

St. Thomas Congregation

Evangelical Church (Lutheran Confession)

Newsletter 6 (2009)

November & December



**The Word became flesh
and made his dwelling among us!
(John 1:14)**



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Important Dates

- 23 November Church Council Meeting
- 28 November Garden Day - Irrigation system (page 8)
- 29 November Advent celebrations (page 9)
- 6 December Community Christmas Carol Service (page 9)
- 25 December CHRISTMAS

PURPOSE STATEMENT SAINT THOMAS CONGREGATION

- To promote fellowship in a friendly environment, where
- a) God's love in Christ is proclaimed (proclamation)
 - b) love for one another is exercised (care)
 - c) loving others is practised (outreach)

Loved by God. Loving others.

FROM THE PASTOR

Pondering the “God” who became “flesh”

The Christmas Season is around the corner. It is commercialised and celebrated - it seems - by “all”, even non-Christians. Despite Advent (a time of meditation and preparing for Christmas), this festive Season seldom provides us with the time to ponder the mystery of what happened that day in Bethlehem.

It was anything but an idyllic, silent night in Bethlehem when a scared teenager gave birth to the “King of kings”. Mary endured the pain of her baby’s arrival without the aid of modern day medical care. Joseph, the man she was engaged to, served as “midwife”. In the fields just outside Bethlehem, shepherds may have been serenaded by angels singing praises to the Baby. But all Mary and Joseph heard was the sound of animals, birth agony, and the first cries of their little baby, God in human form. Not that they could observe any divine features, blissfully unaware of a bright star lighting up the evening sky. The manger scene was a dreary place for those two peasants from Nazareth

As Joseph laid the infant in Mary’s arms fear *and* joy, wonder *and* pain, doubt *and* jubilation must have coursed through her heart. Was this baby really “God”, the **“Word that had become flesh”**? All she knew, was a promise given to her by an angel, that this tiny bundle was the **“Son of the**

Highest” (Lk.1:32). As she peered through the semidarkness into his eyes and then into Joseph’s, she must have wondered how could this baby, crying in the manger, be the One whose kingdom would never end. There was nothing to see, but “faith” characterised the life of Mary, wonderfully captured in Elizabeth words: **“Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished”** (Lk.1:45).

Mary’s “Christmas-faith” characterises the Christian walk in general. More often than not, there is nothing (extraordinary) to see. But as Mary we have the “Word”: **“This is my Son, whom I love; with whom I am well pleased”** (Mt.3:17). **“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life”** (Jn 3:36). In the tension of joy *and* anguish, doubt *and* confidence, pain *and* victory we live our lives. Both “poles” draw us closer to God as we trust his Word and promises. We put our hope in him, even though there is little or nothing to see. Divine mysteries are not unpacked, but pondered. And “blessed” are those who “believe”.

Wishing you a blessed Advent and Christmas Season, a time of contemplation and worship, of joy and inner peace.

Dieter Reinstorf

SOMETHING TO PONDER

Psalm 23:5b: “My cup overflows”

I've never made a fortune, and it's probably too late now. But I don't worry about that much, I'm happy anyhow
And as I go along life's way,
I'm reaping better than I sowed.
I'm drinking from my saucer,
Cause my cup has overflowed.

Haven't got a lot of riches,
and sometimes the going's tough
But I've got loving ones all around me,
and that makes me rich enough.
I thank GOD for his Blessings,
and the Mercies HE's bestowed.
I'm drinking from my saucer,
Cause my cup has overflowed.

I remember times when things went wrong,
My faith wore somewhat thin.
But all at once the dark clouds broke,

and the sun peeped through again.

So LORD, help me not to gripe,
about the tough rows I have hoed.
I'm drinking from my saucer,
Cause my cup has overflowed.

If GOD gives me strength and courage,
When the way grows steep and rough.
I'll not ask for other blessings,
I'm already Blessed enough. And may I never be too busy, to help others bear their loads.. Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer, **Cause my cup has overflowed.**

When I think of how many people in this world have it worse than I do, I realize just how BLESSED WE really are.

