



NOVEMBER 2022

Dear Prayer Partners

We are in the home stretch of 2022, with a busy October behind us and a fairly busy November ahead of us. It was good to see the familiar faces of Chris Spies and his Unyoke team after a long absence due to Covid. After we did Healing of Memories with the Residence and Staff on Volmoed, facilitated by Michael Lapsley and his team, in August, we welcomed a group participating in their journey of Healing of Memories. The first week of this month saw us welcoming the group from the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, USA. This booking was postponed a number of times also due to Covid.

This was followed by the annual Colloquium of Theologians, who by all accounts had a good time of discussion on the topic of acedia, the Noonday Demon.

To lighten the mood we are enjoying the beauty of Spring and the display of colourful flowers in the garden. The roses are blooming and there is a prolific amount of flowering fynbos.

As with some of our visitors we have been waiting with anticipation for this beautiful king protea to open - at times even wondering if the bud had died.



This month we are also welcoming our new patrons who have been appointed after Desmond Tutu, our previous patron's death.

They are Dr Mary Burton, Dr Lionel Louw and Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. This will be marked by planting of two stinkwood trees. One in memory of Desmond Tutu and the other for the new patrons.

Esther

### NOVEMBER VISITORS

1-3 November— Group from the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

4-6 November— Colloquium

25 –27 Julian Weldman men's retreat

26 Mac Arthur Wedding

Various individual guests—some of whom will be on retreat.

As November is the a month of Thanksgiving

We give thanks for all our visitors.

The hard work our staff put in to keep the property and accommodation in good order for our visitors.

The continued support financially and in the prayers of our prayer partners and Volmoed family.

**GIVE  
THANKS**  
FAMILY • FRIENDS • GRATITUDE

“Oktober is die mooiste mooiste maand” says the poem by C. Louis Leipoldt

“Wat skeel dit as ons later weer donker dae kry?” Leipoldt did not know about loadshedding, but there is a beauty that outshadows the dark. Being community at Volmoed is one way of taking the “skeel” out of the darkness that surrounds our beloved country and the world at the moment. Many months back Volmoed acknowledged that we were in a monastic moment (February 2020). Although we are now presumably post-COVID, we are not in a post-monastic moment. We sense around and within us the spiritual darkness and we experience the yearning to gather together to the Kingdom of God. The process of moving towards developing the Volmoed covenant of love is now moving forward. There is a sense that as we start to embody the spirit of community love, we must prepare for the journey or pilgrimage. The covenant is not a constitution, or even the classic vision or mission. This is not about policing. It is more like the pillar of fire at night that shows us the way we need to walk, even more than the visionary goal. This is about building living guidelines. Why is this in a prayer letter? Although we are starting both a process and penning a product, I am so aware that the Spirit gives life and the written word can stifle that. Please pray that together we can be a beautiful part of navigating and building love, truth, justice and beauty in a world that is increasingly... not so beautiful. To use Leipoldt’s words, gather enough “mooi”, for the “donker dae”.

Keep praying for us financially. Bookings have significantly improved, but our budget is tight and we are trying to minimize debt and look forward to celebrate the end of the year without debt. The challenge of debt, or leverage, as some businesses call it, is that it is a mechanism that if used wisely and as a scaffold to build a better plan, is not bad business. Please pray that Volmoed may develop the better plans so that we can use the scaffolding for other places or keep it in storage for some dream work plans. Please thank God that our finances are much more stable than they used to be. Pray for us as we look at how we approach fundraising in a way that is pleasing to our God, the overall provider of Volmoed.

October has also been our month for stack burning. As we approach November, we also approach the months where veld fires are a danger. Volmoed is now part of the new Hemel and Aarde Conservancy and after burning more than 30 stacks of alien growth, we are opening up significant land for indigenous growth. Please pray that we will receive wisdom and favour as we decide how Volmoed will increase its natural fynbos beauty for aesthetic and even economic gain. Although much of the tree removal and tree planting is for future generations, there is a sense that the Volmoed of the future is already emerging, in even greater beauty.

Talking of beautiful (mooi), Mike Guy was in Chapel this Thursday. Mooi! Beauty has so many faces. I salute Mike’s courage. It has been a long haul. I am going to stop writing for a while, although my thoughts continue, otherwise it will no longer be October. By God’s grace, November is already knocking on the door and thoughts of advent, trees (again), family, friends, and gifts. Many of those friends and families will celebrate at Volmoed. Others will carry Volmoed with them as they huddle around fires in the northern hemisphere. To all of us, Volmoed is a gift to give and a gift to unwrap, but enough of that now. I get ahead of myself. I appreciate you Volmoed, wherever you are. As I close this snippet, I remember that for many the end of the year is also a difficult time for those who are burnt out and feeling desperate. This is a challenge of our time, where many, including Christians, face a dark night of the soul. All the best for our colloquium next month on this theme.

God bless. Mooi loop!

Tony

Dear Volmoed Family



On the topic of Creation I thought I would share some more. From sunsets, the Francolin's new chicks and even the Das-sie admiring the greatness of the whales wandering our oceans.

We give thanks this month for more of our old friends re- turning to Volmoed and groups that never came because of the Covid restrictions.

We give thanks for the safety of our men and the successful controlled burns clearing large areas of alien vegetation. This leaves us with what "looks like an airstrip" as a fire break and very little vegetation should any flame think about com- ing to visit. We hope to increase fynbos growth in these are- as.

We also give thanks for Mike's recovery, and the great people sent our way to assist him and Alyson. What a happy moment is was having him back with us in the Chapel!

Please continue to pray with us, as we keep discussing sustainable fundraising possibilities. With that in mind we are looking at the last Paint and Sip evening on the 19<sup>th</sup> Nov here at Volmoed. Creation will be partnering with us this time.

