

SOUTH

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

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National Youth Conference

The previous National Youth Seminar which has been held nearly every year since the mid-1980's was discontinued when there were some personality issues between leaders. Many of the youth still wanted a fellowship and teaching program so the decision was made to start a new initiative called National Youth Conference.

The first Conference was held in KwaZulu Natal in December, 2019. It was organized by a minister in KwaZulu Natal and another minister who oversees youth ministry on a national level. We were not able to attend, but two of the young people from the Umzumbe church attended and were blessed! They said there were around 75 young people from all over the country and six ministers taught the lessons.

A committee was selected from among the youth to plan for the next conference in December, 2020. Pray with us that it will be a successful venture which will provide teaching and fellowship for the youth for years to come!



Some of the young people and leaders who attended the National Youth Conference in KwaZulu Natal in December, 2019.



Michael and Caryl Stanley wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a blessed 2020!

Magog Senior Citizens' Club

We celebrated the end of the year with our annual Christmas party. We had drawn names so we could exchange gifts and then we enjoyed a delicious meal. In previous years we have gone to a local hotel dining room, but this year we arranged for a caterer and had our party in the Umzumbe Church building. The caterers decorated the hall and set the tables beautifully! It was a most enjoyable day.



There was a big pile of lovely gifts when the Magog Senior Citizens' Club celebrated Christmas.



Mrs. C. Mvubu, a member of the local ward committee, and Mr. S. J. Ngwane, a government councilor, were guests at our Christmas celebration.

Sinothando Crèche Graduation

Each December we have a celebration for the children who will be going to big school in the new year. This year we had nine graduates. The little ones were dressed in their best and looked so cute!

We gathered in the Umzumbe church hall with the parents and grandparents to celebrate with the children. The children did some poems and songs and Caryl was asked to speak and present the certificates. This was followed by a meal for all those who attended.



Getting a photo of nine very excited children was difficult! They certainly enjoyed being in the lime-light on their special day!

Rain, Rain, Go Away!

We have had a lot of rain recently. We wish we could share with other areas of the country that are suffering from lack of rain and water shortages! The result of the rain in our area is that the roads are full of potholes and are deteriorating badly! We also had heavy rains in April and a bank by our house collapsed. We had rain on the special occasions at the end of the year – crèche graduation and the Seniors' Christmas party – but we were able to be inside dry buildings!

Family News

Diane, Dawn and a friend, Pelokazi, have started a business venture. They make ethnic clothing and home decor. They have had a couple of “pop-up” events at a local coffee shop. They are also hoping to expand the business so it will help some of the local ladies to market their products.

We have spent quite a bit of time with the grandchildren over the past few weeks. We attended three of the four end-of-year school prize-giving programs. We both were able to be at Erin’s. Michael attended Chayah’s and I attended Seanna’s as they were both the same morning. Matthew’s was held right at the end of the year and he missed it because they went away for a much-needed vacation before the end of the term.

Since Dina and Sean are both employed full time and Gabriella is working a lot, we have had Erin quite a bit since schools closed. When there is no one to look after her, she has to go and sit at Dina’s office, which isn’t fun or good for her.

We had Chayah, Seanna, Erin and Matthew here for a day so they could decorate Christmas cookies. That was a fun activity and they are getting big enough that it wasn’t such a messy experience this time. We had made a batch of gluten-free cookies for Seanna a few days before we made the normal one.



Chayah helped roll and cut sugar cookies.



Matthew and Seanna each decorated a tray of sugar cookies.



Erin had finished decorating her cookies and watched Matthew decorate his pan.

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Retirement Progress

We decided to do a bit of work on our house in preparation for putting it on the market. We don't have any immediate plans for selling as we still need to do some de-cluttering! However we were advised to work on the "curb appeal" so we hired people to come in and build a wall where the bank had collapsed from rainstorms. They also did some repairs to our steps and put in a handrail. We have hired a garden service as keeping up with the mowing was getting too difficult.

We are also working on the de-cluttering, but it is slow-going! It is so hard to let go! We have gotten rid of a lot of books and papers, but there are still more things to sort!



Before – The bank had collapsed in a rainstorm in April this year and the front of our house was very untidy!



After – The wall is built, the steps are renewed, the flagstones are reset, the gate is repaired and the railing is installed. In time the grass will return and we will have a much tidier entrance!