

**Berea
Congregational
Church**

Overview Report 2017



Reports on the Life of
the Church for the
Annual General Meeting
to be held on Sunday
11 March 2018

Berea Congregational Church

Pastoral Report – AGM 2018

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for the privilege to share some thoughts on the work of the Berea Congregational Church over the year 2017.

I always have a difficult time reflecting in preparation for my report at the AGM, for a pastoral report is not the same as a report in the corporate world. The Church is the body of Christ, a faith-based organisation, thus it looks at the reality of life in the world not as the final word to the narrative, but looks at it through the lens of faith, for “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb. 11:1). Furthermore, we always look at our story and connect it with God’s story, and this is where we begin to discern God’s preferred future for us.

When God called me to BCC, I strongly felt that it was a calling to walk with you as the world was changing and we needed to navigate our way through the changing socio-political realities of South Africa. When you realise that the world that you had known had irrevocably changed and all you have are memories and memories stimulate longing, a new struggle ensues. I am sure you all know how powerfully these realities impact on us, yes, even on our faith experiences.

John O’Donohue wrote about the tension between longing and belonging; *“Perhaps your hunger to belong is always active and intense because you belonged so totally before you came here. This hunger to belong is the echo and reverberation of your invisible heritage. You are from somewhere else, where you were known, embraced and sheltered. This is also the secret root from which all longing grows. Something in you knows, perhaps remembers, that eternal belonging liberates longing into its surest and most potent creativity. This is why your longing is often wiser than your conventional sense of appropriateness, safety and truth. Your longing desires to take you towards the absolute realization of all the possibilities that sleep in the clay of your heart; it knows your eternal potential, and it will not rest until it is awakened.”*

It is therefore important that the church in its preaching and teaching points towards that deepest longing which is awakened by the Word and the Spirit, that will ultimately lead us to a place where we can truly belong and will simply long for a deeper sense of belonging in Christ as brothers and sisters.

We are all sojourners on our way to a new Jerusalem (city of shalom), as St John, puts it. Sojourners with different stories, experiences, backgrounds, yet on our way to a new reality, which is promised in faith.

St Paul says; “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). Furthermore, we find our marching orders in the Word, which states; “We strive to live our lives worthy of the calling we have received, being humble and gentle, patient and bearing with one another in love. We choose to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Eph 4:1-3).

Our Biblical values bind us together and guide us on our way. Our conviction that God has brought us together as a community of faith and is sending us into the world, starting right here, strengthens our sense of purpose. Given our context, we believe that God has called us to:

- * *Celebrate God’s presence among us in worship*
- * *Bring all people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and members of His Church family*
- * *Disciple believers into Christ-like maturity*
- * *Equip them for ministry in the Church*

** Empower them for mission in the world*

** Be agents of justice and reconciliation in a broken world*

We started the year 2017 hosting a ministerial intern, Ms Rochan Chetty. We had the responsibility to journey with her on her final year towards ordination. I wish to express my gratitude to the congregation for the ways in which you assisted on this journey, specifically, the space you opened for her to exercise her pastoral ministry. Rochan had subsequently been commissioned by the TMC and is due for ordination in the Teemane Region, during March 2018.

At the 2017 AGM we also elected new deacons and officers. Compared to other deacons' elections that I had been part of here at BCC, we received significantly more nominations. The fact that we had so many new deacons and the resignation of others, created a speed hump, for it normally takes time for some kind of realignment to take place before the group can function as a team with one purpose. However, the new team also brought with them, new gifts, perspectives and energy.

Through the year we have also witnessed how members have participated actively, through the sharing of their gifts of time, talent and financial resources. It is truly heart-warming to witness the generosity and selflessness of the people at BCC.

We continue to have services of worship at both Overport and Musgrave every Sunday. On average we have about 230 people worshipping every Sunday. Our evening services are not as well attended as we would like to see, but we trust that there is value in it for the folk attending. On a weekly basis we have a Bible study session at Overport which is attended by a faithful few. Wednesday mornings we have a prayer and worship gathering which a few faithfully attend and after the prayers they share in fellowship and then minister to the homeless.

The ministry to the homeless is a ministry that has grown over the last three years. It is made possible by committed volunteers who fetch the products, sort it and prepare the food and the next morning the homeless is served a nutritious meal and ministered to in word and prayer. The food is sponsored by Woolworths and we are really pleased by the partnership we have with them. Some of the products we receive are passed on to some of the old age homes in the area and a pre-school in Glenwood. We also periodically provide needy families with food parcels at both Overport and Musgrave.

Berea also supports the theological students at the House of Formation, with groceries and other necessities. In addition to that members of the church participate through the ministry of encouragement.

We have also been supporting the New Forrest UCC with a monthly donation, to assist in their mission, for the last two years. This support had ceased at the end of 2017

It has also been a significant year for the UCCSA with the celebration of its 50th anniversary, which culminated in the Assembly which was hosted by the KZN region. We participated by hosting a group from Namibia and Botswana at the church for lunch, and served tea during the first day of the executive meeting. I wish to express my gratitude and immense joy at the level of excellence we showed in the process.

