

# **SOUTH AFRICAN TORCH**

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



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## **Easter 2019 by Michael Stanley**

Easter services are always well attended. Typically this means that there are about 400 people who need to be catered for. Driving long distances does not keep people away. This year the meetings were held at Gingindlovu where tents had been set up to accommodate the crowd. (Caryl and I had a 2 ½ hour trip.) A significant point concerning the church in KwaZulu Natal is that we are reminded of how big the church is. When we are attending a local congregation that numbers around 30 people each week it is easy to focus on the small size of the church. The Easter weekend forces us to change our perspective. The church in KwaZulu Natal is a large and influential body of believers.

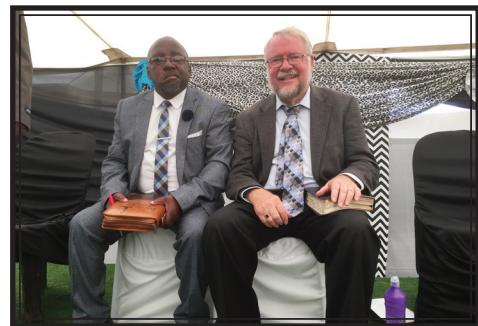
The program for Friday is always the same. Representatives of the various circuits speak on the seven words of Jesus from the cross. These are not normally interpreted so I use the time to visit with church leaders that I don't see at other times. In the evening a meal is served. (That is a major operation.)

Caryl and I do not normally stay for the all night service. This year a house near the church was made available to us so we retired for the night about 10:00 p.m.

Services carried on through the day on Saturday. I was not on the schedule but Brother Lubanyana had warned me that he would hand over to me to take his place. I had therefore prepared a lesson but could not coordinate my message with his. After Brother Lubanyana had preached for more than half an hour I decided that he had changed his mind. But then there was a break in his message and he announced that Brother Stanley would take over from there. I preached my short message and was surprised when a number of people commented positively on it.

Caryl and I left an extended business meeting to retire for the night. The service on Sunday morning was not a sunrise service. No meal was served in the morning so the service started earlier than usual. Brother Sithebe was the preacher and the message was interpreted for Caryl and me. Brother Dinga from Ingwavuma led the Lord's Supper. An early "dinner" was then served and take away boxes were provided those who lived the greatest distance away.

The trip home was very tiring for Caryl and me. It took two extended rest stops to get us home. We were very tired, but encouraged by the large group that celebrated the Easter weekend.



*Ezra Mbali served as interpreter for Michael Stanley at the Easter services at Gingindlovu. Brother Mbali is minister at Myutshini.*

# Women's Meeting and Men's Meeting 2019 by Caryl Stanley

The annual Women's Meeting and Men's Meeting was held on July 6 and 7 at a school building near the church at Mvutshini, which is only about 30 minutes from our home. We decided to stay overnight at Diane and John's as they are only a few minutes away from the church.

The Women's sessions on Saturday included a lot of messages and singing. Everything was done in Zulu, but I could tell that the ladies who spoke had really put effort into preparing their messages. Others also commented that the lessons were very helpful.

The Men's sessions included a lot of business discussions. Several years ago the men decided that, since they brought the women to the meeting, they might as well use the time more profitably with an organized program.

Some people had left late Saturday night or early Sunday morning, but we had a church service on Sunday morning with a message and communion. Then we had a nice meal before everyone went home. Everyone seems to enjoy these provincial gatherings where they renew acquaintances and worship together.



*The ministers were visiting as they prepared for the morning service at the annual Women's and Men's meeting at Mvutshini. Everyone enjoys these times of fellowship.*

## Holiday by Caryl Stanley

While we were in the US last year, Michael's brother, Duane, announced that he planned to go to Normandy in May, 2019 – just before the 75th anniversary of the Normandy invasion. After some discussion we ended up with nine of us going to Europe!

Michael and I met Duane and Kathy in Northern Ireland for a 4-day stay. We visited Killylea in County Armagh where some Stanley ancestors originated. We also went to Giants' Causeway and visited many sites in Belfast, including the Titanic Museum.

Then the four of us flew to Paris and drove to Normandy where we met brother Larry and Marguerite Stanley, cousin Craig and Kathy Stanley, and sister Debbie Neethling. We spent the next few days seeing the battlefields, beaches, and monuments in Normandy. What a pleasure it was to have this time together. Craig's father was a pilot who flew into Normandy three times towing glider planes.

