

Chaplain's Corner September 2022

Warm greetings and a new format - as I write, it is not yet clear what that format will be but I live in faith and hope and trust!

Gratitude abounds once more - August was wonderful. Before coming to Volmoed in Feb 2020, I dreamed about doing a 'Healing of Memories' workshop with Michael Lapsley and Fatima Swartz from the Institute for Healing of Memories. After many months of working with their staff and Volmoed, and a preparation session in April, this workshop took place over two sets of two morning sessions – a new format for everyone. It was a profoundly meaningful experience for those who attended, with trilingual translation in English, Xhosa and Afrikaans.



We drew our life stories on paper, shared in small groups, discussed themes and feelings associated with healing, forgiveness, reconciliation, hurt, abuse and painful, difficult experiences. For many it was the first time they shared their difficult stories with other people - some expressed that it was 'life changing.' What a gift! Bonds of community and relationships were strengthened and deepened. Many have asked that the process continues, and we are working out how to do that.



Music took centre stage when the Ingoma choir from Imizamo Yethu, Hout Bay, came for a weekend of singing and rehearsals, yoga, boxing, and meditation. I joined them on the Friday night to tell the Volmoed story and offer questions for reflection during their weekend. I took them on a hike to the very full De Bos dam, where they stood on the wall and sang 'Stand By Me' for the bystanders. Everywhere they went, they sang! They offered two beautiful songs at the Sunday eucharist, what a joy. Truly, as St Augustine said, those who sing, pray twice!





Michael Battle from the USA, and the Tutu Travel seminar - a group of Episcopal and Methodist clergy and lay leaders - also graced Volmoed with their presence. I joined them to tell stories about gender and racial justice in the church, the journey to women's ordination, and to offer an evening Taizé prayer service. They met with John de Gruchy, attended the brothers' prayers and our Thursday eucharist. I was able to join them for some meals and outings in the

area, and was reminded of the extraordinary beauty and privilege of living in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley. On the Sunday we attended local Anglican parishes in Hermanus and Zwelihle, where group members preached and celebrated eucharist. This was all a big gift to me.

All of this made for a month where I experienced what I had always thought it would be like as the Volmoed chaplain. With Covid-19 restrictions gone, much has opened up and ministry life is being refashioned and reclaimed. What a gift of grace this is!

Dayenu! (In Hebrew, 'it would have been enough!') and, this month my sister and brother-in-law visited from Australia. Lise came to Volmoed for five days, for good sister-bonding, and I was in Cape Town for much appreciated family time. I also preached at Rondebosch United Church, the sermon I had preached at Volmoed on 'Recovering Mary Magdalene'.



I also attended a three day drum circle leadership training workshop, together with Siya, and Don Shay. It was amazing, watch this space in future, to hear how we discern to take this further.

What a vibrant, high energy, beautiful, profound time of ministry and personal relationships and refreshment it has been!

With a full and grateful heart,
Wilma

