

PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS

As we pull out our boxes with Christmas decorations we often confront a time-intensive task with more ‘task’ than ‘time’. We want the transformation of our homes to be completed immediately.

We want perfection, *but what we have are tangled lights, tired bodies and frayed tempers*. We want immediate transformation, but in preparing our homes for Christmas – just as preparing our hearts – *immediacy is not necessarily our ally*.

The best gift we can give ourselves is the recognition that transformation takes time and that each step in the process can be an opportunity to invite God’s transforming presence into our hearts and our homes.

- *As we untangle lights, we can pray, ‘God, bring the light of Christ into this moment’.*
- *As we arrange greenery, we can give thanks for the gift of life, for all that grows and gives beauty to our surroundings.*
- *As we hang stockings, we can say a silent prayer for each person for whom the stocking is hung.*

Even the mess of scattered boxes, strewn packing paper, and Christmas decorations we can’t throw away can serve as reminders of a life that is full, blessed and shaped by love.

As we prepare our rooms we can prepare the rooms of our hearts for the coming of Christ. How do we do it?

- *By cleaning our inner lives, deliberately putting away the resentments and distractions that clutter our hearts and minds.*
- *By giving priority to forgiveness and reconciliation in the season of relationships.*
- *By rearranging our obligations to make sure there’s room for prayer and reflection in the midst of all the busyness*
- *By decorating our hearts with thoughts and attitudes that are worthy to welcome a King – love, joy and peace.*
- *By decorating our lives with loving deeds.*

Heavenly Father, we cry with the psalmist: ‘*create in me a clean heart*’. We want to be ready whenever You come. As we clean our homes and begin to get ready for the big day, show us how to prepare our hearts as well. *After all that’s the place where You live.*



Trinity Methodist Church

LINDEN, JOHANNESBURG



Prayer is the key of the morning and the bolt of the night.

7 December 2014

2nd SUNDAY IN ADVENT

“Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, *but in the future he will honour Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan.*

*The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
On those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*

***For to us a child is born
To us a son is given,
And the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.***

Of the increase of his government and peace
There will be no end.
*He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom,
Establishing and upholding it with justice
And righteousness
From that time on and forever,
The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.* Isaiah

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

SONJA SMIT (daughter Willa Retief) suffering with bad dose glandular fever.

CRAIG McKENZIE (wife Noreen) is in hospital with pneumonia.

MEGAN (niece of Lorna Steele's) was rushed to hospital with suspected appendicitis, on medication, has had scans to see if op needed.

DUNCAN EDWARDS, who contracted Erdheim Chester Disease (ECD) a year ago, his son Anthony and 2 friends, are cycling to Cape Town over a 14 day period in order to raise awareness and funds for the ECD foundation.

COLLEEN (70+) has been diagnosed with a rare type of cancer; there is only limited treatment, outlook not good.

MEMBERS OF TRINITY AND THEIR FAMILIES suffering with the burden of drug and alcohol addiction.

WE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR:

GRAEME FRASER is doing well after knee replacement although he is finding it difficult not being in his office full time.

TONY (Sue Edwards Dad) suffering with severe back & neck pain due to arthritis, he is also battling with problems with his hand.

DELENE MULLER (husband Nic) her leg is still swollen and giving her trouble although she is on Warfarin to reduce the risk of clotting.

GABRIEL (Michelle Tippet's nephew) in hospital suffering with continuous high fevers, Kawasaki Disease diagnosed, family praying his fever will break & stay down.

CARL MARAIS (Carlene Zietsman's son) continues to recover after having his left foot amputated due to diabetes.

DEVON (10 - Dudley Middleton's nephew) broke his arm badly 18 months ago; he now has a serious bone infection and is in hospital for docs to decide on treatment.

GAIL DE KLERK is still in hospital due to her wound breaking open; her husband is hoping that she will be discharged middle of next week.

Our thoughts and prayers are with **NEL ALLEN** as she has a hip replacement and **DAVE Mc BIRNIE** a knee replacement. Both ops are tomorrow, Monday 8th.

GORDENE diagnosed with brain cancer and will be going for chemotherapy.

