

## CHAPLAINS CORNER JULY 2024

Warm greetings!

It has been a full, grace-filled month and I am filled with gratitude. It began with a Taizé youth day, that brought about forty young people to Volmoed for the day, for Taizé prayer services, a bible reflection by Br Scott, workshops on gender based violence and femicide; Israel and Palestine; All about Taizé including how to lead Taizé prayers, and Drumming in



Community. It is always a rich day and a joy to see the young people responding at the end of the day as the prayers around



the cross service beautifully draws all the prayers, Scripture, information and interactions together, in prayerful silence, song, surrender and joy.

After a lot of hard work and a week's extension of the deadline, I finished the Shalem final project and designed a silent retreat entitled, 'Rest, Reflect, Renew: Abundance & Grace'.

This took even longer than I had anticipated, and was very challenging and rewarding, requiring motivation for each quote, song, prayer or Scripture that was used. Some late nights, early mornings, and several cups of coffee were involved. I liked the final product, and got the supervisor's feedback that it is a beautiful retreat and will be a gift to those who participate, along with some very helpful comments. A lovely way to end the course!



Thank you all for your prayers for this. I was happy to be able to actually use the material for a small group on retreat in mid-June, a group of mature faith leaders in cross cultural ministry who were in need of rest and refreshment. It was a privilege to do this with them and they found it deeply fruitful and meaningful. One said he felt he'd had a 'reset and recalibration.'



Another wonderful group left today, called 'Artisans for Peace', who are part of an organisation called the Unrival network. They brought together several peace builders from different countries for a time of

creative renewal and refreshment. They were able to drum with Bevil Spence on one of the evenings. The significant work that they do fits well into the mission and vision of Volmoed as a place of reconciliation and justice and healing.



Both groups loved the beauty, space and peace of Volmoed, and want to return and to tell other groups about Volmoed and all that it offers.



It was fabulous to have the Benedictine brothers from West Park monastery visiting us for their chapter meeting, and to see them again, this time at Volmoed. They loved their visit, seeing people and

places in person they had talked about and prayed for, for years.



Our young people in VYLTP continue to learn and grow. I finished the eight session course on Spirituality and spiritual practices, and their feedback showed they deepened in their understanding and practice of prayer, and want to continue. The Thursday gatherings now include a drumming and singing practice session. Two of them want to learn to play guitar, and help to lead the Taizé music at the Taizé prayer days. This is an answer to my prayer of a few years now, to find younger people to teach and pass on the baton of skills and tools to do this, so I will find a way to give them lessons. If anyone has a guitar lying around in a cupboard that is not needed, I would be happy to buy it from you for one of them, please let me know.



A highlight this month was a full, energetic Sunday in which I began by preaching and presiding at a wonderful youth service at St Patrick's in Mount Pleasant, Hermanus, that included drama and dance.

I then went to Cape Town to the breaking of ground service for the new church for Eluvukweni in Crossroads, and from there to St Stephen's in Pinelands to celebrate Michael



Lapsley and Matt Esau being made diocesan canons.

The day ended with Taizé prayers in the lovely garden chapel of St Stephen's, led by my friends Cindy Stephen and John Roberts. Each service was completely different, filled with joy, music, the Spirit, and I saw many friends, and church people that I had not seen for a couple of

decades or more. It was very moving to be in all three of the Cape Town dioceses and enjoy the variety and diversity of God's people and places, what a privilege!



On a personal note, it has been a week of goodbyes. My good friend Peter Moll passed away after a couple of years with colon cancer. He was one of the first conscientious objectors back in the 1970s, went to prison for eighteen months, of which four months was spent in solitary confinement, often in underpants during winter, as he refused to wear military uniform or 'browns'. His memoirs were published a few months ago and make riveting reading. He is an unsung hero of SA, one who inspired others by his courage, clear moral principles, deep faith, incisive analysis and kind, generous, thoughtful character. Another friend left for KZN, and the one woman friend I made in Hermanus has gone back to the USA. I am trusting a



new local friend will emerge, and appreciate your prayers. But for now, I am sitting in some sadness and grief, with great gratitude for their lives, their friendship, their place in my life.

My family here on the west coast is facing some struggles, and your prayers would be appreciated as I try to be the not-quite-local aunty who lives a couple of hours drive away, as my sister is in the UK. Meanwhile I still love my house at Volmoed and loved my first fire of the winter season. My cup of gratitude is full and abundant with so many gifts, as I am surrounded with spacious, peaceful beauty and wonderful people.

Meanwhile the past month has held all the post election negotiations and navigations, and we continue to pray. As the big announcement was made, we see that there is some change and some reshuffling and that there are big challenges ahead. We entrust our beloved country into God's hands and pray for all leaders. We continue to weep and lament for all the war and violence in our broken world, for all the children who have died in war and violence, for those dying of hunger and malnutrition in Gaza, for those in prison. We pray for those who negotiate for peace and grassroots peace activists and peace builders. We pray for an end to the notion that war and violence are a solution to problems that can only be solved by dialogue and negotiation. We pray for the oppressed, whose desire for freedom and dignity cannot be crushed or quenched by war and violence. May the Prince of Peace reign and the Spirit be outpoured throughout our country and our world.

To end, this prayer from Br Matthew, prior of the Taizé community, used in this past month. *Christ Jesus, you announce peace to us. Help us by your Holy Spirit to welcome this peace when it seems far away. And then your Spirit opens the way on which in our turn we can let it shine out around us. Guide us always we pray! Amen*