

# Hays in South Africa November 2020



26 November 2020

Dear Friends at Tuggeranong Baptist Church

Greetings from David, Janenne and Rachel. Welcome to our final newsletter for what has been a crazy year.

There would not be many people on planet Earth that have not been impacted by COVID-19. While the impact for us has been significant, we can see that there have been some real blessings through this year. One of those is the additional time we have been able to spend with the children. And not just the time, but the quality of that time. The difficulties of the year and the natural concerns the children have had about COVID and its impact have allowed us to have conversations and impacts that might not otherwise have happened.

Recently David was reflecting with a few of the teenagers on Paul's exhortation to the Philippians about not being anxious.

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

*Philippians 4:6-7*

This included talking about the difference between worry and anxiety. To be honest, I hadn't really thought much about this before. Some years ago, I watched a film called "Bridge of Spies" in which Tom Hanks plays a lawyer defending a Russian spy. Throughout the movie, as the pair faced obstacle after obstacle and seemed to be out of options, the lawyer would ask the spy, "Aren't you worried?" And every single time the spy would respond, "Would it help?" I liked the movie as it really showed the futility of worrying about things (or so I thought).

I think like many, I have used the terms *worry* and *anxiety* interchangeably. Now I was being asked if there was a difference between worry and anxiety. So I asked Google and was intrigued with what I found. According to Psychology Today, "Worry tends to be more focused on thoughts in our heads, while anxiety is more visceral in that we feel it throughout our bodies." When we worry, our thoughts are often caused by realistic or specific concerns we can resolve by problem-solving. "Worry can lead us to think about solutions and strategies for dealing with a given situation. Anxiety is more like a hamster wheel that spins us around but doesn't lead us to productive solutions." Anxiety can lead to physical and psychological illness.

I still like the movie, but now I see that worry can be a positive thing and we must avoid becoming anxious. I am so glad that Paul's exhortation is not to be anxious. We can have God's perfect peace when we bring every situation to Him in prayer.

Don't forget we love to hear from you! Please keep in touch and share what is happening in your life, your family and how we can pray for you.

With our love

David, Janenne & Rachel

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## COVID-19 Update

The situation in South Africa with COVID has continued to improve since our last newsletter. We are now at lockdown level 1 (of the 5 levels). We are able to go out more when we have a day off, but still need to social distance and wear a mask when in public.



*With Petra on a day out at Umhlanga*

While there has been a significant improvement over the last few months, the last week has seen an increase in the number of new cases and there is now the possibility of the lockdown level going back up. Until last week, the average daily new cases were about 1,600 and had remained at that level since the end of August when it had been about 2,000 new cases per day. Over the last week, the average daily new cases have increased to 2,600. There is

concern about a second wave, especially with the expected level of socialising over the festive season.

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In our last newsletter, we reported the number of active cases was 80,000 (down from the peak of over 130,000 in July). The number of active cases has now dropped to 35,000, even though the rate of new cases during that period has remained constant. The mortality rate has stayed the same. The reduction in active cases is good news and seems to indicate that people are recovering more quickly and/or treatment is now more effective.

School has continued the same over the last few months. All the children have now returned to school on at least a part-time basis, with staggered attendance to meet social distancing requirements. So daily home schooling has continued as before, which has kept Rachel and Janenne extremely busy.

This year we have five children in grade 12 - their final year of school. This is a record number for us - we usually have between one and three children in their final year.

These five are currently in the middle of their matriculation exams, which run from the beginning of November to the middle of December. This year has been particularly stressful for them due to the disruption of lockdown and missing months of school attendance. The education department considered

having the exams cover a reduced curriculum. However, since the exam papers were set more than a year ago, well before COVID, and there was no time to set new exam papers, the department decided to continue with the exams covering the full curriculum, despite the shortened academic year. David has been kept very busy assisting the grade 12 children preparing for their maths and science exams.

When the lockdown changed to level 2 a few months ago, churches were allowed to resume services but were limited to 50 people attending. At the church we go to in Hillcrest, the weekly attendance is over 2,000 and the church decided to continue with just online services. So we continued to have our own Sunday morning church services at iKhethelo.



