



Morning Star Children's Centre

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18th December 2023.

Dearest Friends,

And it's Christmas! Another year has gone by. We've had good times and hard times, storms and calm, joys and sorrows. We've all had our ups and downs, some more so, than others, but through it all, Almighty God has been ever present, ever faithful and ever true to His promises. He has kept us and sustained us and His Word has comforted and instructed us and brought us peace and joy.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise Him all creatures here below
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Praise God the father who's the source,
Praise God the Son who is the course,
Praise God the Spirit who's the flow
Praise God, our portion here below."
Thomas Ken (1674).



Toddlers' Christmas Party

Today is our last official day at Morning Star for 2023. Our children and most of our staff members are already on holiday. The whirl of activities of the past month, all our end-of-year functions and parties are behind us, once again. "Yesterday" we were planning for the year ahead and today we're bidding 2023 "good-bye." In many ways, 2023 has been the worst year of my entire life but I take comfort in the fact that God, in His providence, has orchestrated events the way they have unfolded and that "for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28.



Grades' Class Christmas Party

Looking back over the past year, my 2 overwhelming thoughts are:

1. Your amazing generosity and support of our ministry here in Welkom and
2. God's abounding grace and ever-present guiding hand in all our activities.

All else fades into insignificance. Without God at the heart of our Organisation and without your prayers, encouragement and monetary support, we'd certainly not be where we are today. I stand amazed at all God has accomplished since our inception 24 years ago. From 8 to well over close to 800 children, from 4 to over 40 staff members; ever-expanding premises; 8 vehicles, always with enough money in our bank account to feed our children and their families, transport them to and from home each weekday and pay our staff a monthly salary. Up to 2, 500 children have been through our doors and received assistance in one way or another since our inception on 24th January 2000. Isn't that absolutely mind-boggling! Yes, we've only scratched the surface in the big scheme of things – but, at the same time – and with your help – have made a vast difference in the lives of the families God has brought our way. Thank you, one and all, from the bottom of our hearts.

Some of the highlights over the past 12 months include:

- January 2023 – Welcoming 35 new children to our two Morning Star Centres.
- February – Our annual Sea Trip and Linda Gardiner's and Isabella Astengo's visit and video made of Morning Star. Such a wonderful gift from two very special ladies.
- March – Bidding internal accountant, Naledi Marumo farewell and welcoming Rose Khambula in her place.
- April – Hosting Ian & Hilary Sneller (from England) overnight on 18th May. Ian's father, Andrew Sneller, left Morning Star a sizeable legacy when he died and it was so special that Ian & Hilary took the time to come all the way to Welkom to see the organization for themselves.
- May – Joshua Bolaji's and Joan's successful fundraising trip to England & Wales.
- June - Our annual Holiday Club for our 10 – 13 year olds where we endeavour to prepare them for teenagehood and equip them to say 'no' to sexual advances.
- July - Saying 'goodbye' to General Manager, Albert Duvenhage.
- August – Welcoming new General Manager, John Burrows.
- September – Employing a second youth care worker, Shedreck Hollane, to assist Pastor Revival with the colossal task of ministering to and counselling our teenagers and young adults. Thank you so much for the funding that came in for this need. (Praise God that a recent, additional monetary gift will enable us to employ a 3rd youth care worker in 2024.)
- October - The successful installation of solar panels on wheel-based trolleys so that we have power/electricity during our frequent 'load-shedding' periods.
- November – Hosting our annual Gogos' (Grandmothers) Christmas Party on 25th to thank them, once again, for the role they play in their orphaned grandchildren's lives.



**Grandmother
Christmas
Party**

- December – Receiving well over 100 hand-knitted dolls from Seven Rivers Outreach in Kwa Zulu Natal. Thank you, David Brown, for travelling all the way to Welkom to hand-deliver them over to us. Also saying goodbye to lovely professional nurse, Pulane Leeuw and teacher, Shiyiwe Ziyeka. Happy retirement, both of you.



This Christmas, as you ponder afresh God's gift of His only Son, Jesus Christ, to a lost, sinful world, may sheer praise and worship burst forth from your souls at such love, mercy and grace.

Love in Christ,
Joan

POINTS FOR PRAYER:

Praise and thanks for:

1. God's protection and wondrous blessings over the past year.
2. The sustained good health of most of our children. We only had 2 deaths in 2023.
3. Ron Adams' return to good health. Ever since his shunt was removed he's gone from strength-to-strength. Praise God he's not needed another shunt into his brain.
4. Our finances – that God has wondrously supplied our every need, over and above expectation.

Please pray for:

1. The safety of our children and staff over the Christmas holidays.
2. For our sick and frail children – especially Siyabulela Latile, and Philokuhle Mraushe.
3. For Ron & Joan as they transition to Johannesburg on 5th January 2024, God willing, and begin the next chapter of their lives.

“Now to him who is able to do far more than all we ask or think,
according to the power at work within us,
to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus
through out all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

Ephesians 3:20-21