



OCTOBER 2023

Dear Prayer Partners,

As I start this letter it feels as if September will literally be blowing out and October blowing in. This was my opening sentence as I started this letter. It is now totally irrelevant as the wind has now died down and we are in the midst of a cleanup of Herculean proportions. Where once we had a grassy field we now have a stoney, sandy beach. The road in front of Die Nessie and Oak Cottage is still sandy with water flowing or pooling in different areas. The avenue that goes down to the river has now become part of the river in places and no longer resembles a road. Needless to say the bridge at the Grotto has once again travelled down stream and is now resting next to the pump house on the opposite bank. We know that part of the other bridge closest to the pump house is still there so we anticipate that we will find the rest of the bridge once we are able to move the sand. Despite all that mother nature has thrown at us this past weekend and the aftermath of it life still goes on and spring is truly here as the 'Piet-my-Vrou' has announced over the last couple of days. The spring flowers display there beautiful colours when the sun shines, which also has more warmth to it.



The joint fund raising concert held on the 17th was well attended and enjoyed by all. Our thanks to Lara Kirsten and Thomas de Bruin for introducing us to the music of Herman Beeftink.

Esther



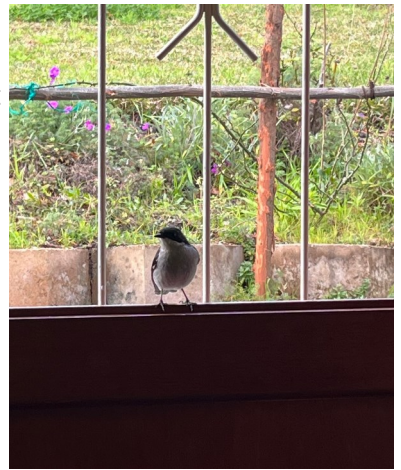
PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVING

- Pray for Mike and Alyson. Mike turns 80 on the 1st of October unfortunately he had a fall and is in hospital with a fractured hip.
- We give thanks for the safety of our staff during the storm. A tree fell on Johannes house, with minimal damage. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of the tree that fell on Andries' car. No one was injured.
- That all our guests staying on Volmoed were safe during the storm and were able to get home safely.
- We are thankful to see the people in the valley coming together and giving assistance to each other as the need arises.
- For the donations we have received for our staff, especially the water for those living in Hermanus which currently has no water.
- Pray for Tony as he embarks on the new chapter in his life. (See his director's report.)
- Pray for the safety of our staff that have to commute to Volmoed as the normal route is closed and there is more traffic on the alternatives

Dear Volmoed family

At the time we started thinking of writing this month's letter things were a lot different to now that we are writing

I was enjoying a little spring weather and the visit from a fiscal flycatcher who came to inspect my office.



The happenings of the last week brought back memories of the wild fire of 2019. The destruction the water left behind is unimaginable. I am glad though, that we never saw the flood at its highest as we did the fire! As it was clear then, now too it's clear that when you need help there is always more than one person ready to jump in and help in some way.

I give grateful thanks for the minimal damage we suffered compared to our neighbours and others in the valley. We have no structural damage even though some of the Gum trees thought it would be nice to live on Johannes and Ann's container. "Wow! What a gedoente!!" We crossed the river in a boat to assess our water/pump situation. The pump house was dug out of a sandbank – more or less a meter deep.

At this time our immediate neighbours Camphill and Bona Dea and other parts of the valley are still without power. Eskom has been fixing wires and poles and fuses day and night for days now. Other than massive electricity issues, 56 meters of the main pipeline from the de Bos dam (supplying water to Hermanus) was washed away. After two days the Municipality were able to put temporary measures in place to supply some water, while great big tankers from as far as George has come to help supply water in the suburbs and in town. JOJO tanks parade all over the place where there are members of the municipality helping people to fill containers with water.

On a personal note, we had all our available empty containers outside on Saturday morning to get some rain water to do our laundry – I think we are doing extreme camping now. At least we were exempt from loadshedding so that was nice. Someone said: "being a South African should be something you can put on your CV"



One of our immediate problems after the flood is accessibility. Stretches of the road at the entrance to the valley as well as near the Camphill turn off, were washed away and is getting worse as more of it is falling in. Hopefully the engineers will be able to make a plan to secure the parts that are left.

Please pray for all our guests/visitors, staff and residents who have serious challenges travelling to and from Volmoed. Also keep in your prayers everyone in the valley losing business and recovering from extreme losses.



Mathilda

Hi all

This will be my last prayer letter as Director. So, there is your first call to prayer. By now the news is out and so it falls to me to share a bit about that. It was a joint decision. After meeting with some of the leadership around the financial challenges that faced Volmoed, which amounted to a perfect storm, I wrote to the leadership and suggested that my salary was the elephant in the room. The position of director has been removed. This is the right decision and I have peace about it, but nevertheless, it is a painful process, especially for me personally. Please pray for Volmoed and for me.

My early process of grief was to question whether there was any point to me being there in the first place. However, I was helped by one of the longer-term visitors (a legacy fellow) Eric de Jongh, who said that he could see that Volmoed had already made a huge shift. What is this shift? It has a few dimensions. However, the aligning theme that connects these dimensions is that we as Volmoed, have started to re-invest in the vision of Volmoed of healing, reconciliation and justice. Herein, I believe, is the kernel of Volmoed's prophetic mandate in our country (and world) with which it shares the collective wound that makes this so important. There is need for places like Volmoed to actively come into the space of woundedness and embody and facilitate healing and reconciliation towards justice. This process has started. Included in this has been the re-investing in the Volmoed community in its various facets and providing connection points so that the members can start to discover the sense of community. Please keep this process in your prayers.

At the same time, it was important to build structure, such as the leadership group and other initiatives that give stability to Volmoed to proceed in an orderly way towards these goals. These are all coming into place. Complementary to Volmoed reaching inwards, is a reaching outward. The shift here is that Volmoed will no longer focus mainly as a facilitating space, but is developing its own program offerings. It is active in reaching out towards its vision. Possibly one of the crucial avenues for this is developing retreat options that will run regularly. I hope to be a part of this initiative. Please pray for Volmoed, that despite the challenges, we may to develop program offerings that honour the vision of Volmoed and lead to greater financial viability.

So, now I go to recent events, which we and many others are battling with. I speak of the strange flooding that has happened, changing the Volmoed landscape in a matter of hours. The field looks more like a rocky beach. There are banks of sand everywhere and we only got to the pump house yesterday, which we had to dig out of a mound of sand. I have just heard that the pump seems to be okay (Thank you Lord), but other infrastructure and pipes have been damaged. Of course, the damage is wider than Volmoed; impacting the whole valley as well as Hermanus Town. Many areas in the Valley are still without electricity and Hermanus was without water for a number of days. We are seriously exploring solar energy now, to help deal with enormous electrical bills. Please pray for wisdom. Further, as you know by now, the Hemel and Aarde Road is closed (partially washed away). What I hear is that the road will open in about 2 months' time. Please pray for Volmoed, as this makes it difficult for our guests, who must now travel via the Karwyderskraal road. I pray that we may discern the wisdom of God in these difficult times. God makes a way where there seems to be no way.

Tony

