



WOMEN'S MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

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As I spend the last few weeks reflecting on 2023, I became aware of the recurring theme of gratitude. It doesn't mean that everything went well, not at all. Each year has its highs and lows with a number of beautiful moments, but our lives do not consist of a series of beautiful moments, one after another: On the contrary, it's the little things we do every day, the little victories, the daily struggles, the significant and insignificant that make up the totality of our lives. Maybe your year didn't pan out as you planned and expected, yet there are so many reasons to be thankful, nonetheless. Let us decide to give thanks for the growth in grace, resilience gained and our faith which sustained us on our journey.

The same applies for ministry, it is not separate from our lives but intertwined with it. Some events of the passing year of Women's ministry will forever hold a special place in my heart. The beautiful moments shared around God's Word in Growth Groups, heart to hearts around a cup of coffee, the laughter shared,

and special moments of praying with a dear sister, the lovely fun morning of getting to know some newcomers to Emmanuel, the opportunities to serve together in reaching the lost, the lonely and disillusioned with the gospel, through Grace Mobile Kitchen (GMK), Kraaifontein Old Age Home (KOA) and the Scottsville High School Matrics. As you read the exciting stories of God's faithfulness and providence, pause to give thanks.

As we enter the Christmas season, let's continue to pause, reflect and give thanks for the many gifts we've been given; the people you love and hold dear and the opportunities you are afforded in life. Enjoy the little things; gathering for carol singing, time with friends and family, sharing a meal, walks along the beach, the sunsets, a simple cup of tea on your stoep, reading and the sharing of gifts.

The Christmas season can also be especially difficult for many of us. It may be the first Christmas without a dear loved one, for others this season is plagued with bad memories of grief, loss, disappointments, heartache, etc.

My prayer is that the spirit of gratitude may carry you and your loved ones through this entire Christmas season. Rejoice and *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit"*
-Romans 15:13

Joy and grace to you and your family.
Gail Daniels





TESTIMONY

A FIRST HAND ACCOUNT OF GOD



I would like to share with you how good and great our God is. When God says “no”, no one can say “yes”. And when God says “yes”, no one can say “no”. I am filled with gratitude, because God gave me strength to carry on with life despite going through a very difficult time.

When I was pregnant with my last-born, my mother was in and out of hospital. I prayed and fasted, asking God to heal my mother. But God wanted to pick His flower, so He did. However, a miracle happened at this time.

My pregnancy wasn't yet full-term so I wasn't expecting to deliver my baby anytime soon. My mother was in hospital the day I woke up feeling tired and strange. I was panicking! That night, at about 8pm, I started to experience labour pain. Edmore, my husband, was in Botswana so I was staying with my brother-in-law and his wife. I didn't have airtime to call a relative or friend to help me. The pain continued until 11pm. I decided I needed to go to the hospital, which was 3km from where I was staying. I couldn't find anyone to transport me to the hospital! So, I started walking to the hospital on my own, late at night! I bumped into two neighbourhood watchmen while they were doing their rounds. They asked me what was wrong and why I didn't find transport to take me to the hospital. They then started walking with me. When we were halfway to the hospital, the labour pain increased, and due to my nursing background, I knew that I was having strong contractions and that I was about to give birth. It was dark as there was no electricity due to load-shedding. I sat down on the road, and the neighbourhood watchmen asked me what was wrong. I told them I was about to give birth, and then they ran away!!

Thankfully I had a small blanket in my bag which I put down on the ground. I sat on the blanket and kept the other small blanket close by. I gave birth to my baby boy alone. He didn't cry. I wrapped him in the blanket although I couldn't see much as it was so dark. Then a car came by and gave me a lift to the hospital. My baby still hadn't cried when I arrived at the hospital. I was wondering if I gave birth to a dead baby. The nurses unwrapped the baby and saw that the umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck! After they removed the cord he started to cry, and I thanked God that he was alive.

What distressed me most about that day, was that at the exact time that I gave birth, my mother passed away in hospital. The very same minute! But I saw the hand of God, because my baby survived. On the way to the hospital when I thought my baby was dead I was praying that I would get through this. By God's grace I did and He healed my baby. Even now I find it difficult to celebrate my son's birthday because it is also the day we remember my mother passing away. But my son is a blessing! When he cried for the first time I told God that I would dedicate him to the Lord and that he must work for the Lord. I gave him the name Peter which means “the rock”. He is indeed a rock. You can see that this boy was given to me by God. Only God knows why all that happened. My son is a very obedient child. He never goes a day without praying. He will tell me that he is praying for me, and I will ask him “what are you praying about?” and he will say “I am praying that you will live long”. I will say that he was God-given and I thank God for him. He is a miracle baby! All to the glory of God.