RUTH (Cecil Olberholzer's daughter) has been very ill; a decision will be made with medical professionals to consider the option of surgery.

MEMBERS OF OUR CONGREGATION who are experiencing difficulties and doubt in their lives, that they may not forsake the care of the Trinity Church family.

GWEN SMEATON suffering with pneumonia.

LIZELLE SLABBERT (husband Martin, 2 young children) undergoing chemo for breast cancer. Lizelle is having a lot of pain and both her, Martin, children and parents are distressed and suffering emotionally.

WINIFRED TENNANT is still in ICU and Barbara's sister has arrived from Australia to visit her mom and to support Barbara with the problems.

CANCER LIST: *Gordon Bennett, Anton Marais* (Sydney), *Lee Barnes, Nola Dodds, Tracy Hoy* (UK), *Hilda Louter, Val Warren, Dudley Middleton, Marguerite, Peter, Myrren* (18), *Diane Turner, Maureen Lupton, Martin vd Merwe* (Karin Blackburn's dad), *Joy vd Klis, Jean Clarence, Daniela Andrade* (7), *Russell Jones, Ursula Ryder, Lesley Steyn, David Edwards* (UK), *Doh Carneson, Louise Shaw* (Texas), *Brian K, John Sandison, Cindy Saunders, Marina van de Ruit, Brian Tromp, Chloe Thomas, Elizabeth Innes, Greg Cleeve-Edwards, Joanna* (Maurice's niece), *Joy* (Sam's sister), *Gilbert Hughes, John Clarke, Dudley Hudson, Keith Bunce* (UK - wife Liz), *Bill Coulle, Rev Hans Visser*.

CHRONIC LIST: *Denese Pieterse* (back problems), *Dave* (Guillain Barre Syndrome), *Elaine Vermaak* (osteoporosis), *Moira Smith* (hiatus hernia), *Maureen Dewberry* (heart problems), *Alison* (spinal problems), *Illia & Graham* (UK), *Diana Viljoen's Mom* (stroke), *Colleen Hunter* (brain op), *Christiaan Vermeulen* (heart surgery), *Deon* (facial surgery), *Susanne* (stroke), *Duncan Edwards* (rare disease), *Noelle Marshall* (leukemia & eye problems), *Louise Combrink* (nervous breakdown), *Heather Seymour* (emphysema), *Nic Swart* (stroke), *Nic Breytenbach* (MDS Leukaemia), *Elwyn Dyer* (hip op), *Bradley Manson* (Kidney disease, dialysis), *Reef's grandparents, Eva & Brian Humphreys, Coral Fisher* (foot problems), *Jules* (auto immune disease), *Lesley* (broken wrists), *Louis Brugman* (heart & hip problems), *Linda Hann* (needs employment), *John, Elaine Vermaak's nephew* (heart problems, loss of job), *Dennis Meintjies* Sheila Marley's brother (intestinal op), *Moira Wessels* (in frail care), *Rebecca Owens* (fungal infection), *Rhys Thomas* (heart), *William Marrs* (elbow op), *Mari Thomasset* (Leg op), *Helene Segal* (fractured arm), *Harold* (Maurice's dad – tired & frail), *Bella* (prem baby), *Terry* (broken leg), *Pam Jenkins* (blood pressure problems), *Hans* (thinning retina), *Audrey Newberry* (broken wrists), *Gail de Klerk* (hip replacement), *Delene Muller* (broken knee cap, DVT), *Annabelle-Jane* (5 insecure), *Sylvia Maphisa* (TB & eye problems), *Cynthia Ross* (spinal probs), *Elsabé Vorster* (back probs), *Sonette Macgregor* (myasthenia gravis), *Willia* (severe back problems).

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*The first purpose of Christmas is **celebration!*** We learn this from the angel's opening statement to the shepherds of Bethlehem. God has wonderful news for us that would cause us all to rejoice, celebrate and throw a party:

***'I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people'***

The good news of Christmas is worth celebrating for three reasons:

It is personal: *'I bring YOU'*. It is positive: *'Good news of great joy'* and it is universal: *for ALL the people'*. It doesn't matter who you are, what you've done, where you've been, or where you're headed – ***this news is for you.***