During the year, I had been approached by the synodical leadership to assist with the formation of the theological students at the House of Formation in Pietermaritzburg. Subsequently, I was appointed as the director of the House of Formation, which means that I have to take care of the management of the centre, with special emphasis on theological and ecclesiological formation. In addition to this I had also been given the responsibility to be acting minister at the Bethel UCC in Sydenham.

The year ahead will be a busy one, with lots of work and challenges. We will be hosting third year students that will be attached to our church as part of their academic requirements. We are also going to focus on the missional participation of men within the church. During 2017 a few men started the conversation about a men's group in church, which will take place during this year.

Lizelle and I will also be going on a visit to the USA, where we shall be visiting several congregations in Kansas, Missouri and Alabama. I had been invited by global ministries, to work towards greater cooperation between churches in the US and SA. During this visit I shall be speaking about the Church in South Africa and the challenges and opportunities which the changing landscape presents to the church. There is also a hope to connect a specific congregation in the US with BCC.

Throughout our busy schedule, we have to constantly ensure that our business has missional value. We also have to retreat, to listen, to pray, to worship, and discern to ensure that we are in congruence with the will and calling of God.

I trust that the year ahead will be a time of new growth, new experiences, and victories through Christ Jesus, as we walk the missional journey together.

As I conclude, I must extend a special word of gratitude to all the leaders who worked with me, the Deacons, management team, pastoral support, and many other workers that assisted in all the work at BCC.

Sr Zamambo Mkize and Br Clive Reinhardt, joined the leadership team last year as secretary and treasurer, respectively. Thank you for a job well done. Br Malcolm Impson, thank you for your unwavering support to the BCC. Revs Thompson, much thanks that you are still willing to support the church, even in your years of retirement.

Yours in Christ

-Christopher Saaiman (Rev)

REPORT ON CHURCH MATTERS

DEACONS' FELLOWSHIP

Our Mission is to:

- *Celebrate God's presence among us in worship;*
- *Bring all people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and members of His Church family;*
- *Disciple believers into Christ-like maturity;*
- *Equip them for ministry in the Church;*
- *Empower them for mission in the world;*
- *Be agents of justice and reconciliation in a broken world....*

In preparing this report on the Deacons' Fellowship, I had to reflect on our Discipleship group and fellowship versus our mission, indicated above, as a Congregation. Yes, despite the long winding road travelled thus far, there's still so much to embrace before victory, for the Glory of our Lord and Saviour.

Since the last Annual Church meeting, our Deacons were charged to discern and alleviate the demands of the Church on our Ministers. In **1 Timothy 3:8-13** Paul assigns the Deacons with helping to administer the benevolence efforts of the church. The Deacons' monthly fellowship sessions are the platform for reflection, deepening our Faith, workshops wherein we are grinded and sharpened to discern and rely on God's Grace & guidance at all times. Training assistance for some critical roles such as leadership; counselling; preaching or providing relevant care will continue to be pursued; wherein we hope the congregation can also partake. In support to the

Ministry, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead in the transformation of lives and structures that will enable the congregation to mature, recognize and affirm the presence of God.

We acknowledge that our congregation is blessed with a wide range of gifts that have to be taken advantage of in the opportunities of reaching out intentionally. This work which has begun in earnest will be followed up and the congregations' support will be crucial as we pursue celebrating God's presence in our midst. The Deacons' fellowship presides in preparing and serving Holy Communion; Sunday collection; door duties; helping the homeless & destitute; visiting the sick; comforting the bereaved and various support services to the Ministry.

It is this accession that epitomised the structuring of various roles and responsibilities that many volunteer their services towards, as follows:

Roles & Responsibilities:

The Roles & Responsibilities have been grouped into 4- Pillars, namely:

- Pastoral Care
- Christian Education
- Evangelism & Outreach, and
- Fundraising

These Pillars underpin the various Ministries to which the congregation is continuously encouraged to support such as the **Management Committee; Youth & Children; Women's Association; Pastoral Care; Alpha & Prayer groups; Siyabathanda Outreach; Lavender Gardens service; Isililo Women's group; the Beacon and Ministry to the Homeless.**

Berea Congregational Church is part of the KwaZulu Natal Synod/Region of the UCCSA and hence participates within the relevant meetings and structures. Our Minister Chris Saaiman; the Intern Rochan Chetty; Deacon Doc Nhassengo and the Church Secretary represented our church at 2017 AGM of THE UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA KWAZULU NATAL REGION which was held in Queensburgh. The church took part and was acknowledged for reaching out; providing meals and other logistical support towards the 50th UCCSA Jubilee Assembly which was hosted by the KZN Region in October 2017.

During the year in review the Lord's Grace and Favour has been upon us even as we're befallen with sickness; deprivation; loneliness and we remember those who were called to Higher Service in God's Kingdom. May their beloved ones be comforted. As we continue to discern God's purpose for Berea Congregational Church, we are mindful of the charge in Scriptures in (**Matt 28:19**) "**Go, make disciples of all the nations...**"

May I take this opportunity to thank our Ministers and all brethren for your continued support and guidance...

