

SOUTH

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TORCH



"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." -- Psalms 119:105



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Ministers' Week 2020 in Warrenton

Every year the ministers and their wives meet for a few days of worship and fellowship. Because we are semi-retired we do not plan to attend some of the national meetings especially if they are far away. This year it was from March 1 - 6 at Warrenton in the Northern Cape. That is about 600 miles away from home, but we decided to go anyway.

We had started to do some down-sizing and we had some records to hand over from Umzumbe Bible Institute to South African Bible Institute in Kimberley. We also had some historical materials and several books for the ministers as well as a large box of old photos. We decided that it would be easiest to go to the meeting so we could deliver these items to them personally. There was much excitement as the people found photos of themselves or friends and they were encouraged to take any that they wanted.

Because it was a long trip we stopped half way between home and Kimberley and stayed over at a Christian guest house. Then we had made arrangements to stay with friends in Kimberley (about 60 miles from Warrenton) for a couple of days before the meeting and again a couple of days after the meeting. We always enjoy our visits with Roy and Jenny.

We went to the ministers' gathering from Sunday until Wednesday. We stayed at a self-catering cottage in Warrenton and attended several of the classes and worship services. We also participated in the classes: Michael taught a class for the men on Monday and I taught a class for the women on Tuesday. We thoroughly enjoyed being with the ministers and their wives.



Caryl led a class for the ministers' wives at Ministers' Week in Warrenton.



Everyone seemed to enjoy the class and there was good attention and participation.

Up-Date

Along with the rest of the world we are dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 26 the South African government imposed a very severe Lockdown. We were not allowed off of our property except to buy food and medicine. We are able to have groceries delivered so we are taking advantage of that service. It also means not having to battle the long lines of people waiting to get into shops where the number of patrons is limited. The Lockdown also included a prohibition on the sale of cigarettes and alcohol. Restaurants, bars and “shebeens” (informal drinking establishments that also sell meat which is cooked on the premises) were closed.

We decided to take advantage of the time at home and spent a lot of time going through materials we have collected over nearly 50 years. We have a couple of boxes of papers we have decided we don’t need so we will shred them! We also have some things to donate to others or to contribute to second-hand shops. I wish I could say we have completed all of the sorting, but we still have more to do!

We also decided to use our time keeping fit by walking every day. We started out by doing laps around the outside of our house. It is good to get out in the sunshine and get some exercise. The Level 5 Lockdown lasted for three weeks and then was extended another two weeks.

We then moved to Level 4 where we were allowed off the property for exercise between 6 and 9 in the morning. Our neighbor has two dogs and she wanted to walk them, but she couldn’t take them both. In fact, she can’t take one because he is too big and strong for her to control. So three days a week we go with her and Michael takes Rocco and Sue takes Bella. We take them to a nearby farm where they can be off the leashes to run and get lots of exercise.

On the first of June we moved to Level 3. It really didn’t change much for us, but some more businesses were able to reopen so many workers were able to go back to work. They also announced that churches could reopen, but there are very strict rules about sanitizing and social distancing which makes complying very difficult. They also do not allow singing so that would make things very difficult for worship - especially for the African churches. They also do not recommend that those of us over 60 should attend church as we are in the vulnerable category. We are blessed to be able to attend church in our home using internet. I have spoken to some of the members of the Umzumbe Church and they are watching television services or listening to radio broadcasts.



Our neighbor, Sue, has two dogs and we help her walk them three days a week. Michael has Rocco and Sue has Bella.

Up-Date Cont...

The Lockdown certainly helped South Africa to “flatten the curve”, but the number of cases is beginning to increase in some areas now. All teachers had to be at school every day from the beginning of June, even when they didn’t have students. Schools reopened for students in grades 7 and 12 in early June and more students will be returning to school over the next few weeks. So far in our area there have not been many COVID-19 cases for which we are very thankful.

Because of all of the restrictions, we have not been to Umzumbe Bible Institute since March 22. The day care center has been closed since then, but Michael and I have continued to pay the teachers as they are dependent on that income. The seniors club also is closed. We have not had any contact with any of the day care children or the seniors’ club members. One of the church members lives near Umzumbe Bible Institute and she has checked on the property. Unfortunately, someone stole the restroom door. It will not be possible to replace it until Lockdown regulations are reduced.

So we are being very careful and trying to avoid exposure to the virus. We are missing the interaction with people, but feel it is the best decision for us now. We would appreciate your prayers for God’s protection over us, our co-workers and fellow Christians.



There are a lot of beautiful old trees on the farm where we walk the dogs. This one stood out to us as it is a so beautiful and set at the top of a hill.



We were amazed to see a bushbuck family in our yard one day. We seldom see the male, but one day he also came and grazed for quite a while.

Family

Dina and Sean both work in the medical field so they have had to continue their work. Dina is the clinical manager at Port Shepstone Hospice so she is working her usual hours and is on call over the weekends. She was able to work from home a few days and take a couple of days of the leave she had applied for before the COVID-19 struck. Sean wasn’t as busy for the first few months and was able to be home part of the time and just go out when he was needed. His work is picking up so he is back to more normal work hours. Gabriella and Erin have been confined at home. Erin has had school work to do, but Gabriella has found it very boring. She had been working as a waitress at a small restaurant, which had to close. She had planned to go to the United States in May to work at a summer camp, but she was struggling to get the papers she needed and then found out the camps had to be cancelled. Rebecca has continued to work as she works for an ambulance service. Just before the Lockdown Ruahn had applied for apprenticeships in the motor industry, but that came to an end with COVID-19. He was hired recently to do farm maintenance. They are expecting a baby in October so we are adjusting to the idea of being Great Grandparents!

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Family Cont...

Diane and John had to send a lot of their staff home at the beginning of Lockdown. Many of them live in a nearby informal settlement, but wouldn't be allowed to go on and off the farm every day. They kept a skeleton staff of workers that have rooms on the farm and they and the family continued to run the farm. Even Matthew, who is not quite 9 years old helped prepare the cucumbers for market. Diane and her mother-in-law took turns working in the cucumber factory and caring for 2-year-old Michael. They were all very happy when they were able to hire some of the staff back. Diane also used her sewing skills to create masks to give to "front-liners" or sell to the public.

JP has been working independently since June last year, but during Lockdown Levels 5 and 4 he was not allowed to go out to work. He created shields for virus protection. He and Dawn did some sorting in their house and they did some up-keep and gardening that needed to be done. They also had to help the girls with school work and keep them occupied. Dawn returned to school in June, but the children in her school will only be able to come back in July. The teachers are preparing materials that the parents can get from the school so the children will have some education during this time. The government decided to have the grade 7 and grade 12 students come back first and now they are slowly bringing the other grades back to the schools.

Please also pray for our family as they deal with the effects of COVID-19.