



QUARTERLY CONNECT

Above & Beyond



RECENT SERMON SERIES

Return to Me - 6 talks in Malachi by Scott Tubman.

"Fully Committed. Fully invested" - 3 talks by Mervyn Eloff on Giving.

All our talks are available on our website and our YouTube channel.

RECTOR'S REFLECTION – OCTOBER 2023

Dear friends,

As we celebrate 55 years of God's grace and kindness to St James I am reminded of the importance of 'thankfulness' in our daily lives. Thankfulness is, or at least ought to be, a human virtue as we all have people to whom we can be thankful to for their love, support, and generosity toward us. And birthdays are often the time when our debt to these people comes to mind and when we say 'thank you' to them.

As Christians however, there is a special aspect of thankfulness that we really ought to be mindful of and intentional about. I am speaking of course of our thankfulness toward God, our Heavenly Father. And, to be honest, it is as I remember this that I am aware of how easy it is to go through life presuming on God's grace without actually taking time to say 'thank you' to Him. I wonder if the same is true for you?

The Bible is full of reasons for thankfulness to God. These are wonderfully summarised in the words of the prayer of General Thanksgiving in our Prayer Book. In this prayer we come to acknowledge that God is Almighty, the Father of all mercies and that despite our own unworthiness He displays goodness and loving kindness to us and to all people. We are called to thank and praise Him for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life, but above all for His immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ. We are thus reminded to thank God regularly not simply for His general grace, which is shown to everyone, but for His special grace, His saving grace, which is ours in Christ.

These same reasons for thankfulness are found in the Book of Psalms – the Prayer Book of the early church – perhaps best summarised in the repeated exhortation “Oh give thanks to the LORD for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever” (Psalm 107vs1; 118vs1,29; 136vs1-3). Indeed, I have found these three Psalms (107, 118, 136) a particular challenge and encouragement and I commend them to you for personal study and reflection during this Birthday month.

But the prayer of General thanksgiving also captures the Bible's teaching on how thanksgiving should be expressed, especially in the petition: “Give us we pray, such a deep sense of all your mercies that we be truly thankful and praise you, not only with our lips but with our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days”. Thanksgiving then is found at least in words of thanks, but also in a lifestyle motivated by thankfulness to God.

Paul captures this practical outworking of thankfulness brilliantly in his letters, reminding us that in whatever we do, in word or deed we should “do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Colossians 3:17). The honour of Christ's name and gratitude to God should thus be the motivation for all that we say and do. What a challenging word that is to all of us, especially in a culture in which self is central and grumbling rather than thankfulness is so often the norm.

And so as we celebrate our 55th birthday at St James, the question for each of us is this: Are we truly thankful to the Lord? And if so, how will we express our thankfulness? One of the ways in which Alison and I do this every year is to give a special thank offering, above and beyond our monthly giving at St James. Can I invite each of you to join us in that, as you are able.

But above and beyond that, we by God's grace are taking this opportunity to remind ourselves of God's goodness and loving-kindness and especially of His wonderful gift of salvation in Christ. And having done that, we are committing ourselves afresh to a life of thankfulness, to His service and to walking before Him in holiness and righteousness until He returns or calls us home. What a joy it is to know that as we make this commitment, we do not do it alone, but as part of a wonderful family of believers here at St James

Yours in His Service
Mervyn Eloff
Rector



FINANCE UPDATE

Since August we have made a concerted effort as a church to be transparent about the financial situation here at St James. We have been encouraged by the initial response and there is much to be thankful for as we close out the third quarter of the year.

We give much thanks to God for those in our congregation who have heeded the call to support the church with respect to its finances through increases in tithing and/or additional one-off donations since July. We have seen a notable improvement in the key metrics being monitored assessing the financial health of the church.

The two key figures we want to continue reporting on is the number of monthly EFTs we receive as well as our monthly deficit.

Number of EFTs

The numbers of EFTs have increased over August and September when compared to the prior period. This shows that there are congregants who are now supporting the church regularly and we trust that they may continue to do so. **Our prayer is that this number will increase to 450 by the end of the year.** Please consider switching to regular EFT giving.

Monthly Deficit

The monthly deficit has reduced since July and even reached positive territory in August thanks to some one-off donations received. However, if we exclude one-off donations, which is a more accurate reflection of the financial position of the church, we are still in the red. As costs have been managed downwards, in the long term this can only be resolved through a sustainable and consistent increase in normal tithing by existing and new members. If we can once again encourage everyone to consider increasing their giving by a certain percentage this will go a long way in reducing our monthly deficit.

Where we stand for 2023

We remain at **a year-to-date September deficit of R 1 157 903** and are therefore relying largely on the birthday offering at this equivalent magnitude over October, November, and December to ensure that we are able to break even for the year. In 2022, we raised R 850 000 through the birthday offering, and we trust that the Lord places an even greater conviction in the hearts of those who are able to give above and beyond their normal tithe.

We continue to trust that the Lord will provide for the needs of the church for the rest of the year and that you will continue and even grow your partnership in the gospel

Kyle Fourie and Gareth Heüer
Church Treasurer and Executive Pastor.



MINISTRY FOCUS

SUPER YOUTH CAMP 2023

Over the weekend of 29th Sept – 1st Oct we had our annual Super Youth Camp (Grades 8 – 12) at Mizpah Campsite in Grabouw. There was much stress in the lead up to camp when the campsite owner called on the Wednesday morning before camp to say that they are still without power or running water due to the storms the weekend before!