- Zamambo Mkize

Church Secretary

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Committee Members:

Malcolm Impson (Chair) Elizabeth Bryce (Secretary) Clive Reinhardt (Treasurer) Christopher Saaiman, Hixonia Nyasulu, Janet Linde, Derek Gage, George Wootton, Doc Nhassengo, Glenn Thatcher, Mike Kambarran.

At the meeting 18th May and as a result of Elizabeth's illness Zamambo Mkize (Church Secretary) assumed the Secretarial responsibilities of Manco.

Manco met monthly on 11 occasions during the year under review and always well attended by Members.

The minutes of all meetings are filed in the Church records so I will merely attempt herein to highlight and briefly comment where necessary on items that have been on our agenda. Further detail is of course reflected in the minutes and statement of accounts which are available.

Finance

The Churches Financial status is always the first item on the monthly agenda and dealt with under headings of Operating statements for the Month/YTD/Budget comparison and Investments.

A report from the Treasurer highlighting main items on the Financials follows my comments here but suffices for me to endorse his comments about the need to retain expenses to budget levels as far as possible and to increase income via Planned Giving and fundraising in the year ahead. The recent programme and suggested thoughts for our recent Week of Prayer have challenged us to seriously consider our commitment to the Church and thanks to all who participated at home and at the Church.

The year-end accounts are completed and have been made available for inspection and comment if necessary and hopefully you would have sought to clarify any points of concern you may have with members of Manco before the AGM. A word of thanks is due here to Robin Thompson for help in compiling the monthly accounts.

Intern Outreach Project

Manco was tasked with finding suitable accommodation and other maintenance matters in respect of Rochan Chetty's year with us. She served on Manco during her tenure with us and I would like to record my thanks for her contribution at meetings and for her assistance in Church Admin when necessary. In the Financial report it is noted that expenses in respect of the Intern Project were covered by a donation R180k from a church member and I would like to express my grateful thanks again to that member.

No doubt there will more comment on this project from our Minister in his report.

Ministers Sabbatical

Rev. Christopher Saaiman's three month sabbatical fell due in 2017 and I would merely report that Manco dealt with Christopher on various issues necessary with staffing, finance etc. that related to him being away. This was a matter also dealt with at the Deacons' Leadership Meeting and will no doubt be reported in the Deacons' and Minister's reports elsewhere in this overview.

For the record the sabbatical period was taken in July and December 2017 and the balance in January 2018.

Maintenance:

As you are aware there was much needed maintenance and upgrade of the premises done at Overport and Musgrave which was started in 2016 and carried on into this year. The expenditure was justified in line with a bequest we had received and included painting, tarring of driveway, plumbing, electrical work, replacing of windows and other incidentals which restored the premises to what they are today.

Boundary wall:

The collapsed wall on Musgrave Road had been an ongoing dispute with the Municipality and was reported on last year. They eventually accepted responsibility and put the work out to tender and which was only completed in February/March 2017.

Security has been another regular item on the agenda and the minutes/accounts reflect the expenses involved in the electric fencing and monitoring equipment that one sees in the office. An expense was also incurred with our having to hire overnight security several times during the repair of the boundary wall.

The hiring of the Church premises and rental arrangement with the Region including the use of Church facilities has regularly been discussed at Manco and with the Region. An improvement in both areas is evident.

The old PABX system in the office has been upgraded and should serve us well for some years ahead.

Health and safety Certification at the Church premises has been discussed for some months. A document has been compiled and a system will be introduced at the Church early in 2018.

The audio-visual system is maintained and in the main operated by Rod Aitchison and the need for assistance in this area of Ministry is still a high priority.

Fundraising:

We remain indebted to Derek and his team for running the sales day regularly. Unfortunately the golf day did not happen in 2017 but hopefully will be held again in 2018.

Details of all Fundraising events will be reflected elsewhere in the Overview. Although this item is always on our agenda it should be noted that this is not just the domain of Manco and it is hoped that Members may form a Fundraising Committee that could interact with Manco with regard to arrangements and advance funding where necessary.

Staffing and general church admin:

Manco deals with salaries annually and other staffing issues when necessary. We thank Robin, Rochan, Janet and others who stepped into help while Christopher and Anna were on leave.

It has been agreed that bi-weekly office/admin/accounts be held in the office with staff and Manco be represented at such meetings. This would facilitate planning ahead and will be implemented in 2018.

Outreach:

The Siyabathanda Project is always discussed but again will be reported elsewhere in the reports.

I would commend George and Pat Wootton for their work and pray for the continuation of this work by the Church leadership and members.

I would thank all members for their support and in doing so must make special mention of Elizabeth Bryce. It has been my honour and privilege to serve with this wonderful lady in various aspects of Church life and her absence has been sorely felt. With regard to Manco she has been Secretary since its inception and her dedication and love for the Church she serves has reached far beyond any normal expectations. Elizabeth, you have set an example for us all to follow and we love and miss you dearly. Thank you for always being there for us.

