

Alun and Debbie Burt

April 2025

Dear Family and Friends,

What's ministry on the Cape Flats like? There are many possible answers to this question, but perhaps the words that sums it up best are 'a privilege'. Like ministry anywhere in the world, we get to walk alongside people, often over many years. We see folk at their bravest, when God's word demands a costly obedience and they continue on the narrow path. We see folk at their lowest, when sinful consequences leave a trail of destruction. We witness people at their happiest and in their most anxious moments, in their triumphs, through their grieving and in their utter despair. Through consistent teaching of God's word, we watch people make new choices and live differently as their lives change as a result of the gospel. Tragically we see folk drifting from the truth and occasionally outright rejecting Christ's offer of salvation.

J and his wife, C, joined St Thomas about two years ago. Church goes for decades, J tells of how faith has become alive since digging into God's word seriously. He now loves apologetics and has a contagious zeal for evangelism. J faithfully visits patients in our city's largest public hospital each Sunday to share Christ, simply asking the nurses on duty to direct him to patients who don't receive visitors. Just this week he visited a man dying at home in

Heideveld, a man for whom decades of drug use has ravaged his body, but for whom the gospel presented a welcome offer of new life, forgiveness, and eternity. When St Thomas ran a third circle of Christianity Explored this term, Alun promptly asked this couple to be table leaders. J invited his atheist cousin and his wife as well as a friend. The couple attended the first session but texted later in the day to say *'thanks, but Christianity is not for them'*. Later in the week, they got back in touch to invite J to continue to meet them one to one. 'Your God is too small' is the non-believers' current objection. Doesn't that sound just like the sort of criticism some had about Jesus when he was on earth? He can't be Messiah and die! Please pray that J will continue to have openings and that he will be able to gently challenge the man's thinking and that the Lord would bestow on Him the precious gift of faith and allow him to embrace the hope of the resurrection this Easter!



St Thomas men



Debbie and Ilana on the piano

S is a lady in Debbie's Thursday night Bible study. As a teacher on the Cape Flats, she educates a class of 46 10–11 yrs olds every day. Not only does she play the role of educator, but social worker, parent and counsellor too, sometimes bringing them food she has cooked at home to eat. Over the last few months we have been praying for one of her learners, a boy with severe behavioural issues. S shared recently how the gospel has helped her to learn to love this troubled boy. She shared how she didn't know what love was, and previously modelled her style of teaching on the authoritarian and typically harsh models she was used to. But God's word is teaching her a new way, one that can model gentleness and kindness, whilst remaining firm. The Lord is changing her through His word in order to help him.

Zooming out from Heideveld for a moment, you might have picked up international headlines in recent months bemoaning the increasing hostilities growing between the US and South Africa. Racial tensions continue to plague this country, so any move towards increased polarisation injected from overseas is worrying indeed. Lies, exaggerations and misinformation flourish in such a context; pray for truth to prevail. Cuts to USAID will assuredly cost lives here as HIV and TB programmes are curtailed immediately. Those affected will not just be numbers, but very likely names and faces of folk we know and care about. Pray for our leader, President Ramaphosa, as he continues to lead our fragile Government of National Unity, our 11-month-old coalition of politicians, through this extremely unsettling time.

Likhona passed his driving license this week, which certainly feels like a milestone. Ilana is busy working on her visual arts portfolio this morning and is preparing to write her Grade 5 music theory exam later this month. Malachi is now a teen with seemingly hollow legs, who plays both club and school soccer and enjoys it all! He has loved moving up to St Thomas Youth. Timothy is currently hooked on the Bear Grylls Mission Survival Series of books. He ran his first 5km with Alun last week and loved it! Health issues have continued this quarter, particularly effecting Malachi and Debbie. Both are under the care of neurologists who are helping with finding appropriate daily medication for their severe migraines. We are ever grateful for medical aid, but realising that our monthly medical bills are substantial, so please pray for God's provision to meet those needs.



Malachi playing soccer

With every blessing,

Alun, Debbie, Likhona (20), Ilana (17), Malachi (13) and Timothy (9)