★ *Matilda Munyaradzi*





KRAAIFONTEIN OLD AGE HOME

“Beautiful young people are accidents by nature, but beautiful old people are works of art” - Eleanor Roosevelt.

How time has passed us by. Soon we will be celebrating the birth of Christ; yes- Christmas is almost upon us. There are many who will be getting excited but there are also many who will not be that excited because they do not have families who care enough about them to invite them to share that day.

Let me get back to the KOAH ministry. We have just completed our study in the book of Exodus. What a wonderful message that points us towards a Saviour and reminds us about our own journey with the Promised Land as our destination.

As we have already previously shared with you, after our story time, we then put our voices together for a time of praise. If only you could witness the passion and joy in the voices.

Just like the psalmist in Psalm 42 questions his despair- the expression: “I will still praise him” signifies an inner determination and a forward-facing outlook. Many of these folk display the knowledge and belief that no matter what their circumstances, God has promised to never leave nor abandon His children.

And then before we close, we break up into groups for a time of prayer. It is here that we are humbled by the prayer requests, not what they want but what they need and what others need. Mainly for the needs of others.

As a group we are saddened when we hear of anyone passing away, but this of course is all part of God’s plan.

The numbers of our own group have changed with some having left for various reasons, but the Lord has graciously filled the vacancies. We would like to thank all involved in answering our requests for prayer and for so generously filling our needs basket.

It’s our intention to close off the year with a Carols session.

Please be on the lookout for details about this event. It will be our privilege to have you on our Carols team.

Last but not least, we continue to give thanks to the Lord for this ministry of being able to serve others.

One always leaves there feeling so humbled and blessed.

Veronica O’Connor



SCOTTSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Gail and I met with the Scottsville High School principal during the June school holidays to gain an understanding of how the Women and Men's Ministries could assist the school leadership team to create hope in the lives of its learners.

We were surprised at the day-to-day challenges that learners face, these include:

- Rape and sexual abuse
- Suicide
- Self harm
- Hunger
- Inability to read with understanding
- Pregnancy
- Gangsterism
- Lack of access to water & electricity
- Substance abuse
- Vandalism and theft

In addition to having to teach learners in this very tough environment, a substantial amount of educators' time, especially at a senior level, is spent on non-core tasks like policy formulation (e.g. Social Media Policy, Health and Safety policy) and regulatory compliance. The Department of Education allocates one social worker and one psychologist to each district in the province.

A district comprises 23 schools. Subsequently, the principal and educators find themselves exploring various opportunities to assist learners with meals, quiet and structured spaces to study and do homework, access to social grants, etc.

Listed below are some interventions that could assist the learners:

- » Study methodologies
- » Create quiet spaces
- » Provide light refreshments/meal to matrics during final exams
- » Start working with Grade 8's
- » Motivational talks, Prayer
- » Equip parents to parent
- » Counselling
- » Provide basic necessities to identified learners
- » Teach learners how to draft a study plan

A project committee, comprising representatives from the Men and Women's ministries and other Christians will be established in the new year to explore how best to bring hope to the learners. The Committee will work with the designated Educator identified by the school.



On the 6th of September we arranged for a remarkable woman who, with God's help and by His grace, was able to overcome hurt, trauma and adversity to qualify as a Chartered Accountant and rise up the ranks as the CFO of an oil and gas company. Nombulelo shared her journey and interacted with the matric girls via Teams all the way from Ghana. This was the first time that the girls had been exposed to this platform. Nombulelo emphasised how knowing that God was at her side and trusting Him enabled her to decide that her circumstances would not prevent her from achieving her vision. She stressed the importance of having a vision, acting on that vision and persevering no matter what. Nombulelo's life as a teenager resonated with many of the learners that morning; they were noticeably surprised to hear where she had started.

She highlighted how knowing God's promise that he would never leave nor forsake her enabled her to get through the days when she felt completely overwhelmed and helpless. The interaction with Nombulelo was important to remind the learners of God's love, to encourage them as they prepared to sit for their final exams and importantly to reinforce that their current circumstances need not define who they are, their journey or their destination. Gift bags containing sanitary towels, deodorant, tissues, toothpaste and luxuries were handed to the learners.