Sent in by Shane Swiegers

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

Confirmation

In the last two months Saint Thomas congregation was blessed with “two” Confirmations. On 20 September twenty-one year old Konrad Clifton was confirmed in his faith during a festive

service. The confirmation was attended by his mother, Gisela, (from Greytown - see photo) as well as Konrad’s brother and other family associates. With the Confirmation Konrad has



Errin Johnston and Sheldon Willemse (see photo below) were confirmed. The Confirmation was preceded by a "Presentation" in the parsonage on 16 October. The Presentation, during which the confirmands gave account of everything they had learned, was attended by the church council members, parents and friends. The Confirmation was indeed a very festive occasion. Additional chairs had to be carried into church to provide seating for all. Pastor Helmut Straeuli, the godfather of Peter Reinstorf, delivered the sermon. We sincerely hope and pray that the four confirmands will become "pillars of faith" in our congregation. Most of them have already indicated, what ministries they want like to be involved in.

become an official member of Saint Thomas. We welcome you Konrad and may God bless you richly in our midst as we have already been blessed by you.

On 25 October our four confirmands - Keegan Karshagen, Peter Reeinstorf,



Before Confirmation Pastor Reinstorf asked the confirmands various questions. These are some of the answers they gave:

Q: Why do you want to be confirmed:

A: I think it will help me with my Christian life and it will bring me closer to God (Peter Reinstorf)

Q; What do you expect from the confirmation service?

A: It will be the first time I receive Holy Communion and the congregation will acknowledge that

I am confirmed (Sheldon Willemse)

Q: What did these two years of confirmation mean to you?

A: It meant a lot (to me). I learned more about Jesus and things I did not know before (Keegan Karshagen)

Q: How will your life change after confirmation?

A: It will change a lot. I would like to get more involved with the church (Errin Johnston)

A Guide to Membership - Committing to a ministry

In the September-October issue of our Newsletter, every member of Saint Thomas congregation received a "Ministry Page" on which they could fill in their names if they wished to commit to a particular ministry in order to help build the congregation into a more loving and caring fellowship in line with our motto: **Loved by God. Loving others.**

A hearty thanks is hereby expressed to those who responded. If you still wish to commit to a particular ministry, feel free to do so at any time. Remember: Saint Thomas congregation, gathered by God to bring his Gospel into the world both in word and deed, is only as good and effective as the totality of its members.

Wall of Remembrance - a place to behold

On 10 October various congregation members gathered at church for a day of gardening. Compost was fetched. Trees and flowers (donated by members of the congregation and others) were planted in the "flower box" in front of the Wall of Remembrance.

This was done under the able supervision of Shawn Johnston. Thanks to all who made the effort to help. It has indeed beautified not only the Wall of Remembrance but the Church as a whole. Hopefully the Wall of Remembrance will become the

resting place for the deceased members of our congregation at the Church where God nourished them with his Word and Sacrament and kept

them in their faith until the last day when all believers in Christ will be resurrected to eternal life.

Bazaar under blue skies and amongst friendly people

On a warm day under blue skies Saint Thomas congregation held its annual bazaar on 30 October 2009. The weather was great, the flux of people visiting the bazaar was slow but continuous throughout the morning. The bazaar featured a number of stalls. Granny's Kitchen made the most money, closely followed by the White Elephant. The food stalls in the inner courtyard with delicious hamburgers, pancakes, waffles, and sweets drew many people. A first for Saint Thomas, and hugely successful, was the clothing stall. For the children there was the usual Tombola and a free jumping castle and water slide. A special thanks to all members of Saint Thomas for their donations, personal contributions, hard work and time.



The income on the day of the bazaar (including the sale of books before) amounted to R11 030. The income from the raffle sale is still outstanding. **Please return your raffle sheets.** The draw will be made on Sunday, 8 November, immediately after the church service.

The best of all was the *fellowship*. The bazaar is not about money, but members of Saint Thomas working together, playing and chatting, and making people of our community feel welcome in our church.

We thank Heindry Peyper and David Skibbe for organising the bazaar.

CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Garden Day - Fitting an Irrigation System at Church



The grass (lawn area) in front and on the side of the church is taking strain. With the building of the Wall of Remembrance part of the present (already dysfunctional) irrigation system had to be disconnected. The church council has, therefore, decided that the irrigation system at church needs to be replaced and automated, so that the lawn can be irrigated regularly and especially at a cooled off time with less wind

(early hours of the morning). For this purposes a Garden Day is being planed for **Saturday 28 November, starting at 8.30**. We need as many hands as possible to dig trenches for

the piping. Bring a spate along . Shawn Johnston will purchase the necessary irrigation equipment and oversea the project.

Advent Celebrations

It has become a tradition in Saint Thomas to have our annual Advent celebrations in the evening. We are planing a similar festive evening service this year, on Sunday 29 November (1st Advent).

The service will start at 7pm, seated around tables, with something small to eat, an advent message,

singing of Christmas carols, and possible a nativity play by our children.

These celebrations are a great opportunity to invite another family member or a friend to visit Saint Thomas.



Community Christmas Carol Service



On Sunday, **6 December**, everybody in our greater Tygerberg community (and beyond) are invited to attend the "Community Christmas Carol Service" organised by the Tygerberg Ministers

Fellowship (representing all Churches in our community). Please note that there is a change in venue:

Time: 7.30 - 8.30pm

Venue: Lawn area in front of the Edgemean Shopping Centre (Louis Tibault Street)

With...

- ▶ Traditional and Contemporary Christmas Carols (including Hip Hop)
- ▶ Two short messages (for children and adults)
- ▶ Thank offering in aid of "Open Doors" (to purchase Bibles for children and young adults in the persecuted Church of Christ worldwide)

Bring a blanket or a beach chair and some candles along.

FROM THE TREASURER

This is the last report on our finances for the year 2009 and deals with the situation until the end of September 2009. There are less than three months left of our financial year and this gives us the opportunity to reflect on our finances over the past nine months.

Expenses

After we spent R66 500 on closing the roof over the courtyard in 2008, we assumed that this year our expenses, especially on capital items, would be less. Although they were, we have however spent a substantial amount on capital items. The Wall of Remembrance cost us R29 606. We installed blinds in the flat for R6 131 and had to replace the old copier for just over R5 000. We also had to install a new alarm system in the church for R4 954. During September we also paid the second installment of our annual levy to Synod (R58 682).

Income

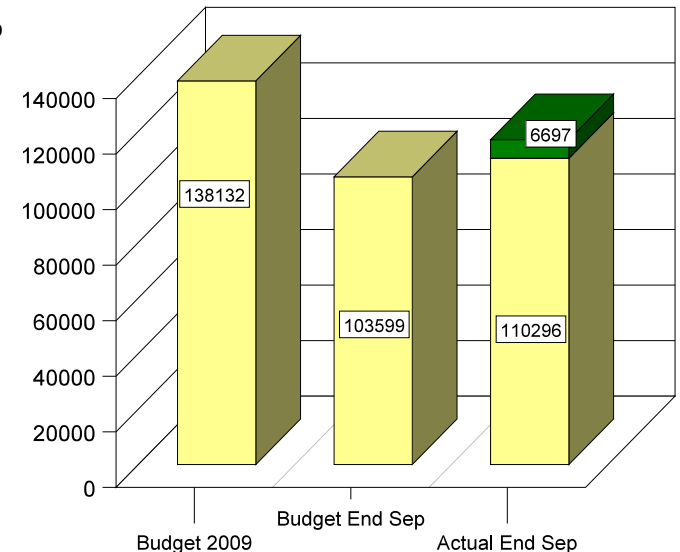
During September our own contributions amounted to R11 358 which brings the total contributions for the year to date to

R98 938. Although this is above the budgeted figure, this amount is about R6 000 less than the figure for the same period last year.

Conclusion

Looking back over the past nine months, it fills our hearts with gratitude that we, as a congregation, were able to finance our normal running expenses and were in a position to spend on certain capital items. May this, and the knowledge that whatever we have we receive from God, encourage us to continue to contribute in such a positive manner during the remainder of this year.

