

MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP



It is my joy and privilege to be part of the celebration of the Bryanston Methodist's Jubilee celebrations.

Jacqui, Rebekah, Daniel and I arrived in December 1999 to serve at BMC. From the moment we arrived at BMC, our family was received with so much warmth and love. I was a phase 2 probationer minister and Jacqui had just candidated for the ministry. Being part of the team at BMC shaped our ministry, of which we are eternally grateful.

Bryanston Methodist Church is indeed a shining light in our community. It has, since its birth, impacted the life of tens of thousands of people. More people than we can ever imagine gave their lives to Jesus Christ because of the ministry of BMC. Not only that, scores of people, outside of the church, have come face to face with Jesus because of the caring nature of this community. The poor, widows, orphans, those in prison, have all received the grace of Jesus, because of BMC's response to the great commission and great command. You have taken Jesus' words, found in Matthew 25, and have made them come alive in the work you have done and continue to do in His name.

Many churches owe their existence to the 'outward looking' nature that is BMC. As BMC planted churches, so have those churches planted churches. So the thread that runs through all these churches continues to make an impact in Southern Africa, Africa and the World. BMC has always been an extremely generous church, and has supported ministers, ministries and churches along the width and breadth of our Connexion.

There are many ministers who came through the doors of BMC as probationers who had their lives and ministries shaped during their time there. Our Connexion is covered with these ministers who look back at their

time at BMC and know that the training and instruction they received set them on a course that has helped them become all that God has called them to be in serving the church. I was one of them. As I write this, I am flooded with memories of encounters I had with the beautiful people of God that have called Bryanston Methodist Church home.

I am aware of the fact there are times in our past, that as a church we have faced many challenges, and I would like to take a moment to honour those who have been faithful during good times and bad. I salute the families and individuals that have hung on, even when it seemed like all was lost. You have fought the good fight, thank you.

As you celebrate your Jubilee, please be assured of my prayers and support, as I, with you, give thanks to God for the life of this incredible community of people. So we celebrate, because God is faithful, true and gracious to us. We celebrate with the Saints of yesteryear, as we look to the future with hope and confidence, because of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Grace, Peace and Love,

Gary Rivas

Bishop

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Central District.

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTERS

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD; HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER.

Psalms 107:1

Without our history we would have no future. As we celebrate our diamond Jubilee we give thanks to God. We thank God for the men and women who were given the vision to begin a new work in this area of Bryanston and planted this church, all those who over the past 60 years have contributed to the development and growth of this community.

When people obey, God can do great things! Indeed God has done great things through the lives and work of the many ministers, staff, leaders and members who have helped BMC grow in a wide variety of ministries. The Gospel has been proclaimed, the sacraments celebrated, and people nurtured and strengthened. Through these, many lives have been transformed.

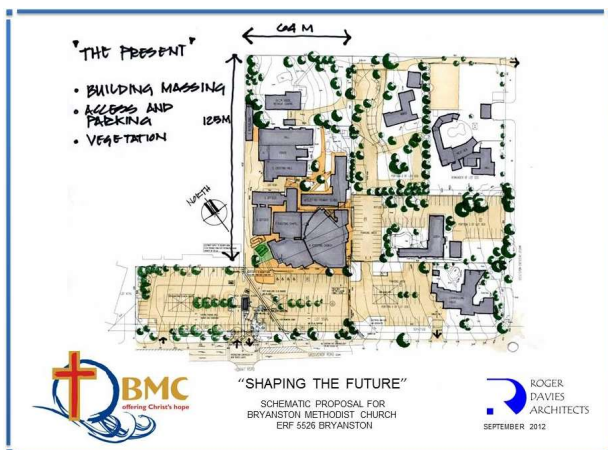
Prayer:

God of time and eternity, we thank you for this our Church. We thank you for your continued blessing upon us. Grant us your gifts of love, joy and peace, that our Jubilee celebrations will empower us for the new ventures You call us to.

Your servants in Christ

Lunga, Similo, Pete and Dalene

“Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, “Thus far the Lord has helped us.” (1 Samuel 7:12)



TO GOD BE THE GLORY, GREAT THINGS HE HAS DONE!