In closing I again refer to the Week of Prayer recently held at the Church. This was a wonderful time of reflection which has left me with a deep sense that the Church is now really moving into a new and exciting season of its life. We are called as members, both old and new, to participate in the future by expressing our passion for God and the Church through our support for the Ministry team and in our participation and commitment to the life of the Church.

I thank Christopher for his wise counsel when necessary at meetings and pray that he, Heather and Robin as our Ministry Team for 2018 will tangibly feel the support and love from all Members as we go into 2018 and beyond.

It has been my honour and privilege to Chair and be part of this wonderful team that has served well at Manco and we thank Church members for having entrusted us with such responsibility.

*~Malcolm Impson
Chairman Manco BCC*

PERSONAL GROWTH

Tuesday Morning Bible Study at Overport

Ten of us have met each Tuesday morning for Bible Study, and it has been my joy to lead this group. We were sad to have to say 'goodbye' to Raymond Greeff who passed away to be with his Lord last year

We studied Timothy and Titus last year and started this year with the letter written by Paul to the Thessalonian Church. It is touching to think Paul only spent 3 weeks preaching in that church and yet the Holy Spirit brought so many to know the Jesus as their Saviour and Lord and he writes to encourage this group of new believers. Even though they would undergo persecution they were asked to stay committed to their Lord, to work hard and always be ready for the Lord Jesus' second coming.

I wonder how we would have responded under these circumstances. Do we encourage new Christians? Paul emphasises that a church that pleases God is a loving, joyful, praying and thankful church. Are we like that?

Join us for Bible Study each Tuesday at 9.30am in the Overport hall. We would love to see you

~Heather Thompson

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Musgrave Women's Fellowship

2017 seemed to be a year of decisions for the Women's Fellowship Group as our numbers had dwindled; were we to close or soldier on? Well I am pleased to say we took the latter decision and decided to make a fellowship morning at Lavender Gardens. So after many, many years of meeting at the Church we moved our meeting day to the 4th Friday of each month instead of the 4th Thursday and went to Overport.

Times have changed, seasons come and go and we felt this was necessary and has proved a great success. We have a short meeting in the hall just to fill the ladies in on what is happening in the church and then go outside in the garden to have tea. What a treat the tea is and the price even better, then we sit and chat. We had a morning of book reviews and it was so successful that we have decided to do this more often. It is so interesting to see what others read and then also know what books to buy, one doesn't get much chance to talk to one another on a Sunday after service, so this change has proved to be very successful especially since we have Sally Ridgeway joining us as she kindly picks up Dulcie Chadderton, also Janet Linde is able to be in for part of the meeting, as are the ladies who work at Lavender.

We might be in our twilight years but still do as much as we can in working for the church, we have ladies who work at the jumble sale and who are called upon to mark, we have ladies who

still do Botanic Gardens duty, and of course the team at Lavender Gardens ...take a bow you good and faithful servants!!!

If ever you have the fourth Friday off please do come and join in with us we would really love to see some of the ladies from the church. Why do we have a variety of friends who are all so different in character, how is it possible that we can get along with them all, I think each one brings out a different part of us. With one we might be polite, with another we might joke, with another we might talk about serious matters or get advice. Friends are like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, when completed they form a treasure box that reminds me of our ladies at the Women's Fellowship we all treasure the friendship.

*~Heather Impson
President*

Overport Ladies Fellowship

Overport Ladies Fellowship meets every second Wednesday of the month where we discuss church matters and duties.

Every year we commence with Holy Communion Service and thereafter get down to the business of the day. The Women's Fellowship is very important branch of the church as they are the workers in the church and we really need them. We do have speakers coming in and giving us lovely talks. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the ladies who do attend and also for always helping to bake and make tea for funerals and other events.

God bless you all.

~Barbara Hatton

ISILILO REPORT

During the course of the last year, BCC saw the inaugural beginnings of the Isililo Women's group come alive to compliment and support the work of ministry in various capacities within the community. Isililo is part of the UCCSA Synod Women's formation with a rich tradition on the role of women in response to the challenges faced by society. Our ladies, led by the Chairlady Ms Princess Myeza, together with our Minister Christopher and his dear wife Lizelle Saaiman attended the Isililo Conference which was held at Ohlange. Whilst deeply rooted in prayer and the biblical scriptures, the ladies have responded to requests of special prayers; to the sick; the bereaved and have been a pillar of support in serving meals for various functions held at the church. We are thankful to God for this movement that is committed to serve the Lord gracefully and entwines us to the larger Congregational family. May the Lord continue to bless them, grow in numbers, multiply their efforts and initiatives in service to His Glory!6

~Zamambo Mkize

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Children's Church

It was with great excitement that the doors of the Children's Church opened on Sunday 15 January 2017 and all the children returned from the Christmas holiday. Forty five children attended the children's church that morning! Familiar faces, new faces, happy smiling faces as well as a team of dedicated and able leaders: Kenny Claassen, Sthe Ndlovu, Sandile Dhlomo, Mervis Gambisa, Lungi Mkize and Anna Orlandini.

