



Parris News

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Easter Celebrations

Dear friends and family, Greetings to all of you from a wet and cold Cape Town. Our season has just changed and now we are heading for Winter. It's a time for mountain hikes, sitting around the fire, and enjoying home-made soups. Our church family shared a meal together on Thursday – We ate leg of lamb as we remembered the freedom that God provided not only for Israel at Passover, but also for us. It was a good

time to meet and celebrate God's provision. Our Good Friday service was a time to come around tables and remember the body of Christ broken for us and reflect on the cost of our salvation. Sunday morning we met at 6 am to walk/drive up a nearby hill and started the day by singing, sharing testimonies, drinking hot chocolate, huddled under warm blankets overlooking the city of

Durbanville. This year we didn't see very much because it was grey and cloudy. A great way to start the day! A few hours later we were meeting again for our family service as we celebrated the benefits of the resurrection in 1 Peter: Mercy, New Birth, Living Hope.

New Birth...

It's always exciting to see people move from darkness into the kingdom of light. Cas is a young man who has been coming to our church for about a year. He was invited by a girl that he was very interested in getting to know better. She told him very clearly that there was no hope for a romantic connection unless he was committed to following Jesus Christ. At first he was offended, but later intrigued by her devotion to this God. He got to know her community group and

started coming regularly and asking all kinds of questions. He joined an evangelistic bible study and finally was convinced that Jesus was trustworthy and so in his words, he jumped! He stood up in front of the church and shared his story and the congregation was moved!



We then had the privilege of seeing him baptized with his unbelieving family members and work colleagues present. This past month Mark officiated at his wedding and it was great to see a clear gospel witness. So exciting!



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Brokenness

We've been reminded lately that we live in fallen world. One of the guys I meet with weekly in a men's coffee group is shattered as his wife has left him. She doesn't want reconciliation; she just wants to live her own life. Another good friend is a business owner and the cash flow has dried up. Salaries to pay - stressful times. It's local election time here in the Cape and the politicians are telling their usual lies. They don't offer any realistic hope. No guarantees of easy living in this world. Austin broke

his arm for the second time in a year while trying new moves on a skateboard. Benjamin fell on his head from quite a height and was badly concussed. He spent the night in the ER being examined, including a CAT scan to make sure there was no brain damage. This took place on Saturday night before Easter. It gripped my heart as I reflected on what it must have been like for the Father to lose his only son. Cyndi and I chatted about holding onto things and people lightly. We live for the

hope that will be completely realized when Christ returns and restores everything.



Depression

In our circles we are seeing a growing number of people struggling with anxiety and depression. Many people are making less money and the cost of living keeps going up. Others are making lots of money but are anxious because they work out of fear. We have to remind people all the time to trust in the faithfulness of God. We did a three week series on guarding the mind, being alert and believing the truth of God's Word. We all have to keep our focus on God and enjoy the blessings he provides daily.

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Stress Relief

Talking about depression and stress, one of the practical and natural ways to strengthen the mind is to regularly exercise. Cyndi has been walking and running the dogs or have they been walking her? Austin and Ben have both been recovering from their injuries and Anita has been

playing netball. Mark has started jogging; some guys at church entered him into a 21 km race, so he's had to train in order to survive. There are quite a few runners at our church, so we are looking for ways to encourage the runners to use this hobby as a way to influence others. Joletta, a keen runner from

our church finds that many runners will come to her for advice. After telling someone about her faith, they insisted on coming to her church. She's a great example of someone using everything for the glory of God.

Our Third Child

We have had Anita living with us for almost 18 months. She will turn 7 in August. We have attempted to foster her with the idea of adoption, but her case is quite complicated and we have found the process slow and frustrating. The main thing is that she is in a safe environment and is adjusting well in school and making friends. She is a quick learner and is growing in her knowledge and understanding of the gospel. She has adapted well to being in our family and we are richer for having her. There are a

few other families in the church who are fostering children and we are challenging others to consider this practical ministry. In a country with so many orphans, the Christians have to lead the way in opening their homes, otherwise our faith is useless. It's costly but that's our calling.



Community

Austin is 11 and as he heads towards the teenage years, we are more aware of our need to be surrounded by other parents who share the same values so that he will have access to other adults who can be a godly influence in his life. In the African culture, boys are initiated into manhood through circumcision at the age of 18. That's not our plan, but I've spoken with some of the other dads and we are planning various camping trips together with the kids that will help prepare them for



adulthood. We want to equip our children to think for themselves, to take responsibility for their actions and to know what God expects. We recently invited some of these families for a hike in the mountains and a picnic together. The kids enjoyed it and the parents got to chat along the way. It's great to get out of the house and enjoy God's creation. No-one misses the computer or television when we're outdoors.

Gospel Urgency

“Our desire is to see men, women and children grow in their understanding of the gospel...”

It's so easy to be lulled into a safe, comfortable existence. This is the danger of church work. We have started a series on Romans. We will be preaching through this letter for the rest of the year and our community groups will be studying and discussing this together weekly. Our desire is to see men,

women and children grow in their understanding of the gospel and to become bold and unashamed of sharing their faith. We have compiled study guides which have questions for the community groups to work through and a section for families to use in the home around the dinner table. Along with these

studies, there will be several opportunities for groups and families to live out what they learn as they are exposed to situations where the gospel is needed. We'll keep you updated with more details in the months to come.



Thank you for your prayers, your friendship and your generous hearts toward our family.

With lots of love,

Mark, Cyndi, Austin, Benjamin & Anita

Prayer Needs

Progress with Anita's court case.

Daily strength & wisdom

For our church members to be passionate about living out their faith.

For God's provision in our church building project.

For our family to stay refreshed in ministry

For us to be shaped by God's word as we study through Romans.

For more of our members to consider adoption and being radically generous to the needs around them.