FOREWORD

Bryanston Methodist Church (BMC) is a church of Jesus and called to join His people to be His hands, feet and voice in the city of Johannesburg.

This book is a record of God's dealing in the Bryanston area over the past sixty years and how God has used ordinary men and women to spread the good news of Jesus. The journey has been an exciting one and it is the prayer of those involved in the production of this book that it will be an inspiration and encouragement to the people of Bryanston Methodist Church to continue to fulfill the mission of Jesus, to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20) with the same enthusiasm and vigour as those who have gone before.

THE PURPOSE AND VISION OF BMC

OUR PURPOSE:

BMC exists to be an instrument of Christ's hope in our broken and fast-changing world.

WE ARE CALLED TO BE A CHURCH

- of spiritual influence
- that develops significant influencers
 - that shares Jesus and grows
 - that makes disciples through:
 - * nurturing family life
 - * giving offenders a second chance
 - * empowering the poor

60 YEARS OF WITNESS!

This is the journey of faith that we celebrate this year. Our Bryanston Methodist community has been spreading the Good News of the Gospel in this area and further afield for 60 years - but how did it all begin?

Methodism in South Africa began in the Cape in the early 1800s but only started later in what was then the Transvaal when a Methodist Society was established in the 1860s. So how did Methodism come to Johannesburg? In 1887, a year after gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg was established to accommodate the numerous people who streamed north to the Reef to make their fortunes. It was a dreary, dusty place, especially when the wind blew through Marshalltown from the main Reef trenches. Randjieslaagte, where the town was pegged out, was a triangular piece of land between the farms Braamfontein, Doornfontein and Turffontein.

Marshalltown was a private township on land that belonged in 1886 to Samuel Fox and H B Marshall. It was here that the first Methodist Church was built in 1886. Some years later the **REV GEORGE WEAVIND** wrote to the Wesleyan Methodist Society in England saying that: "The discovery of gold brought an enormous influx of Europeans and others to the country. With the earliest gold seekers came a Colonial local preacher who gathered a congregation on a Sunday and held the first Methodist service".

This was in 1886 and **JOHN THORNHILL COOK** the preacher who preached from outside his tent at the bottom of what is today von Weilligh Street. He told the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) to men who were also far from home and needed to be reminded of the love of God.



Rev. G. Weavind

At first the Methodist minister from Pretoria would travel to Johannesburg to take services but in 1887 the **REV F BRISCOE** moved to the new town to become the first full-time Methodist minister in Johannesburg. The following year the Revs Weavind and James were also sent to Johannesburg as the numbers of Methodists grew.



WESLEYAN CHURCH AND PARSONAGE, PRESIDENT STREET, JOHANNESBURG.

The first Methodist Church in Marshalltown was built in 1887, designed by Thornhill Cook and opened by the Rev George Weavind in September 1887. The next church was built in President Street on land donated by Mr Marshall. This

was a more permanent structure built in 1889. Soon the number of Methodists grew and another church was built in Jeppestown in 1890. Gradually the number of Methodists grew and there was expansion to the East and West and also along the Vaal River. By 1895 there were 27 preaching places, 6 ministers, 2 deaconesses and 57 local preachers and by 1898 there were three Circuits in the Johannesburg district. There was also expansion to the north and in 1910 the Parktown North Methodist Church was opened, an outreach from Central Hall in the City. It was from here that churches were established in the 1950s at Trinity, Linden, Randburg and **BRYANSTON**.

BRYANSTON IN THE 1950s

Bryanston was proclaimed a township about 60 years ago and was one of the first suburbs to be serviced according to modern township principles. It was established on land owned by S A Townships and at the time that BMC was

established was made up largely of one acre plots or small holdings. S A Townships was a small independent mining house owned by Sir Abe Bailey and the name “Bryanston” was derived from the location of his London home – Bryanston Square.

Bryanston also had a link with the mining history of Johannesburg. The Braamfontein Spruit forms the southern and eastern boundaries of Bryanston and it was here in 1878 that a man named Pieter Marais found traces of gold. However, the small amount of gold found did not amount to much and Bryanston escaped becoming a mine.

