



## Returning to the UK for three months' furlough

Dear friends,

It is hard to believe that on 31 August we will have been serving as Mission Partners for three years. So much has happened during these last few years, the expected and the unexpected, the joys and the sorrows. It will be good to be able to share some of these experiences with many of you for the first time in person during the next three months whilst we are in the UK.

You may have expected the heading to have been something like "Returning home", rather than "Returning to the UK." However, the heading we have chosen more fully represents what we are feeling as we prepare to return to the UK. Yes, in some ways it is returning home, but the UK doesn't feel like home in the way that it did before. One simple example is that we now have no place of our own in which to stay whilst we are in the UK, something which has surprised our South African friends. We are grateful for family and friends who have opened their homes to us when we visit. It also reflects the way in which Germiston has begun to feel more like "home" or at least "home from home". We are now feeling much more rooted in Germiston having been here for more than two years and got to know many people who we can now call friends.

It has been hard to explain to friends here about the purpose of our visit to the UK. Many people have assumed that it will be a three-month holiday. It is true that we will have time to rest and relax whilst we are in the UK as well as enjoying spiritual retreats. We will also have the joy of spending time with people we love. Yet, there is also an element of "work" connected with the visit. The Methodist Church in Britain wants us to report on what we have been doing during the past three years, hopefully with a view to extending our stay in South Africa for a further three years. We will also be visiting friends in churches in Cardiff, Huddersfield and Leeds who have been supporting us in prayer and in other ways during the past three years. We will be able to share our experiences in much more depth than has been possible in these newsletters and in a way that allows people to ask questions of us. We have been touched by the number of people who have been in touch about the possibility of meeting

up to spend time together whilst we are in the UK. The sad reality is that we will not be able to spend time with particular families in the way that we would like to do, simply because of time constraints. For this reason, we would like to share when we will be having public engagements in the hope that you might be able to attend one or more of these gatherings.

On the weekend of 8-9 July, we will be in Cardiff. On the Saturday afternoon, there will be a social with a bring-and-share supper at Insol Court. On the Sunday morning, we will be leading worship at St. Andrew's Methodist Church; the service begins at 10.45. For further details, please contact Mrs Gill Peace on [peaceloss1@btinternet.com](mailto:peaceloss1@btinternet.com).

On Sunday 16 July, Jane will be preaching at New North Road Baptist Church in Huddersfield; the service begins at 10.30.

On Tuesday 18 July, we will be at New North Road Baptist Church, Huddersfield, for an evening of conversation. The evening will begin with light refreshments at 17.30. For further details, please contact Mrs Mary Whalley on [whallmary@btinternet.com](mailto:whallmary@btinternet.com).

On Sunday 6 August, we will be in Leeds. In the morning we will lead worship at Trinity Methodist Church, Bramley; the service begins at 10.30. In the evening we will be hosting a conversation at Hunslet Methodist Church, beginning at 18.00. For further details, please contact Ms Audrey Wilks on [audreywilks@btinternet.com](mailto:audreywilks@btinternet.com).

On Sunday 20 August, Steve will be preaching at Netherpton Methodist Church, Huddersfield; the service begins at 10.30.

## **Please pray for...**

Your prayers would be much appreciated for the following:

- Finishing well here and making the final preparations to return to the UK;
- Finding time and space to prepare for the various public engagements in the UK;
- To have a good balance of time with family and friends as well as to rest and relax by ourselves;
- Discussions about the hopeful return to South Africa in September 2017 for a further three-year period and the nature of our roles.