

GAP News – September 2025

Personal Newsletter of Pierre and Sugnét van Wyk

Friends, we greet you in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ, our friend, Saviour and King.

The news is offered in English for a change. Our final newsletter later the year will again be in Afrikaans. We begin the newsletter with a brief word of encouragement.



GAP MINISTRIES

Lamentations may not seem like the most appropriate Bible book for encouragement. Jeremiah often expresses his struggles with the Lord in vivid detail. However, there are many verses that offer glimpses of God's grace. Some of these verses are well-known. In Chapter 3 v 22, Jeremiah shares a brighter moment in his journey with the Lord: "It is because of the Lord's mercy and loving kindness that we are not consumed, because His tender compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great and abundant is Your stability and faithfulness."

A few weeks ago, the town was shaken up when all 900-plus employees of Goodyear received notifications that, for the next working day, they were required to report to a rugby field in Despatch instead of the factory, and they were instructed to bring their clock cards to clock in, on the rugby field. Once gathered, they were promptly dealt the bad news that, as from that day, the factory would commence the process of closing down, with final production scheduled to end at year's end. Apart from insiders, it came as a surprise even to the unions that were totally caught off guard. One can only imagine the shock and the emotional rollercoaster that the company invited their employees to join. Since then, and after consultations with unions, the production stopped abruptly, and two weeks ago, employees left the factory for good, apart from the skeleton staff that must wrap up production and admin. Needless to say, it not only left the employees in shock but also our community. A good year turned into a very bad year!

More rumours of layoffs at Ford's Struandale plant and the Mercedes-Benz plant of Mercedes in East London followed. It is times like these that one would like to agree with Jeremiah that it felt as if one's teeth were all knocked out with a stone! "Great and abundant is Your stability and faithfulness," Jeremiah later said to the contrary. So let us then rejoice in the hope that we have in our Lord for that much-needed stability in our personal lives, and as a community that is going through some very troubling times!

Family News

The year was a rollercoaster ride for us as a family, sharing much joy as our first grandchild saw the light go off every time he wanted to wake up, while his parents wanted to go to sleep. They did an amazing job of fattening him up so quickly. Well done, Pieter and Megan, for coping with all the responsibilities so well. Megan is

getting back to work in October. It will bring new challenges, but once again, we rest assured that the Lord will help them to deal with the next phase. Earlier this year, we experienced the transition of Pierre's mother from her own care unit to the frail care unit in Groenkloof Retirement Village in George. The transition was not without pains, but she settled in well. Pierre's sister's recent visit from the UK brought more stability, seeing that she is a nurse herself, and recently completed her doctorate in Nursing so she had the title to go with the job. Pierre's mother is turning 90 at the end of October and the family plans to celebrate it in proper fashion with Corli flying in again from the UK. It will most probably be biltong for starters, a braai as the main course and desert. Thank you Rita for keeping the family visits going in our absence.

Talking about troubling times. Eldi's husband, four weeks ago, notified her that he is done with the marriage after only four years! It came out of the blue, without reason and without explanation. It completely took her off guard, and she was so shocked that she moved out immediately, and had to find other accommodation. Needless to say, it turned her world upside down, and ours, and the rest of the family's. When she managed to pull herself bravely together again, she asked him to put the divorce on hold so that they could explore a way forward. He did so, but since then indicated that he wants to continue with the divorce, and it seems as if the willingness for reconciliation is one-sided. Eldi managed to get back on the horse, managing on her own through this mess very bravely. We visited her shortly after she received the bad news, and are planning to visit her again in Kimberley in October. At the moment we are taking it one day at a time. She will appreciate everyone's prayer very much!

Ministry News

It has been a busy year, and we have only shared the most important events and milestones.

Last week, I had the opportunity to spend a few days with pastors in Hillary, **Durban**, as part of a network of international leaders from Ghana and Nigeria. Once again, I was struck by the diversity within the body of Christ and the various ways we conduct church. It reminded me that we should never become complacent in our own perceptions. The gathering took the form of a congress, where participants presented on different topics related to the functioning of the church. My focus was on the topic of discipleship. After the presentations, we worked to weave together the insights shared into a guideline for the network to follow moving forward. It was truly a blessing to connect with different parts of the body of Christ and observe how they function effectively despite their diversity. One evening, we visited a church nestled in a very dark corner of Chatsworth. There, we found encouragement in witnessing how God positions His church in the darkest places to be a light to the world. He truly is our only hope!

Planning for the **Gumdale Campsite and Conference Centre** on the farm is progressing, and the management team is in the final stages of the rezoning application. Two weeks ago, Dr. Cameron Macintosh met with representatives from YoungLife in Colorado Springs to discuss a potential partnership in the development and management of the Centre. YoungLife is an international Christian youth ministry based in the United States that operates camps for young people both

domestically and abroad. We will explore various options together. Interestingly, Gumdale's name has been gaining recognition on the other side of the globe, which has come as a surprise to us. In the meantime, different species of wildlife have begun to frequent the campsite, and we recently discovered giraffe footprints near the old shed. The architect is currently assembling a 3D model, and once it is completed, we will share the pictures.

MES opened their office in Uitenhage at the beginning of August after a successful launch on Mandela Day, July 18. This event involved volunteers forming teams to clean up the central business district (CBD), paint road markings, clear overgrown road verges, and plant flowers in the main street's flower boxes. Food vouchers were distributed to the homeless before the event, and over 300 individuals attended to receive meals, clothing, and medical assistance. Some were even taken to Home Affairs to apply for their IDs. With support from the Department of Human Settlements and CMR, attendees were profiled, and this data will be used for follow-up and planning purposes. My responsibility focused on public safety, which isn't typically my area, but we received strong support from the Traffic Department, resulting in no road casualties—a relief for me. The next step is to find a venue that can serve as an overnight shelter for the homeless, even if only temporarily. Your prayers for this would be greatly appreciated. We are awaiting the details of the work readiness programmes and will share it once available.

Jericho Walls International Prayer Network, with whom we have previously collaborated, is celebrating 25 years of establishing 24/7 prayer watches in South Africa this year. To commemorate this milestone, they are hosting an African Prayer Summit in Stellenbosch from October 7th to 9th. Under their guidance, the Prayer Watches are experiencing significant growth locally and internationally. The Summit in Stellenbosch will bring together prayer coordinators from across Africa. We are still deciding whether to attend and are considering the possibility of combining the trip with much needed family visits.

Throughout all the activity, we are constantly seeking the Lord's guidance as we look towards next year. The golden thread of prayer and city and community transformation is a given regardless where we are, but we sense that there will be a shift in ministry focus as Sugnet prepares to finish her season at the end of the year at Huppelkind. We will therefore appreciate your prayer and guidance dearly.

Thank you to everyone for your friendship and support. You are making a difference in our lives so that we can make a difference in the lives of others. Be blessed!

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