Contributions can be summarized as follows:



SYNODICAL NEWS

Letter from President Ahlers

To all Congregations of the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa

Office of the President

In our Lord Jesus Christ dear Sisters and Brothers,

As I am turning 65 in December this year and with that will reach the official retirement age, after discussing the matter with the Synodical Council, decided to return my office as President of the FELSISA on 31 December 2009.

According to the FELSISA Constitution (par. 1.7.3.2.2), Vice-president Dr. D. Reinstorf will assume responsibility for the duties of the president until the following regular Synodical Convention, which is planned to take place in May next year.

In deep gratitude to Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, I can, besides serving in the pastor office for 35 years, look back on 27 years on the Synodical Council. Fifteen years out of them I had the privilege to hold the office of the President.

During this time I have often been comforted by a word of Martin Luther: "It is certainly not us which can preserve the Church. Our forefathers also have not done it. Our descendants will also not do it; but He has done it, is still doing it and will do it who says: 'I am with you always, to the very end of the age' (Matth.28:20)"

In His name I greet you cordially
Peter Ahlers
2.Cor.12:9

Synodical Convention
4 & 5 May 2010
in Durban



President Peter and Renate Ahlers →

FANIE'S CORNER



Why are there still so many shortcomings regarding the integration of persons with disabilities in society?

Is it perhaps the detached attitude of the community that "disables" those concerned, and not their disability as such?

The ability of the "person with a disability" is not necessarily

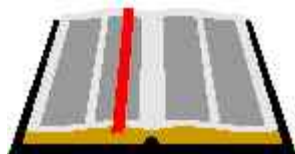
inadequate. I believe that the inability of the community to communicate spontaneously and to listen to the real needs of persons with disabilities, has the end result that many people are unnecessarily marginalised.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTION WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Persons experiencing hearing loss	Persons with a physical disabilities
Wave or touch the person's shoulder to draw the person's attention.	Do not lean on, or touch a person's wheelchair - it is part of their personal space.
Keep sentences short and use proper sentence construction. Rephrase, rather than repeat phrases that the person does not understand.	Always speak to the person with the disability and not to the person accompanying them.
Speak clearly so that the person can see and read your lips. Use a normal tone of voice when having a conversation with a person experiencing hearing loss, unless otherwise indicated by the person.	When talking to a wheelchair user, sit on a chair in order to sit at their eye level. If you have to stand, stay at a distance so that the person does not strain his/her neck.
Do not smoke, chew gum or let your hair cover your face whilst in conversation with a person experiencing hearing loss. Do not shout at them.	Never ask a wheelchair user to hold items, e.g. coats. Do not put your drink, for instance, on the desktop attached to someone's wheelchair.
Use facial expressions to correspond with the topic and mood of discussion. Keep eye contact and talk to the person rather than the interpreter.	Do not push a person's wheelchair without their permission.

Thanks for the good tips, Fanie. These are a great help (Pastor Reinstorf)

BIBLE STUDY



Bible Studies are held every Wednesday evening from 7-8pm in the parsonage, 10 Van Gogh Street Panorama (school holidays excluded). Various topics, proposed by the group, or sermon texts, are explored. Everybody is very welcome.

Birthdays

Wishing you a happy and a blessed birthday!



November

- 6 Reinhold Küsel
- 11 Glynis Rewitzky
- 13 Dennis Rewitzky
- 20 Christy Johnston
- 22 Matthew Crouch

- 12 Tracey van der Walt
- 27 Vivian Louw
- 31 Marja Wybrow

Dezember

- 2 Fankie Lear (and President Ahlers)
- 3 Taylor Marriott-Watson
- 5 Peter Reinstorf
- 6 Bob Laspé

January 2010

- 5 Anita Willis
- 7 Elke Crouch

Prayer for my own Birthday

Lord, let this feast of my birth be a reminder to me of all the gifts and blessings I have received from You. Lord You have been good to me all these years and I thank You for all the blessings I have received but especially for life itself.

Creator God, I do not know what lies ahead for me this year. Yet I know that You are holding my future in Your hand. Let my ways be pleasing to you.