We concluded our vacation with a short visit to Paris where we were able to visit the Eiffel Tower and take a short cruise on the Seine.



*The cousins: Debbie Neethling, Craig Stanley, Larry Stanley, Michael Stanley and Duane Stanley. What a joy to have the cousins enjoying a tour of Normandy! We stayed in Sainte-Mère-Église, one of the first towns that was liberated.*

# Retirement

The time is approaching when we will formally retire from missions' work. We have been contemplating it for the past few years, but with some health issues we have faced over the past year, we have decided that the time has finally arrived. We will discontinue our involvement in national events after the annual church conference in late September. We will hand over responsibility for our work with the day care to a national co-worker from Umzumbe. We are in the process of handing over the Umzumbe Bible Institute property to others who will allow the day care center and seniors' club to continue to use the facilities. It is a huge step and we would ask you to pray with us as we go through the process.

I am sure you are aware that all of our children and grandchildren live in South Africa and, after living here for most of the past 47 years, this is our home so we will retire here. We will still be in contact with nationals here and we will travel back to the US to visit family and friends there.

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## Down-sizing

On the advice of our children and our siblings we are in the process of preparing to sell our house so we can move to a more secure gated community. It has been a very difficult decision as Michael designed our house and we did a lot of the work on building it. We have lived here since January, 1985 – over 34 years! We are in the process of going through the personal and mission materials we accumulated over those 34 years plus the 13 years we were in our house near Umzumbe Bible Institute. In addition to our personal collections we also have a lot of materials that Alvin and Vernita Nicholson and Lynn and Lucille Stanley left with us when they retired! Pray that we will find someone to buy our house and that we will find something we can buy.

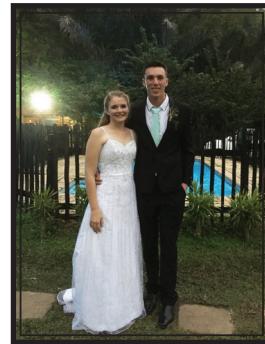
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## Family News

Dina and Sean's family has increased. They now have their first son! On May 4th Rebecca and Ruahn Beattie got married. They met when Rebecca did volunteer work with the National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI). They are living in a small apartment on John and Diane's farm. Ruahn works for NSRI and Rebecca works in the call center for an ambulance service. Gabriella recently started working as a volunteer at a home for abandoned babies. She loves the little ones and it is giving her some job experience. Erin is an active 9-year-old who keeps us all on our toes. Gabriella and Erin shared a room until Rebecca got married so now they are enjoying having their own space!

Diane and John are busy on the farm where they raise cucumbers, tea trees and macadamia nuts. Matthew and Michael both love to be outside and the farm really provides great opportunities for that. We take care of the boys on Tuesday afternoons when Diane and John are busy delivering produce for their side-line business. Going for walks on the farm and playing in the sand box are favorite activities.

In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Dawn is making craft items to sell. Chayah and Seanna are both active in dancing and will be in a dance show in August. JP resigned from VW/Audi at the end of June. He had been very unhappy and stressed. He decided to be self-employed. He is keeping busy with IT jobs for friends and acquaintances and creating clocks, picture frames and other items from disused computer parts.



*Rebecca Thorncroft, Sean and Dina's oldest daughter, and Ruahn Beattie were married on May 4, 2019.*



*In order to supplement his income, JP creates clocks and photo frames from disused computer parts.*

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## Magog Senior Citizens' Club

We are proud to announce that some of our seniors did very well in the annual Golden Games where they competed against other local senior citizens' clubs. Four of them will go on

to compete in the provincial games after placing in the local competitions. They are very excited because they will be able to stay in a hotel when they go to compete in those games!



Mr. Msomi won an award at the recent Golden Games.

## Sinothando Creche

The day care center has an attendance of between eight and twelve most days although we have about fifteen children registered now. Three of them are tiny babies who need a lot of care. Michael often goes and plays with the puzzles and building blocks with the older children. The teachers are helping the children learn their numbers and colors. We have a cook who prepares breakfast and lunch for the children.



Michael watched as Khiyani put the puzzle together. She is very good with the puzzles.