*Sunday morning service at iKhethelo*



*Back at church in Hillcrest- social distancing and masks required*

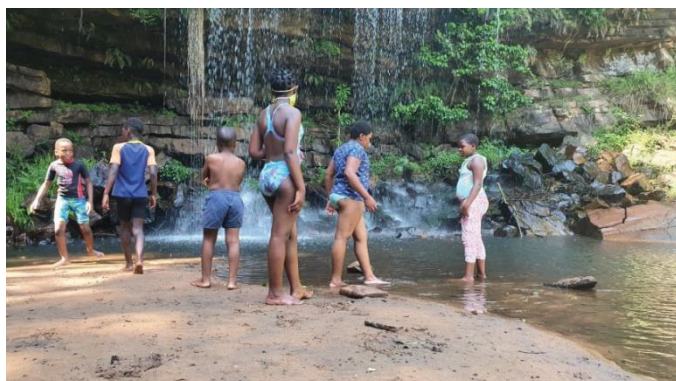
When the lockdown changed to level 1, church services were allowed with up to 50% capacity, with a maximum of 250 people. Our church in Hillcrest resumed services, now with four services on a Sunday to allow as many as possible to attend. For the last month, we have returned to church in Hillcrest. We have to social distance and wear masks, but it has been wonderful to be back and the children have enjoyed seeing their friends at church again. Like many churches, there is an online booking system for church attendance. Every person needs to be individually registered and that keeps David busy for an hour each week to book us all in.

## Walks and Waterfalls

For the six months that we were at lockdown levels 5 down to 2, the only time the children were able to leave iKhethelo was to attend school. The children love going for walks. We have been able to do short walks on the iKhethelo property, but it has only been with the lowering to level 1 that we have been able to take the children out for longer hikes.

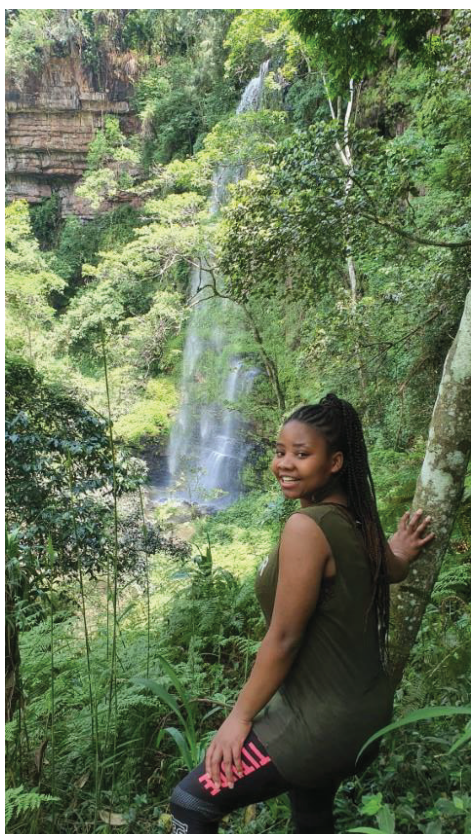


The photo above is from one of the walks around iKhethelo. While this is still on the iKhethelo property, it is on roads outside the security fence that surrounds the village, so we need to wear masks.



The photo on the left and the next page are from recent hikes to waterfalls





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## Birthday Shopping

One of our joys is celebrating birthdays with the children. With so many children, there is hardly a week goes by without a birthday to celebrate and often there is more than one. During a weekly gathering of everyone in the village, a few of the children will pray for the child celebrating their birthday that week. Each child has a party in their cottage and gets to go shopping and choose a present.

For the first six months of lockdown, we were still able to provide parties, but children were not able to go out birthday shopping. When the lockdown was lowered to level 1, we allowed the children to go birthday shopping. So in the last month, we have had quite a bit of catching up to do as children were eager to go to the nearby mall and choose their presents.

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## More Cottages Painted

You know we love bright colours at iKhetelo. In our last newsletter, we showed cottages 5 and 7 with their new coats. Since then we have received donated paint to freshen up cottages 11/12 and 13/14.





## Heritage Day

September 24th is Heritage Day in South Africa and is a public holiday. On this day, South Africans celebrate by remembering the cultural heritage of the many cultures that make up the population of South Africa. Events are staged throughout the country to commemorate this. We always have a special day at iKhethelo, with a traditional Zulu feast, dressing up and lots of traditional dancing.



*David dressed in a pair of jeans converted into umblaselo - traditional Zulu men's trousers*

One of the traditional Zulu foods eaten on special occasions such as Heritage Day is mogodu (tripe). Below you can see a couple of the teenage girls preparing the cow's stomach for cooking.



As well as celebrating South African cultures, we shared some Australian culture by singing Waltzing Matilda. First, we needed to explain the meaning of the words in the song using a PowerPoint presentation. For example, Billabong is not just a brand of clothing. Words such as Matilda, swagman, jumbuck and tuckerbag all needed explanation. And what does "Waltzing Matilda" mean anyway?



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### For those who pray:

Praise God:

- all at iKhethelo have remained safe from COVID-19
- that the COVID-19 situation in South Africa has improved significantly

Please pray:

- for continued protection over the village from coronavirus
- that there is no second wave of infections in South Africa
- for our five grade 12 children who are sitting their matriculation exams between 5 November and 12 December, and for their plans for work or further study next year
- for our summer holiday program through December and January
- for strength, endurance and patience during this challenging time

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*Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.*

*James 1:27*



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