As You have promised, be with me,
Lord, grid me with Your strength and grace so that I can live for Your light. Enable me to draw closer to You that I may walk in your peace and be the creative and loving person that you intend for me to be. I ask this and all things in the sure and certain knowledge of your love for me and for all your people. Amen.

Laughter is good



Lot's wife

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted, 'My Mommy looked back once while she was driving,' he announced triumphantly, 'and she turned into a telephone pole!'

Good Samaritan

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan. She asked the class, 'If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?'

A thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, 'I think I'd throw up.'

Did Noah fish?

A Sunday school teacher asked, 'Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?' 'No,' replied Johnny. 'How could he, with just two worms.'

The Lord is my Shepherd

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorise one of the most quoted passages in the Bible - Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter.

Little Rick was excited about the task - but he just couldn't

remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line.

On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Ricky was so nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, 'The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know.' (And isn't he right?)

Unanswered prayer

The preacher's 5 year-old daughter noticed that her father always paused and bowed his head for a moment before starting his sermon. One day, she asked him why. 'Well, Honey,' he began, proud that his daughter was so observant of his messages. 'I'm asking the Lord to help me preach a good sermon.'

With the brutal honesty of kids, she asked 'How come He doesn't answer it?'

Being thankful

A Rabbi said to a precocious six-year-old boy, 'So your mother says your prayers for you each night? That's very commendable. What does she say?'

The little boy replied sadly, 'Thank God he's in bed!'



DAILY BIBLE READING PLAN

November

01 Daniel 2,1-3.27-49
 02 Psalm 33
 03 Daniel 3,1-30
 04 Daniel 5,1-30
 05 Daniel 6,1-29
 06 Daniel 7,1-14
 07 Daniel 7,15-28
 08 Daniel 12,1-13
 09 Psalm 1
 10 Lamentations 25,11-28
 11 Lamentations 26,11-22
 12 Lamentations 27,1-7
 13 Lamentations 28,1-5.13-14
 14 Lamentations 29,4-11.18.25-27
 15 Lamentations 30,7-9.21-23
 16 Psalm 6
 17 1 Thessalonians 1,1-10
 18 1 Thessalonians 2,1-12
 19 1 Thessalonians 2,13-16
 20 1 Thessalonians 2,17-20
 21 1 Thessalonians 3,1-13
 22 1 Thessalonians 4,1-12
 23 Psalm 46
 24 1 Thessalonians 4,13-18
 25 1 Thessalonians 5,1-11
 26 1 Thessalonians 5,12-28
 27 2 Thessalonians 1,1-12
 28 2 Thessalonians 2,1-12
 29 2 Thessalonians 2,13-17
 30 Psalm 24

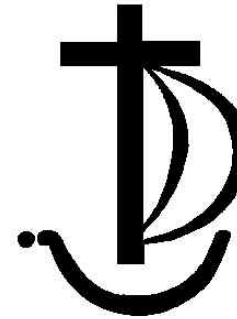
December

01 2 Thessalonians 3,1-5
 02 2 Thessalonians 3,6-18
 03 Zechariah 1,1-6
 04 Zechariah 1,7-17
 05 Zechariah 2,1-9

06 Zechariah 2,10-17
 07 1 Samuel 2,1-10
 08 Zechariah 3,1-10
 09 Zechariah 4,1-14
 10 Zechariah 5,1-11
 11 Zechariah 6,1-8
 12 Zechariah 6,9-15
 13 Zechariah 7,1-14
 14 Luke 1,46-55
 15 Zechariah 8,1-3.14-23
 16 Zechariah 9,9-12
 17 Zechariah 11,4-17
 18 Zechariah 12,9-13,1
 19 Malachi 1,6-14
 20 Malachi 2,17-3,5
 21 Luke 1,68-79
 22 Malachi 3,6-12
 23 Malachi 3,13-18
 24 Malachi 3,19-24
 25 Psalm 2
 26 Luke 2,29-32
 27 John 1,1-5
 28 John 1,6-8
 29 John 1,9-13
 30 John 1,14-18
 31 Psalm 103

