families. We pray that you would help us to prosper in all you are leading us to do, and bring every plan you have birthed in our hearts to fulfilment.

Shine your light in us, through us, over us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Set your way before us. May all your plans succeed. May we reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing.

To you be glory and honour this New Year, and forever.

In Jesus' name, Amen

Description	Person/s responsible	Tel. No.	Cell. No.
Church Office		021 674 6819	
Minister	Rev G Peers	021 683 9680	083 681 6803
Regional Representative	A Jackson	021 685 3893	083 254 8724
Secretary	G Laubscher	H: 021 671 0862 W: 021 671 7067	
Min Secretary (church)	B Fouche	021 683 3414	083 455 5024
Min Secretary (deacons)	B Fouche	021 683 3414	083 455 5024
Treasurer & Tithing	B Wehrl	021 671 5474	
Children's Church Superintendent	Griselda Jacobs		
Challenge Editor	Linda Attwood	021 686 8578	
Social Morning & Craft class	A Snyders	021 671 8732	
Mission awareness / Outreach	J Sterrenberg	021 558 8265	083 461 8147
Pastoral care	P & B Anderson	021 671 4688	083 422 3490
Flowers	C Shortt		082 956 6559
Teas / Hiring of hall	C Meyer	021 671 5908	
Library	B Anderson	021 671 4688	083 422 3490
Worship Groups	Mike Begg	021 685 2293	082 928 7620
Community Groups	Che Matthews	021 671 6231	082 779 5235
Birthdays & anniversaries	M van Rensburg		082 673 1826
Love Loaves	W Kalis	021 762 7215	082 575 7169
Cleaning Dept	C Meyer	021 671 5908	
Property Steward	T Adriaanse Paul Goliath	021 797 4634 021 703 2106	083 983 3650 083 327 6912
Memorial Plaques	R van Rensburg	021 671 2809	082 662 3513
Garden	R de Villiers	021 671 5658	
Counselling	Pat Scott	021 713 3121	079 505 1562
Prayer Ministry	Linda Harrower	021 671 1303	
Organ	J Ross B Anderson	021 696 6105 021 6714688	082 536 7103 082 438 9877

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



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 Community Group questions for the coming week there.

You can also **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. To have your own personal pdf copy emailed to you, just send a request by email to the new editor, who will put you on the mailing list!

MAY 2018



Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	01	02	03 Craft Class @ 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.	04	05	06 The Minister Church's 50 th Anniversary Celebration
07	08	09	10 Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.	11	12	13 The Minister - Communion
14 Elders Meeting	15 Deacons Meeting @ 7.30 p.m.	16	17 Prayer Meeting @ 7 pm	18	19	20 The Minister
21	22	23	24 Social morning @ 10 am Prayer Meeting @ 7 pm	25	26	27 The Minister - Prayer Meeting after AM service
28 Childrens Church Meeting	29	30	31 Prayer Meeting @ 7 pm			

What's Happening each week :

Sunday - 9:15 Morning
Family Service with Children's Church

Community groups
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
Morning and evening
(Community groups and Youth groups take a break during the school holidays)

Prayer meeting in Church Lounge
Thursday - 19:00