At the time that Bryanston was being established the veld was full of protea bushes and many of our members who knew the area during those years remember them. There were also proteas on the land where BMC was built and before adequate accommodation for the Sunday School children was built, classes were held outside among the proteas.



As the suburb grew, so schools were established. The first, **ST PETERS**, was established in 1950 and became an Anglican Diocesan school in 1956. **ST STITHIANS**, a Methodist school, followed in 1953. It was here that the first Methodist Church services were held. **BRYANSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL** was opened in 1954 and for a while, before the church was built, the BMC Sunday School met there.

St Stithians came about through the vision of three men, **ALBERT COLLINS**, **WILLIAM MOUNT-STEPHENS** and **GILBERT TUCKER**. Collins died in 1937 but in 1942 the other two men formed a trust to collect money to establish St Stithians. The College opened its doors in 1953. There was a Chapel where Methodist parents met with the learners to worship.

A CHURCH OF OUR OWN – BMC IS BORN!

1956

In 1956 a group of parents with sons at St Stithians College got together and decided that Bryanston needed a Methodist Church of its own. These founder families included **TED AND ERITH DAY, HARRY AND MAVER HARRIS, HAROLD AND FRAN THOMPSON, EMRYS AND RENE HUGHES and DR. AND DORIS BUTLER.** They were joined by the **WATSON** and **JACOBS** families. These families worshipped at St Stithians while planning for the new church. However, while worshipping in the St Stithians chapel was fine for those parents with sons at the school, there were parents and children who did not attend the school. St Stithians was an all-boys college so what about the girls in the community? Something more was needed.



St Stithians Chapel

1959

In 1959 four **SUNDAY SCHOOL** teachers started the Bryanston Methodist Sunday School in the ballet studio in the basement of Bryanston Shopping Centre. The studio had a piano which was useful for leading the worship. Some twenty children arrived on the first day. They then brought friends and the Sunday school grew rapidly. By the end of the year there were 80 parents and children and classes had to be held outside to accommodate the numbers.



Sunday School under the trees

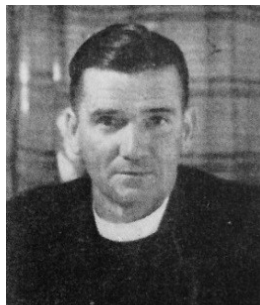
The first Sunday school picnic took place in 1959 in the grounds of the **HUGHES'** home in Witkoppen. At this time (1958) the **REV NEWTON FICK** had oversight of the new Society. He gave the Society a large pulpit Bible which is still in use in our Sanctuary.

1960

By 1960 the numbers had grown too large for the premises at Bryanston Shopping Centre and the Sunday school moved to Bryanston Primary School where they stayed until the new hall was built. In 1962 the Sunday School was able to meet in the newly built church Hall.



Sunday School in the Hall



Rev J B Webb

The original ground on which BMC is built had been purchased some years earlier by the Rev J B Webb of Central Methodist Church. He was Superintendent of the Circuit as well as Chairman of the District. He saw how the Bryanston area was developing and donated the ground to build a church.

The Rev Webb had hoped for an Ecumenical church but this did not materialize and Bryanston Methodist Society was established instead. The first minister to be given oversight of the developing Bryanston Methodist community was the **REV VIVIAN HARRIS**. Next a 100% loan of 350 pounds was granted by the Methodist Connexional Office and building commenced. What a difference to the cost of the present Church built nearly twenty five years later!



Rev Vivian Harris

1961

A hall was built consisting of two modules, a kitchen and two toilets. Before the roof was on it had become too small and a further three modules were added to provide for the growing numbers of people. On 10 December 1961 the Church Hall had its Opening and Dedication. The service was led by the Rev Dr J B Webb, by now the President of Conference, who had provided the land and the impetus for building the Hall. It was a modest building measuring 1650 square feet (153.29 square meters) and costing R10,000. (Compare with 350 pounds.)