After much panic, prayer and plan B hunting, the owner called back on Thursday to say that the problem was sorted, thank you Lord! We then went into full camp shopping and prep mode, it was hectic, but we got it done in the end. And it was absolutely worth it because we had such an amazing weekend together! We had 75 teens at camp this year! Some highlights from the weekend include:

- New teens to our youth group sharing around the campfire how they have “found a home” at youth.
- Wonderful one-on-one chats getting to know the teens better.
- Amazing food!
- Great singing!
- Listening to the testimonies of a teen and one of the leaders and hearing how our Lord is working in their lives.
- And a real togetherness on camp with lots of fun and laughs.

All the praise and glory belong to our Lord Jesus! And we keep praying that He will continue to work in the hearts of the teens. That His word which was read and taught at camp will take root in their hearts and transform their lives, for His glory.

A personal highlight for me was realizing again just how special youth ministry is. It is truly a privilege and joy to serve our teens alongside a wonderful team of leaders. I pray that our Lord might bless me with many more years to serve in this special ministry.

Last but certainly not least, a huge thank you to all of you who donated toward Super Youth Camp so that no teen was left behind. I have truly seen the Lord's hand at work in the hearts of people in their generosity. Giving is part of our worship of God and it gives Him great joy when those who have the means to are able to contribute to gospel work in this way. Thank you too for all your prayers. We truly appreciate it!

Leights and the Youth Team.



PARTNERSHIP @ ST JAMES

The motto on the front of our building says, "Together-For Everyone-For Christ." The first question one might ask is, what does it mean to be together in this mission?

The answer comes in just one word, "Partnership". Partnership is the word we use to talk about becoming a member at St James. We chose it because it speaks of an active, ongoing, relationship. It's also the language of the apostle Paul in the New Testament. His letter to the Philippians begins and ends with gospel partnership (1:5 and 4:15).

To that end, we are running the next partnership class on Sunday the 12th of November in preparation for our special Partnership Service 2 weeks later on the 26th of November. During the class we will discuss our distinctives, convictions and values. We will learn more about God's church and what it means to be a part of it, as well as the denomination of which we are a part. There will also be opportunity to get involved in serving so that you don't slip into becoming a passenger, but engage as a true gospel partner.

The class is open to anyone who is a Christian, considers St James their home church, and has been regularly attending for 6 months or more.

See the details below and **RSVP to Sharon at the office by Thursday 9 November**

Partnership Class

Sunday 12 November

11.30am – 2pm

The Meeting Room (upstairs)

We would like to enjoy a light lunch together, so if you could please bring a plate of eats to share, we will provide the dessert, coffee & tea.

Sharon Ruthenberg : sharon@stjames.org.za

WHAT'S COMING IN TERM 4

OCTOBER

- 15: Welcome & Info Tea (Newcomers) at 9am & 11.20am in the DG Mills
- 17: Discovering Christianity starts and runs over 5 weeks in the Studio @7pm
- 20: PODClub upstairs in the Meeting Room at 6pm
- 20: Friday Men's Breakfast 6.30am in the DG Mills
- 28: Church Carpark Braai & Picnic : 12pm – 4pm
- 29: 8am & 10am services - Birthday Celebration Sunday
- 29: Kids Camp Cake Sale after services to raise funds for Kids Camp 2024

NOVEMBER

- 3: Youth Cutting Edge at St James in the Auditorium (& DG Mills) from 7pm till 9pm
- 5: Confirmation Service at the 10am
- 10: PODClub in The Meeting Room at 6.30pm
- 12: Partnership Class with light lunch at 11.30am
- 19: Baptism Sunday at the 10am
- 23: Women-to-Women Connect Event in the DG Mills at 7pm
- 26: Partnership Sunday
- 29: Combined last Growth Group event for the year at 7.30pm in the DG Mills

DECEMBER

- 1: Mini Carol Service at 5pm in the DG Mills
- 3: Carol Services at both 10am & 6.30/7pm in the Auditorium
- 3: Christmas Crafters market in the afternoon from 3pm
- 7: GWC Graduation in the afternoon
- 9: Last Challengers meeting for the year – will start up again in Feb 2024
- 15- 20: Crossword Youth Camp
- 24: Christmas Eve Services 8am, 10am & 11pm
- 25: Christmas Day services 8am & 10am (All Age)
- 31: Last Sunday of the year – 8am & 10am services



STAY CONNECTED @ ST JAMES



ST JAMES WHATSAPP GROUPS

Our Whatsapp groups are essential to stay in touch on a regular basis. We have a number of groups which send out specific information about services and relevant church notices. These groups are divided into the following categories:

Youth

Young Adults

Quarterlife

Church@home 35-55

Church@home 55+

If you are not part of one of these groups, you can join via a requested link. (Due to the POPI Act we do not add names without your consent/request). Please get in touch with one of our staff team if you would like to join one of these groups.

Anything else?

For all other information contact the Church Office

Tel: 021 671 7070

Email: info@stjames.org.za

THANK YOU FOR ONGOING FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY TO US AS A LOCAL CHURCH.

We are working harder than ever to see God's Kingdom grow and we appreciate your investment in the gospel with us.



Snap here to pay



BANKING DETAILS

St James Church
Acc No. 072921137
Standard Bank
Branch: 02620919

