



February 2014

Dear Friends,



Greetings from Johannesburg! May I take this opportunity, if I have not already, to wish you all a happy New Year! We have begun the New Year at Christ Church Hillbrow by preaching through some Psalms and over the last few weeks we have been making our way through the Songs of Ascents. For me the note of hope in these Psalms has been a constant encouragement. As we looked at Psalm 121, such familiar Psalm to many, we looked to the promise that our 'foot will not slip' (v. 3) and were reminded that this promise is not so much a promise that no harm will come, but no ultimate harm will come. Looking to Jesus, who faced even death on the cross, this promise was kept as he was raised from the dead. As we sing Psalm 121 we are reminded of the same, the promise that even

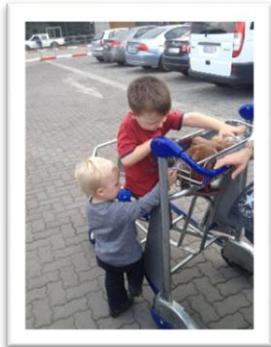
we die we will live again. Many at church found this helpful and it encouraged me to keep my focus on the hope of the New Heavens and the New Earth which in this world is so easy to lose sight off.

As we move into the New Year a lot of things have started up again at Christ Church Hillbrow. Our mid-week Bible studies have restarted and are going through the book of 1 Corinthians. We have two groups and the Tuesday night group have been a particular encouragement. Not only have we seen a number of new faces keen to study God's word but we have a real spread of ages as even some school children have begun attending. Please pray that the group doesn't just grow in number but also in depth knowledge and godliness. Pray also that through these studies people might begin to be equipped to read and understand the Bible for themselves.

Last week also saw our monthly prayer meeting where we had the best turn out since I started at Christ Church, again we had a whole range of ages all of whom pray. We are praying that more and more people would see the prayer meeting as key in our churches activities and that more will join us.

With much encouragements there have also been some harder things. Edwin (the rector of the church) has been quite unwell. He has been off for three weeks already and while he recovers he will be off for another two weeks. Please pray that he would recover and rest well in the next two weeks and would be well enough to return to work after two weeks. This of course puts a little extra pressure on me as I have been running the church while he has been away. I feel very weak and sure I am making lots of mistakes but it has been an encouragement to me how things seem to be holding together and we are pressing forward with our plans. The staff and the council have been

a constant support and please pray that God would strengthen me this during this time and would enable me to do all that I need to do with grace and love.



Next Sunday we will begin our evening service and I will be preaching through the book of Jonah for four weeks. Pray for me as I prepare and that people would come. We pray particularly those who cannot make it in the morning would join us and this would grow the work of the gospel in Hillbrow.



We are also praising God that work has begun on the Christ Church building. Funding has been provided to completely redo the building and over the coming months the place is getting a facelift. Please pray that that we will be able to use the building even more for God's greater glory. Not only has building begun but thanks to the kind donation by some UK churches we now have Bibles in the pews which is huge cause for praise and a real help on Sunday.

Beyond church there has been more changes and encouragements. I have moved from where I was living to a new house sharing with one friend of mine. It is much more convenient and has meant that I have been able to get the bus into work which has been very helpful while Edwin has been unwell. The Christ Church Hillbrow staff now consider me to be the expert on the bus! It has also been a great joy to be joined in Johannesburg by another family of Crosslinks Mission Partners James and Lucy Buchanan as they start their ministry at Melville Union Church. I am also continually thankful for Glenn and Lizzy Nesbitt who are a constant source of encouragement. I was put in charge of their dogs again after Christmas. Ginger and Jiver (whom I know will be reading this) behaved relatively well however they remain the two worst behaved members of the Nesbitt household. Last but not least there was the arrival of six more Williamson's in South Africa. I met my brother Sam and his family at the airport as they are moving to South Africa to facilitate ministry over the border in Lesotho. (My nieces and nephews are in the pictures).

As always thank you for all you prayer.

Ben Williamson

PRAYER POINTS

Praise:

- Increased attendance and enthusiasm at church over the midweek Bible studies and prayer meeting.
- God sustaining me and the church over the last few weeks while Edwin has been off.
- Encouragements for fellow workers in the gospel.
- The church renovations have begun.
- Very suitable new place to live.

Pray:

- For Edwin to be restored to health quickly.
- For strength, grace and wisdom as I oversee the ministry at Christ Church Hillbrow in his absence.
- That may will attend and be built up in through the evening service.

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