At the beginning of the year we focused on Bullying. You might ask why Bullying? We felt that a Biblical foundation on bullying will be a strong foundation for the children to stand on especially facing so many challenges each day at school and even at home. A lot of things in

life change, electronics have changed the nature of friendship and ways to bully or be bullied have increased. However two things that never change are (1) God's Word, and (2) human nature which hasn't changed since Biblical times. Just think about Joseph, Moses, the adulterous woman and then Jesus. The aim of the lessons was to empower children to stand up against being bullied and has the freedom to talk to an adult and try to forgive the bully just as Jesus did and not become a bully. So what is bullying? This is what even the youngest child will tell you: *Bullying is: Negative words or actions towards a person or a person's stuff that makes him scared or ashamed. That is bullying and God doesn't like it!* At the end of the six weeks we all took a pledge by saying NO to bullying with a collage of handprints.

During the Easter period we talked about the temptation of Jesus. Not an easy concept to explain to the younger children; thinking how are we going to do this? Today there are so many resources and surfing the web is a very powerful tool! I found the most amazing cartoon on Jesus' forty days in the desert and at the end of the eight minutes they remembered all three temptations! The aim of the lesson was to help the children understand that temptation doesn't come from God - it comes from Satan (through the flesh) James 1:13. Temptation often comes as a lie in disguise but the truth always reveals lies. Satan misused scripture to tempt Jesus. Jesus knew all the truth and revealed the lie. He resisted Satan through the Word of God (Matt 4). Just as Jesus resisted Satan so can we, with the Word of God on our side.

Our last lesson for the term was the crucifixion and resurrection. It is amazing how the little ones hang onto every word while reading the story to them but the biggest impact was the Easter Garden with the three crosses and empty tomb which shows that it was empty with the scripture: *He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Matthew 28:6-8 New (NIV)*

During the year the children also had the opportunity going in to church. Presenting little gifts to the moms and grannies with a flower or little gift on Mother's Day and dressed up as men on Father's Day portraying the fathers of the future. Children's Church should also be filled with fun therefore we play games and act out characters from the Bible. Don't forget the cake at the end of Sunday School morning, provided by the ladies of the church. A big thank you to all of them!

As the year came to a close the air was filled with excitement with the Nativity Play coming up. This year the children presented "The Real Christmas Story" reminding us that Christmas is not about the gifts under the tree, the lights in the windows, the cards in the mail, and shouts of "Merry Christmas" to those who pass us in the streets. Is this really Christmas? No. Christmas can be and is a season of great joy. It is a time of God showing His great love for us by giving us his son to save us all. It can be a time of healing and renewed strength. We can truly be happy at Christmas! No matter what may be happening, we can know that we are His children. We then become sons and daughters of God. Heaven will be our home one day."

Let's look at Christmas in a new way this year. This is the year to invite Jesus into your heart. You will then have a "Merry Christmas." The joy and peace you will receive will last all year as you look to God for all your needs to be met.

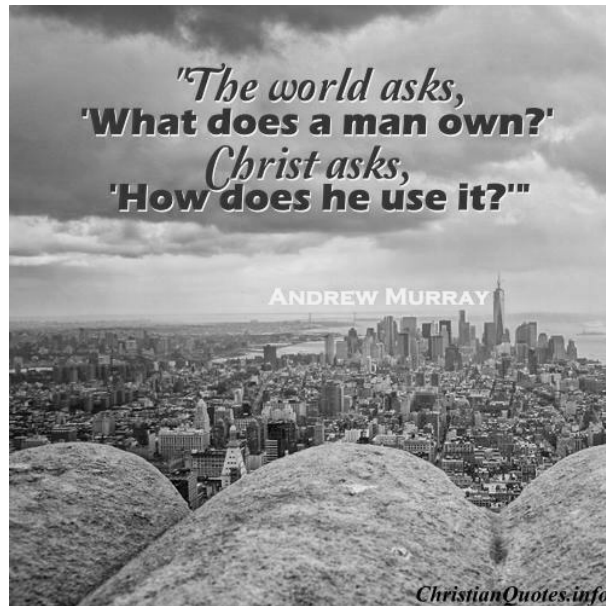
I want thank all the leaders for their dedication and passion for teaching the Word to the children during the year. It was a blessing to part of this team and may you we all return afresh in 2018. God bless you all.

This year we also gave Bibles to all the children who had no Bibles and I would like to thank the Management for their financial support. Without these funds it will not be possible to cater for the needs of the children regarding stationery, crafts and many more.

