

CHAPLAINS CORNER

Warm greetings for this new year in 2025! as we celebrate Christ our Light who came into the world, Christ our Light who leads our way into a year full of unknowns and uncertainties, Christ our Light who shines Love on all the world.

It was a wonderful December with highlights of joyful celebrations. What a privilege and a pleasure to officiate at the wedding of my godchild Thea, grandchild of John and Isobel, to delightful George. A week later was our annual Christmas carol picnic - both were marvelous events in perfect weather, with a mix of families and friends and beloved folks from all around the country and the world.



The picnic was held in the beautiful gardens of St Peter's Church for the second year. We hope next year that Volmoed will be recovered enough from the 2023 floods to host it here. The Manenberg Church of the Reconciliation band, under the faithful leadership of Edwin Joshua, provided great Christmas music and carols, and spent the rest of the weekend on a retreat at Volmoed. We've done this now for five years!



This year we added the cutest little singing Hermanus Angels, led by VYLTP member Xenolene Bazier. They were a complete hit with the crowds! Raffle prizes were given with great generosity from local wineries and restaurants in the valley, local Hermanus restaurants, art and book stores, and more.

Total funds raised after expenses were R 9400.00. This was shared by Volmoed and the band. An enormous thank you to a fantastic team of volunteers from Volmoed and St Peter's, whose hard work make this an event that is a pleasure to organise every year.

There was also a marvelous concert connected to the FynArts program, in the chapel, with pianist and friend Lara Kirsten, together with Bevil Spence and our VYLTP drummers who were fresh off their USA tour and so crisp and polished. It was fantastic! It included an incredible 5

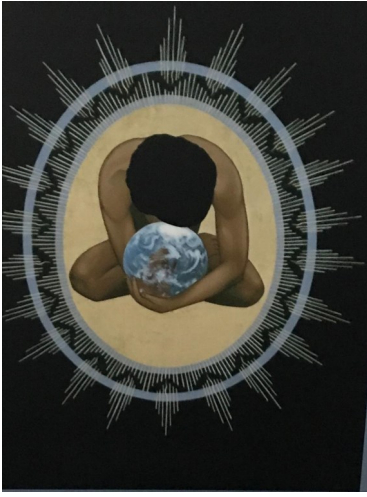


minute improvisation piece with piano and drums.



The young people in the VYLTP program received their end of year certificates after a chapel service, and we are proud of all they have done this year. The celebration included a dinner gathering at The Rock restaurant, whose owners support the program by providing regular lunches at the drum making venue. We are grateful for their ongoing support, along with the owners of La Pentola, who also provide regular lunches.

I took some time to visit family before Christmas, then assisted in the midnight Christmas service at St Peter's and joined the Benedictine brothers for Christmas lunch after playing the piano for the brothers' Christmas Day service here at Volmoed. After Christmas I played the piano for a wedding at Volmoed, of the son of a friend who attends the weekly service. I enjoy using my musical gifts at Volmoed in this way.



I was very happy to get a couple of getaways in beautiful spaces with long time friends. Both in the Overstrand, at the Grootbos Educational centre, and then at Pringle Bay. So grateful for a time for rest and naps, reading, good conversations and meals, some very light swimming or more like floating, and not much walking as my hip still makes it challenging to do more.

The new year also began with some challenging situations for people I know and love. My nephew Stewart had facial nerve cryosurgery for an incurable condition, Trigeminal Neuralgia to manage the excruciating pain it causes, at least for about six months. Some families I support in various ways lost a spouse, and are losing a mother. And then the fires in Los Angeles, the Eaton fire in particular, is my home town in the USA, and where much of my USA life was spent with friends and parishioners, whom I stay with when I visit. So far sixty parishioners and families totally lost their homes, many are friends

and those I know and ministered with. Many hundreds had to evacuate and will not be able to return for a while. My church was a shelter for those who lost homes, and is doing incredible support work from material donations to starting grief and loss groups called 'Rising from the Ashes'.

All of this added to the strain of living with a hip that needs to be replaced, so the start to the year has not been easy. The surgeon's office opened this week and I will know more about the date for the surgery soon. It will be done at Vincent Pallotti hospital, hopefully in late March and recovery will be in Pinelands. It will be a challenge to keep living at a slower pace while keeping on walking and moving, and I will be starting pre-habilitation exercises to build strength. Your prayers for health of body, mind and spirit will be much appreciated.

Here's my favourite New Year prayer by Joyce Rupp. May it tether us to Christ our Light.

*Faithful Companion,
In this new year we pray:*

to live deeply, with purpose,

to live freely, with detachment,

to live wisely, with humility,

to live justly, with compassion,

to live longingly, with fidelity,

to live mindfully, with awareness,

to live gracefully, with generosity,

to live fully, with enthusiasm.

Love,
Wilma