Please pray that the right team of people would agree to serve the learners at Scottsville High School and that many learners will come to realise that they are special and loved by our Father.

Crystal Abdoll



YOUNG WOMEN'S MINISTRY



We normally meet on the first Saturday of every month to pray and discuss how to apply God's Word to issues that affect Christian women, with the help of a book called "Lies Women Believe" by Nancy Demoss Wolgemuth. Occasionally we'll have a social instead, where we can relax, laugh and have fun together. On Saturday night the 2nd of September, the Young Ladies group got together to watch a movie at Roxanne's house. There was much laughter complete with tasty snacks and good fellowship.

Back in June, we had a social at June Denyer's Clay Lounge that she runs from her home. Eight ladies attended, and it was probably the best social we've had this year. We all brought eats to share, and then each of us painted a dinner plate.

The atmosphere was very relaxed – for some of the time we painted in comfortable silence enjoying the background music, but of course, ladies can't be quiet in each other's presence for long – so lots of chitter chatter was enjoyed too. We are very grateful to June for hosting us, giving us tips on how to paint and letting us play with her adorable puppies!

We look forward to the ladies Christmas picnic taking place at the church on the 25th of November, where we can socialize with women of all ages!

If you consider yourself a young woman (our age group ranges from 18 – 40+) and would be interested in attending our get-togethers, contact Roxanne Brown on 076 871 4084.

Roxanne Brown





UFO

(UNFINISHED OBJECTS)

PARTY

In the lovely lounge of Isabel, a group of creative and passionate women gathers once a month for a unique kind of UFO party. However, this isn't your typical unidentified flying object party; it's all about Unfinished Objects. Beryl Green's growth group's UFO Group is a close-knit community of individuals who come together to celebrate and work on their ongoing creative projects, from knitting and sewing to painting and pottery. Here's an inside look at this charming group of artisans and their heart-warming gatherings.

Isabel, a seasoned crafter with a passion for unfinished creative endeavours, had an idea to create a supportive space for like-minded individuals to share their artistic journeys. She believed that there was something magical about the process of creation, and the joy of completing a project was often overshadowed by the thrill of starting something new. With this vision in mind, Isabel founded the UFO Group, where every member could bring their unfinished projects, no matter how big or small.

Once a month, the group members come together, each carrying their incomplete works of art. The variety is astonishing, ranging from intricate knitting patterns and quilting squares to half-finished paintings and mugs waiting to be glazed and fired. As members arrive, there's an atmosphere of excitement and anticipation, as they prepare to dive back into their creative projects.

The gatherings are as much about camaraderie as they are about creativity. Each member shares their progress, challenges, and upcoming projects during the meeting. This exchange of ideas and experiences is a source of inspiration for everyone in the group. Members often find solutions to creative roadblocks or learn new techniques to improve their projects.

One of the members, Joan, brings her latest knitting project every month. The UFO Group has seen her transform a bundle of yarn into beautiful scarves, hats, and blankets over time. Her dedication to perfecting her craft has been an inspiration to others, encouraging them to embrace the journey of their artistic pursuits.

Isabel, the gracious host of the UFO Group, plays an essential role in creating a warm and inviting atmosphere. She brews pots of delicious coffee and the bring-and-share from the group includes a range of homemade delicious snacks and treats to fuel the creative juices. As the ladies work on their projects, the room fills with laughter, stories, and the clinking of coffee cups.

The members often find that the act of sharing their work in progress can be just as fulfilling as completing a project. They take comfort in knowing that they are not alone in their creative struggles and triumphs. The UFO Group provides a haven for these talented women to express themselves and develop their skills in a supportive, non-judgmental environment.

Beyond the practical aspects of creating art, the UFO Group also celebrates the value of the unfinished object as a metaphor for life itself. In a world that often rushes toward completion and perfection, these women have found wisdom in embracing the journey, the learning process, and the beauty of imperfection.

The UFO group has become so infectious to immediate family and friends of the group so much so that Dulcie's grandson drew a picture of the UFO and what it represents to the group! This sweet gesture brought lots of "oohs" and "aahs" not to mention a few tears from all.

Beryl Green



CARRIE STEYN



About me

Hi there, my name is Carrie Steyn. I am 32 years old and am married to an amazing man, Francis. He works as a data engineer for a company called PBT. He has helped me become what God has called me to be since I was a young teenager- A children's worker. Together we are raising a very strong-willed loving and independant 2 year old who is living up to his name Ethan- meaning "strong"- and we pray that strength would be found in his love for Jesus one day.