~Anna Orlandini

OUTREACH

Annual Donations	R
Faith for Daily Living	R 6 000
Bible Society	R 6 000
Our Daily Bread	R 2 000
Highway Hospice	R 6 000
Durban Children's Society	R 4 000
Alpha South African	R 2 000
Cancer Association	R 2 000
Open Doors	R 5 000
Tape Aids or the Blind	R 2 000
Diakonia	R 5 000
SA Synod-Planting Seeds	R 5 000



OUTREACH PROJECTS

Siyabathanda Children's Home

On behalf of Pat and myself
as the co-ordinators of the (BCC)

Outreach Project at Siyabathanda Children's Home we wish to thank all members of the BCC who have in so many ways been of assistance to the BCC OUTREACH at Siyabathanda. The year 2017 has been an eventful year due to the registration of Siyabathanda by the Department of Social Development (DSD) on the 23rd of February 2017. Father Cyril Xaba was appointed Chairman of the management Board in 2007 and was given a mandate to get the Children's Home registered with the DSD as a Child and Youth Centre. The road to this achievement has

Children are like wet cement. But remember, we only have a short window of time until the wet cement turns to concrete. We must impress God's Word, wisdom and ways into their lives while we have the

"There can be no keener revelation of
a society's soul than the way in
which it treats its children."

— Nelson Mandela, Former President of South Africa

been long and difficult at times, but with prayer and perseverance the goal has been reached. At this point I must thank Derek Gage for assisting me in setting up a meeting with Wilton Magwasa to discuss the way forward with the DSD because it seemed that registration was never

going to happen. I was on holiday in the Drakensberg when I received a phone call from Princess Ngcobo requesting me to contact Mr Magwasa, because their attempts to be registered seemed to be going nowhere. Derek spoke to Wilton after one of the Church Services and within a short space of time a meeting was set up and met with the staff with a delegation from Siyabathanda at their office. Father Cyril in his report stated “we will forever be grateful to the work done behind the scenes by members of the Berea Congregational Church in particular. Through their involvement with the DSD we have been able to have meetings at a higher level with the Department and it was at the meeting mentioned above that started in earnest the registration process.

The registration has resulted in Siyabathanda receiving a once-off allocation of R 300 000.00 from the DSD which Princess stated was one of the Board’s greatest achievements to date. A procurement list was provided by the DSD to give an idea to Siyabathanda as to the items that they should consider purchasing with the funding that the Department had allocated to them. This enabled them to upgrade items such as beds, kitchen utensils, upgrading of the furniture in the dining room and new TVs in the lounge. In addition the Department is funding a full time and qualified Social Worker who provides all the programmes in a facility such as the children’s home. Princess also reported that after a long period where the numbers of children at Siyabathanda had stuck on 10 they have increased to 18 made up of 11 boys and 7 girls. All the children attend therapeutic and afternoon study sessions. The aim of the programmes is to equip them with life skills so that they can cope with the outside world and also progress at school lessons that are carried out by the Social Worker. The children attend church each Sunday and also render music.

The Ruth Ann Hall Legacy Garden at Siyabathanda has a full time agricultural Advisor in Mr Shezi who is continuing doing exceptional work across the road. Some of his routine activities include cleaning up and maintaining the yard around the institution, vegetable garden and irrigation. At present they have young cabbages, lettuce, spinach, onions and potatoes.

The 10th Annual General Meeting of Siyabathanda was held on the 9th September 2017. The attendance from the community was very poor, especially as it was their first AGM following their registration. Malcolm Impson, Noks Xulu, Mandy Vilakazi and I attended the meeting with Noks, Mandy and Malcolm adding valuable contributions relating to the finances which were well received. Currently there are three children who are on ARVs and Princess thanked their dedicated Child Minders who ensure that they (the children) take their medication on time as stipulated by the doctors. Unfortunately the children on ARVs are not performing well at school. The home has recently taken in a boy who is not attending school because he doesn’t have the relevant papers. Princess reported that we must not forget the Fundraising that Michel and Dorothy De Boecker have accomplished through their sponsors in Germany which has kept the home running. I also record that Tony Naidoo, a school teacher at a school in Tongaat, which through his contacts has attended to a number of things at the Children’s Home such as the painting of both the inside and outside of the buildings. Tony has also arranged outings for the children from time to time which provided the children with an idea of what life is outside of the haven that they live in.

The highlight of the year for the children was again the Annual Christmas Party, another great experience with gifts which were donated by the Ex Pro’s Annual Fund Raising Project. It is with gratitude that we thank the Ex Pro Association for this donation. Not forgotten are the church members for their generosity with the Love Boxes they put together. Dawn Impson a member of the church, who is also a member at a Bridge Club, raised Siyabathanda at one of their meetings. One of the other members offered to provide what they refer to as CRAYZY QUILTS for each child. This was a great hit with all the children. Caroline Glover, Dawn’s daughter has for a number of years faithfully donated party packs filled with a number of goodies and juices which were handed out to the children after Brother Amos, our esteemed Father Christmas, handed out all the gifts. We thank Caroline for her continued support. The next item on the

agenda, a new item introduced by Mandy Vilakazi, was to get the children attempting the hula hoop which none of the children knew of. Between Knox and Mandy they each demonstrated how to swing their hips much to the delight of everybody present. We also thank the ladies who planned the "Love Boxes" which were handed to the children by Father Christmas during lunch time. Cash donations which I have received over the year provided for lunch which was made up of three buckets of KFC. Each child had two pieces of chicken with bread rolls and more juice. The party finished shortly thereafter with songs shared by five of the children. This was a wonderful ending to a lovely morning.

