

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER JULY/AUG 2024

Warm greetings! It has been a full and fabulous two months, against the backdrop of a harsh winter. In between, the sun comes out now and then to cheer us up after gale force winds and what feels like endless rain!



Life at Volmoed is always exciting, and I love the variety of groups and retreats that I participate in or lead. In July, the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation staff came for a staff teambuilding retreat. I did sessions on the spirituality of the late Archbishop Tutu and what I learned from my journey with him through the years, as well as contemplative prayer times that included body and breath prayers. The Tutu travel seminar group from the USA returned in August. They focus on

Tutu's legacy and issues of reconciliation, justice, and healing in South Africa. After spending time in Johannesburg and Cape Town, they come to Volmoed to experience the local context of a small town, and are hosted on township tours by the young people, including a drumming session. They enjoy the natural beauty of Volmoed and reflect on their experiences.



A former clergy colleague and friend from both California dioceses where I ministered brought a group from St John's Church, Lafayette Square opposite the White House in Washington DC



to Volmoed, Zwelihle and the drum making project.

On Mandela Day in July, people were inspired by motivational speaker Zelda la Grange, who was the private secretary to President Nelson Mandela for many years. This was followed by an intergenerational drum circle that drummed for 67 minutes to mark the 67 years of service it was estimated that Nelson Mandela gave to the world.



Our Thursday program with the youth leadership program included a residential week focused on reconciliation, led by facilitator and drummer/musician Themba Lonzi. His storytelling using the traditional African mbira instrument was powerful. The young people listened raptly to his personal story of

reconciliation and engaged with deep questions throughout the week.

During August, Women’s month, the Thursday focus has been on Gender Based Violence and Femicide, with a young academic and skilled facilitator, Toby Rhine Nkoloti. To have someone their own age address these complex and overwhelming issues was transforming for them. They now have so many more questions about culture, Scripture, GBVF that we will continue to explore.



Over the past few months I have enjoyed participating in the Volmoed trustees’ facilitated workshops that focus on discernment of future direction. This included creative work with beads, toothpicks and clay, to symbolize what Volmoed is and can be. Some beautiful work included a garden, tree, bridge, a river, hands, and other creative pictures that sparked some important conversations. This led to excitement, a lot of discussion, and some very good ideas for next steps, so watch this space. . .



more visitors and sell more drums as a way of increasing financial support for these local unemployed youth. This is also a way to reach and impart leadership in a very different way from the formal Thursday program, learning the art of discipline, work, teamwork, and more.

My involvement with the youth leadership drumming and drum making project keeps me active. Their drum making on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, at the drum factory set up in a local church hall, moved to a new venue in August. This is a more accessible space for local communities, with more reliable electricity, and will include connecting with other local community groups. This has great potential, and we are excited. The hope is to get



There is a fantastic opportunity for the youth leadership program in mid November this year, to attend PASIC, the annual Percussionist Convention in Indianapolis, in partnership with Bevil Spence of Drumba, our drum trainer. This is a huge endeavor that some very generous people in the USA, a MidWestern group working for Middle East Peace. Twelve young people have been selected to attend. Currently the money has been raised for the airfares, passports and visas. The group is working hard each week to practice not only their drumming skills but their singing. They are a wonderful group of singers and drummers who will most certainly make an impact at PASIC, and the leadership learning of the experience will be enormous. They will also tour and give a couple of concerts in Indianapolis, Michigan and Chicago. The tour is called 'Drumming for Unity and Peace' as they will arrive a few days after the US elections. Please pray for this.



My love of doing retreats continues to be my most loved activity. Last week I had an unexpected retreatant arrive on a 'divine appointment' when her travel plans collapsed. I am

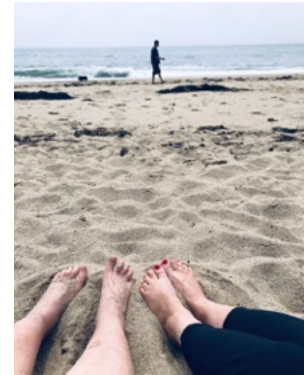
currently leading a small group of women on a silent, directed retreat. After they finish, a group of eleven clergy arrive for a silent, conducted retreat, with theme, 'Rest, Reflect, Renew: Abundance, Grace & Compassion.' It's hard and intense work and ministry, and I love it.



On a personal note, I had a wonderful two and a half week California summer break in July and early August. It included a baptism of the baby of a couple I married two years ago, and the celebration of fifty years of ordination of women priests, all very exciting. I re-



connected with wonderful friends whose friendship I treasure, and loved re-visiting my favourite beautiful places. The warm temperatures were balm to my body, which just relaxed in the summer heat, and the joy of swimming was wonderful.



Thank you always for your prayers, which are palpably felt in my ongoing life and ministry, and always welcomed and appreciated.

I close with a favourite quote by Gerald May about love, the Source and Centre of all.
“ LOVE is the power that births and grieves,
the laughter that fills the heavens,
the tears that water the earth.
LOVE us the energy that fuels, fills and embraces everything everywhere.
And there is no end it, ever.”

Love
Wilma