How I came to know Jesus

I was very fortunate to be raised by both a Christian mother and father, who also knew the importance of including godly church family members in our lives, so we were raised by a strong village. I was taught about sin and death and the need for being saved from sin from a very young age. I was also read to from the Bible. However, it wasn't until I was seven that these things started making much sense. My father took me to a Franklin Graham convention at this age, and it was at this time that I first remember responding to the call to repent. Life wasn't easy from then on. At the age of 13, I had my first grand mal seizure. Shortly after that I was diagnosed with idiopathic epilepsy. They couldn't find the cause and at first struggled to control it with medication, leading to numerous ICU visits and time out of school. I really struggled with exams and tests but somehow made it through. Throughout high school I knew I had to be particularly careful when it came to late nights, drinking and partying - which friends often wanted me to participate in. Eventually I saw my epilepsy as a gift - an excuse God had given me so that I had an easy way out.

I didn't want to live that life of a partier, I wanted to go to youth and live for Him- He kept me through High School- for an even harder trial I was yet to face.

I was offered a job as an apprentice at Tokai Community Church after I had finished studying at GWC- I was so excited as this had been my dream, to work in children's ministry, knowing how important it is to teach children the gospel. I learnt so much about ministry in my first 2 years as an apprentice- from school ministry to working in youth ministry in our daughter churches. However, after 4 years, our children's worker, who I was working under, had to step down from ministry all of a sudden. This had a huge impact on me. I was very hurt as was most of our congregation. It was a trying time and I took a step away from my home church to take some time to heal. I got a job as a teacher and worked as a Gr R teacher for 4 years, met my husband and had my little boy Ethan. After Covid, we realized teaching in a school had been a place where I had been hiding and surviving from my true calling. Thanks to lots of support and encouragement, I found my way back into ministry at Emmanuel churchdoors flying wide open at every turn- and I have never been happier. Life is still a struggle sometimes, however, I can now look back at how God has had me in all the chaos and difficult seasons and has been growing me into the person He needs me to be. He prepared me for this past year by some of the challenges I have already encountered in life. I only pray He keeps me and that I turn into a strong, wise, old woman who can nurture and guide younger women one day, since I have had the privilege of being guided in His wisdom by those wiser in their faith than me.



GRACE

MOBILE KITCHEN

It has been an eventful year for the GMK Ministry team. While we have seen more and more new faces on the street, we have been blessed to see how prevalent the hunger for the Gospel is. Despite their circumstances, their faces remain cheerful and we are always greeted with smiles and often told how happy they are to see us. The GMK ladies work hard behind the scenes supporting this folk with food, clothing and corporate prayers. We are privileged to be able to hand out Bibles and tracts and recently received a shipment of a few hundred tracts covering a broad range of subjects from addiction to the responsibility of parents and much more. Our main focus is to show the love of Christ and His compassion for the poor ("The poor you will always have with you" - **Mark 14:7**) and at the same time assist with their most basic needs. Promoting education is a collective effort and one which we are also very passionate about.

Some of our exciting events this year included the opportunity to help pack 500 food boxes for families in need. GMK was blessed with 30 full boxes and 25 empty ones that we are filling ourselves. These 55 boxes will form part of our Christmas outreach. Packing the kiddies packs last Saturday was a joyful occasion for the ladies. Not to be outdone, the ladies treated themselves to a Spring Tea event at the Bamboo Restaurant Joostenberg. The hats were beautiful and everyone put in a huge effort. Our last get together this year will be our breakfast on the 2nd of December where we will end off 2023 by celebrating God's goodness and faithfulness and look forward to new opportunities in 2024 to spread the Good News.

Jenny Reid





MEET 'N GREET

In July of this year the Emmanuel Ladies Events Committee organised and hosted a "Meet 'n Greet" morning at the church. With so many new (and very welcome!) faces at Emmanuel, the aim of the morning was for women to meet other women and have a fun morning together. Hopefully it would also help the new ladies at the church to feel welcomed and loved.

There was no entry charge, only to bring a plate of eats which was served communally with tea and coffee. There was much chatting and laughter.

There were 10 tables of various short games. The aim of the games was to get to know those around the table and then move on to another table which would have different women at it and play the next game.

The games were fun and relaxed and the noise level was very high because of all the laughter!!

All those who attended the morning really enjoyed themselves and many new friendships were formed.

Our thanks to the Events Committee for organising it!!

Judy Kerrich-Walker