During November last year I made contact with (Sne) Snegugu Ndlovu for whom we obtained a bursary about three years ago. I was told that she was now teaching. Her reply to my e-mail was: "Hi I'm not working so don't know what the source are talking about. The truth is that I'm still studying Chemical Engineering. I've been facing so many challenges but in God's hand I pulled through. For that I hope next year 2018 I will finish my studies and look for in-service training. You will be the first to know.

We thank you for your help and prayers during the year. However our toiletry donations have almost dried up. Please, please we need your help in restocking the empty cupboard. We will reintroduce the Wish List in the Pew Notices again as a reminder. ~George and Pat Wootton

Outreach to the elderly

The Overport Care Group has always been well attended on the 3rd Wednesday of the month by about 20–25 ladies from Essenwood Home and Tafta on Ridge, two retirement homes in the area. This has become a very special morning for everybody and they are really looking forward to it. They enjoy meeting new people and having a morning away from their retirement homes

During the year we have invited various entertainers from a guitarist, pianists to a choir. Apart from the good music and singing, they really enjoy singing along songs from yester year. Being in their twilight years doesn't mean that they cannot have fun! During a Bingo morning they really can get very competitive to win the main prize which is normally a chocolate!

Our Christmas Party on 15th November 2017 was a great success with Peggy Gorven (93 years!) and her choir of retired teachers who entertained us with some beautiful singing and David Daniel excelled with his beautiful voice. This is a wonderful example that age doesn't count when it comes to doing things from the heart. Everybody really enjoyed the morning and to everybody's surprise Elizabeth Bryce joined us for the morning! It was so good to see her after so many months. We wish her well on the long road of recovery.

I would like to thank all the ladies who helped with transport during the year and also in the kitchen supplying the delicious cakes. Well done ladies it really is appreciated Thanks again and God bless you all

~Barbara Hatton

Lavender Gardens

Lavender Gardens experienced a very good year on the whole. A good many folk organised to have their birthday and Christmas parties there and this truly boosted our finances. The weather was mostly kind to us and we were not completely blown away by the wind, although it was a challenge!

We are truly grateful to the group of ladies that join together to knit and crochet. They bless us each week by their presence and the fact that all their lovely knitted and crocheted goods go to help the poor in the hospitals.

I have now retired from lavender gardens and left Barbara to run the tea garden and I'm confident that she will do an excellent job.

Finally I wish to thank our precious Lord for calling me to start this outreach project and I am so grateful that it has been a blessing over the past 11 years. God truly is so good!

~Heather Thompson

FUNDRAISING

Second Hand Sale 2017

We had another successful year raising R 56 145.00 for the year. The success of the sales is in no small part due to the generosity of our congregants who have kept giving. Please continue and we request that everyone speak to friends, neighbours and work colleagues for donations of clothing household items and so on.

Our figures for the December sale were down on the previous years, simply because we had less merchandise to sell. This is going to be our big challenge in the forthcoming year. We need to contact as many people as we can, to ask for donations. We have the customers and a fantastic dedicated team. We have a good story to tell, we are all volunteers, and there are no highly paid executives as is the case with some charitable organisations. Please spread the word. We have already started with friends and family and received a very positive response

At the end of last year Christine and I decided to stand down and let someone else take over. We have decided to carry on for as long as we can. We are heartened by the fact that Musa Mbatha has joined our team and is already making a big impact. Musa is highly capable and committed person and we feel sure that she would be able to take over at some point. We are going to work in tandem to ensure that there will be continuity.

Please also remember to tell prospective donors of the good work the Church does, feeding the homeless, done by a dedicated band of members, all volunteers. The support given to Siyabathanda and the numerous charities the church gives to on an annual basis. Most important too, is that this is an effective way to help people less fortunate than ourselves acquire clothing, crockery, kitchenware, books and sometimes furniture at a very reasonable price. We are going to prepare and dish out pamphlets stating all the social benefits that accrue from these Sales.

Lastly but by no means least we would like to thank our wonderful and hardworking team who have been a constant source of support and inspiration.

May the Lord give us strength to do his work.

God Bless.

~Derek and Christine

Here's to all the volunteers, those dedicated people who give selflessly of their time, talent and treasures.

Other Fundraising Activities

During the year there were a few other fundraising initiatives. We had bingo evenings, which was really great fun and lots of prizes that were given away. Besides the prizes that brought many great joy, was the food which was simply a winner. Our thanks go to Mike, Hamish, Kim and others for their hard work.

We also had our first Gospel Show, which was an unforgettable experience for those who attended. Not only were the artists of a high standard, but the lighting and sound added a touch of class. Our thanks go out to the ladies who worked so hard to make a success of it.