January

1 Psalm 121
 2 John 1,19-28
 3 John 1,29-34
 4 Psalm 138
 5 John 1,35-42
 6 John 1,43-51
 7 John 2,1-12
 8 John 2,13-25
 9 John 3,1-13
 10 John 3,14-21



EVANGELICAL CHURCH (LUTHERAN CONFESSION) SAINT THOMAS CONGREGATION

Church

27 Settlers Drive, Edgemean

Parsonage:

10 Van Gogh Street
Panorama 7500

✉ Street Address or
P.O. Box 12255
N1-City 7463

Divine Service

Every Sunday at 10.00am

- Sunday School
- Holy Communion

Pastor

Rev. Dr. Dieter Reinstorf

☎ 021-9303734
083-4409498

Church Councillors

Günther Meier 021-9760313
 Marja Wybrow 021-5571328
 Quinton Aubrey 082-9726666
 Shawn Johnston 021-5591069

Women's Guild Chairladies

Denise Kontsidis 021-5584525
 Christy Johnston 021-5591069

Sunday School

Maggi Reinstorf 021- 9303734

Treasurer

Günther Meier 021- 9760313

Banking Details

ABSA (Parow 502 110)
 Account Name: St Thomas
 Acc Number: 404 1515 600

Website: www.stthomas.za.net

(See latest Bazaar photos in the Gallery)

SUNDAY SERVICES AND DUTY ROSTER

Service Times: Every Sunday at 10.00 (with Holy Communion) / (U) = Usher / RS = Reading Service. Evening Service at 19.00 (7pm) /

DATE	SUNDAY	CHURCH COUNCILLOR	READER	SUNDAY SCHOOL	ALTAR DUTY	FLOWERS	TEA DUTY
8 November	3 rd Last Sunday	G. Meier M. Wybrow (U)	H. Peyper Rom.14:7-9	Ulrike Reinstorf	M. Skibbe	F. Dini	F. Dini D. Kontsidis
15 November	2 nd Last Sunday	Q. Aubrey A. Runds (U)	D. Skibbe Rom.8:18-25	Martina Reinstorf	M. Halm	M. Deetlefs	M. Deetlefs C. Johnston
22 November	Sunday of Fulfilment	G. Meier S. Johnston (U)	Errin Johnston Rev.21:1-7	Ulrike Reinstorf	L. Swiegers	M. Aubrey	M. Aubrey J. Karshagen
29 November	1 Advent Evening Service 7pm	Q. Aubrey	Pastor	----	No Communion	----	----
8 December	2 Advent	M. Wybrow G. Meier (U)	Sheldon Willemse James 5:7-8	Peter Reinstorf	B. Schreiber	E. Crouch	E. Crouch L. Wilson
13 December	3 Advent	S. Johnston H. Peyper (U)	S. Swiegers 1 Cor.4:1-5	Ulrike Reinstorf	J. Peyper	L. Swiegers	L. Swiegers M. Deetlefs
20 December	4 Advent	Q. Aubrey S. Swiegers (U)	Peter Reinstorf Phil.4:4-7	Martina Reinstorf	A. Willis	J. Karshagen	J. Karshagen E. Crouch
25 December	CHRISTMAS	S. Johnston M. Wybrow	C. Melck Tit.3:4-7	Ulrike Reinstorf	M. Skibbe	C. Johnston	C. Johnston F. Dini
27 December	Sunday after Christmas	Q. Aubrey D. Skibbe (U)	D. Skibbe 1 John 1:1-4	----	M. Halm	M. Reinstorf	M. Reinstorf M. Skibbe
31 December	New Years Eve Evening Service 7pm	S. Johnston	Pastor	----	Pastor	----	----
3 January	2 nd Sunday after Christmas	Q. Aubrey	Pastor	Maggi Reinstorf	B.Schreiber	D. Kontsidis	D. Kontsidis Martina Reinstorf
10 January	Epiphany	G. Meier M. Wybrow (U)	E. Köhne Eph.3:2-6	Peter Reinstorf	J. Peyper	M. Hohls	M. Hohls Lauren Swiegers