



The Joy
of CHRISTMAS

WALMERMETHODIST
AS DISCIPLES TO MAKE DISCIPLES

TO ALL WALMER METHODIST MEMBERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Greetings to you all. What a privilege to correspond with each of you. This letter is an attempt to ensure that you are able to make the most of all the opportunities between now and the beginning of the school term next year. Starting with the more distant events and finishing with the soonest, I can tell you that we have many opportunities for participation in activities and gatherings aimed at enhancing and enriching any person in knowing and serving Jesus. I encourage you to be involved!

SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES

From Sunday 11 December 2011 until Sunday 8 January 2012 the times of services will be 07h00, 09h00 and 18h00 – but on **Sunday 1 January 2012** there will be services at **9h00 and 18h00 only**.

SUNDAY 25 DECEMBER 2011 – CHRISTMAS DAY

Services at 07h00 and 09h00 only. Each year we get a good number of visitors. I want to encourage us “locals” to come to either the 07h00 service on this day or even to consider attending the Christmas Eve service to make space for our visitors. Most important of all, though, is not to miss the special opportunity of being together as God’s people at this time.

SATURDAY 24 DECEMBER 2011

Christmas Eve Communion at 23h00.

THURSDAY 22 DECEMBER 2011

Church Office closes at 13h00 and will re-open on Monday 9 January 2012 at 09h00. Pastoral Staff will be on call for emergencies. A staff person will check the answering machine regularly during this time and follow up any message left.

WEDNESDAY 21 DECEMBER 2011

Christmas Communion of Hope service at 18h00 at the Church

We meet to celebrate the hope God brings through Jesus, who enters our world in solidarity and love. We share in Communion and spend time in prayer for all who may find Christmas and the holidays difficult. Included in the service is remembering loved ones lost in the past year and praying for those who grieve. Please let Anne at the office know should you wish to have someone remembered.

SUNDAY 11 DECEMBER 2011

Carols and Community at 18h30 at Clarendon Park Primary

This year we combine with the congregation of St John the Baptist Anglican Church in a community Christmas event. Activities commence at 18h30 with jumping castle and games to keep the kids happily occupied, boerewors rolls and cold drinks on sale and the opportunity to meet, mix and mingle. The specially written Carol Service starts at 19h30. Bring family and friends, picnic baskets, blankets and garden chairs, and share in this special time together. Please, also bring a torch or lamp or candle

in a suitable holder for your use during the service. Should the weather be unhelpful we will move to Walmer Methodist Church.

SUNDAY 4 DECEMBER AT 08H45 – SAM STUDIO CLOSING CELEBRATION

Our usual 8h45 service will centre around the children and the year-end for Sam Studios. Come and share in the worship and celebration with our Sam Studio leaders and children.

SUNDAY 11 AND 18 DECEMBER AT 09H00

Special all-age family services. Bring friends and visitors for carefully constructed interactive all-age worship!

SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER, 4 , 11 AND 18 DECEMBER 2011 – ALL OTHER SERVICES

Advent Season Focus

This year our preaching team is planning to help us engage with the theme of Jesus' coming. He came as God-with-us at the first Christmas, in humility and sacrifice, but our advent focus now is on the promise that He will come again, this time in power and glory. In the meantime He seeks to be known and seen in us and through us as the One who rules in power and glory. His selfless, serving love has conquered sin, death and evil once and for all. Using passages from Isaiah and 2 Samuel we are called and challenged to be prepared! Are you ready?

Advent gift

Last year the response to the invitation to give towards the "Send-a-child-to-School " fund was amazing. We have been able to assist children at John Masiza Primary School weekly with paper for schoolwork. We supplied workbooks for Grade R's, which not only enabled and empowered them but resulted in a motivated and committed teacher. We continue to invest in feeding children so they can concentrate whilst at school. In future, it is hoped that we can move beyond giving money to giving of our time and expertise in upliftment of this depressed community. Thanks be to God.

The focus of our Advent "extra giving" this year is a community in the Langkloof which is in dire need. Most are unemployed. The local Methodist Church feeds as many as 450 people once a week from a most basic and rudimentary building and cooking area. Many people there are denied access to healthcare, education and other opportunities because of inadequate documentation. There is need for building upgrade and maintenance at the Church. Here is an opportunity to bring food and hope through our presence and involvement. We anticipate outreach groups going out around every six weeks to invest in improving the infra-structure, building hope in the people and trying to address some of their needs. A R50 donation in lieu of a gift to someone we love who already has enough could literally save the life of a needy child, or arrest the slide into blind desperation. What an opportunity! Donation envelopes and gift cards will be available at Church from 27 November 2011.

Conclusion

I am challenged by the fact of incarnation. As a historically verifiable event, Jesus left the serenity, perfection and beauty of heaven to be part of a fallen, torn and tattered world. Not only did he embody solidarity with all of creation and human beings in their need, but he revealed God who comes to find us and make it possible for us to be restored as partners and co-workers with Him. We dare think, now, in terms of healing, restoration and hope for all. We even get to be instruments of his activity as we invite Him to live in us and through us by our obedience and love. What a privilege!

May God bless you and those you love, be present to you in this Advent, and find us faithful and fruitful as Jesus' disciples in the days ahead.

A Blessed Christmas and a Spirit-guided New Year. Greetings from Anne, Andrea, Christopher and me, as well as good wishes from all Staff and Elders.



JONATHAN