Then of course we had the Women's Day tea which was held at the Durban Botanic Gardens. This event has become an institution for the women at BCC and each year they work hard to raise the level of excellence. It was a great success and we congratulate the team of ladies and gentlemen responsible for the event.

So, these events are arranged to do some fundraising, but the building of community and helping people to connect with each other is central to these initiatives. Blessings to all who give of their time, talents and resources to make these events successful. We also want to thank Rod Aitchison for all the recording of services during the morning and evening which is also a source of income

A Final Thought:

The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope – Barack Obama

BEREA CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Held on Sunday 5th March 2017

1. **OPENING:** Christopher Saaiman opened in prayer.
2. **PRESENT:** Names of those attending are listed in the Attendance Register which is attached.
3. **APOLOGIES:** Noted on the Attendance Register.
4. Minutes of the last AGM noted and approved by Clive Reinhardt and seconded by Derek Gage. Agreed.
5. **PRESENTATION OF REPORTS:**

Christopher gave a power point presentation of his report, which included amongst other things, that change is inevitable, but that faith plays an important role in handling change and that our diversity is strength! This report was Approved by Clive Reinhardt and seconded by Malcolm Impson.

Malcolm Impson as the Chairman of the Management Committee, highlighted some of the areas with which Manco had dealt with during last year, the main expenditure being the maintenance of the properties of Musgrave and Overport for which he thanked Derek Gage and George Wootton who had worked hard at this. One main difficulty was the wall on the corner of Pardy Gardens and Berea Road, which being the responsibility of the Municipality, was repaired by them. The income from pledges and offerings was the same as for 2015, which is something we have to look at, and our finances are showing a loss of R200 000, which is also the same as last year.

George Wootton approved the adoption this report and Derek Gage seconded it. Malcolm advised that this year is the last year he is able to be the Chairman of Manco.

Clive Reinhardt then reported on Finances and said that R269 000 had been spent on maintenance of our properties but that the Old Mutual results and the sale of the Manse had been positive, although Investments generally did not have the best year. Our Investment in the Grindrod Bank brings in a 9 and a half % return. He confirmed that the pledges and offerings were the same amount as previously, but there had been some donations. The budget reflects a R210 000 loss for 2017 but generally BCC is in a strong position. The report was approved by Colette Kambarran and seconded by Barbara Hatton.

Christopher then took up the situation of Planned Giving, saying that although there were many who did give through the EFT system, but it was disappointing that so many members were not on the Planned Giving system of Tithing. He also mentioned however, that there were some members who generously did things for the Church for their own cost, one example being the printing of the Calendars.

Christopher thanked Rochan Chetty, our Intern, for organizing a Youth Group on Sunday afternoons, some members of which were involved in participating in the morning service.

Referring to Anna's Orlandini's report on the Children's Church, Christopher said he was very heartened to see the number of children who attended every week, as there were many Churches who had very few children to enable them to form a Sunday School. However, he reminded members that further Teachers were needed to assist Anna in this Ministry.

Mandy Vilakazi was thanked for her interest in Siyabathanda and help with certain events, as well as being involved in the feeding of the homeless people every Wednesday, which appears to be very well received. George Wootton was commended on his willingness to

travel to Siyabathanda so often at his own cost, but we were reminded that this Outreach was a Church outreach in which others should participate.

Rev Heather Thompson thanked those who were there to help her when she required information from the Church Office, and also thanked the organists who played for services.

6. Christopher reported on the names of those who had been recommended for acceptance as Deacons from the Church members i.e. Phakama Nhassengo; Balikile Myeza; Phila Mqadi; Doc Nhassengo; Goldie Naidoo; Maryon Scott; Precious Nhassengo; Kim Reinhardt; Zamambo Mkize; Deneys Linde; Clive Reinhardt; Sandile Dhlomo; Thokozini Khoza; Musa Mbatha; Mandy Vilakazi; Noks Xulu; Beverley Impson and Venetia Dhlomo. Christopher requested that all the newly named Deacons meet with him after the morning service the following Sunday 12th March, to discuss the Retreat arranged for 17th and 18th March at Jacobs Well.

Over and above these names the following have been awarded the recognition of Life Deacon: Malcolm and Heather Impson, Elizabeth Bryce and Barbara Hatton.

7. **Officers:** Zamambo Mkize is appointed as Church Secretary and Clive Reinhardt as Treasurer. These names were approved by Mike Kambarran and seconded by Val Rudd.

This was unanimously agreed on.

Christopher thanked Lizelle for her support when he needed it so often, as only she could give.

Rev Heather Thompson thanked Christopher for his Leadership and also thanked Rochan Chetty for the role she fills with her at Overport.

George Wootton said he would like members to realize what Rod Aitchison does as being responsible for the Technology system during services, not only at Musgrave, but recently at Overport for their members to view the DVD of the Children's Church Nativity play.

There being no further business, Christopher prayed and then said the Grace and the AGM closed at 11.45am.