First Hall

By the 1960s streets like Bryanston Drive and St James Crescent had already been built. Plots were for sale for between 350 and 650 pounds and there are members of the congregation who bought plots and moved to Bryanston during those years. There was also a member who related that they had looked at the plots but her husband had said that they were too far out of town!

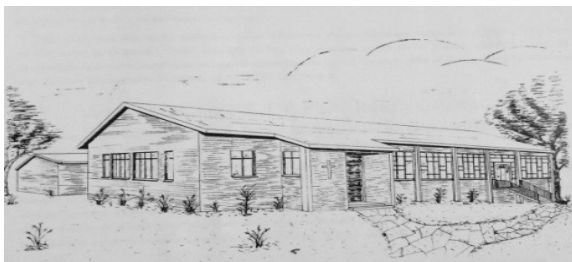
The **METHODIST WOMEN'S AUXILIARY** was established in South Africa in the early 1900s and started meeting at BMC in 1961. Their mandate is, "To advise the various associations as to the best ways of helping the womanhood of the Church to reach the highest and the best character and service". Their motto is "To Know Christ and Make Him Known".

1963

God continued to bless the work at Bryanston and the number of members grew. By 1963 the Sunday School was again bursting at the seams. So, less than two years after building the Hall, they found that the Sunday School, under the leadership of Ted and Erith Day had outgrown the present Hall and a larger Hall was needed to accommodate the growing

congregation. At the monthly Family Services most of the children had to sit on the floor. It was agreed that the Hall needed to be expanded. The extensions would be modest. They would add another 22 feet (6.7 meters) onto the main hall with a corresponding lower hall and caretaker's quarters. Everything had to be done according to the requirements of the Circuit Trust Committee and the Circuit Finance Committee. This would mean adding another R7,500 to the outstanding loan of R6,800 on the existing building. The amount needed was in addition to the ordinary running expenses.

The Leaders embarked on a "Planned Giving Campaign". The organisers of the Campaign were **CHARLES LUCAS** and **JOHNNY KOEKEMOER** with the help of **MATT EDDY**. In the information booklet the Rev



The enlarged Hall

Webb wrote: "So, once again, but this time without so much trepidation, we are planning to extend our building so as more adequately to cope with our work. And this is where you come in. I have always maintained that the strength of a church is to be gauged by the number of those who express that sense of belonging in terms of regular worship and regular giving".

The Sunday School, which had only been running for four years, already had 176 young people and 20 teachers. A **WESLEY GUILD** and a **CRADLE ROLL** had also been started and teenagers were attending Confirmation classes. The **WOMEN'S AUXILLARY** was started in October 1961 as a fellowship organization but they also helped to raise funds for the growing work at BMC.

In 1963 the new Circuit of Johannesburg North was established and the Bryanston Society became a member. Other churches in the Circuit were

Trinity Linden, Forest Town, Parktown North and Randburg. The Lord blessed the work of the new Circuit and it grew rapidly. Later various Retirement Villages were also added to the preaching plan and mission work spread northwards.

1964

A big change came at the end of 1963. In spite of having a building and a growing congregation BMC had no full-time minister of their own. The part-time ministers at this time were **REV MILTON MARTIN** and the **REV ATTWELL**. However, in 1964 the **REV ALLISTER RUNDLE** arrived, BMC's first full-time minister. He described his appointment thirty-two years later: "I arrived in Johannesburg to work at Bryanston and Randburg. At Bryanston the third module of the all-purpose hall had just been completed. The Society itself had just been transferred from the Johannesburg Circuit to the newly formed Johannesburg North Circuit. I had been ordained at the 1963 Conference and was still to graduate from Rhodes University." Rev. Rundle who was at Bryanston for two years was followed by the **REV BRIAN BROWN**. He was a truly inspired man who encouraged the congregation to build a manse and to begin to plan for a proper church building.

1968

By 1968, with financial help from the Johannesburg North Circuit, the new manse was built next to the church hall. Rev. Brown started small groups based on John Wesley's "class meetings". He wrote in his 1969 newsletter in the "Bryanston Messenger" that the groups would "promote a sense of fellowship" and that the members of the congregation would get to know each other. They would also "allow for a challenge to specific commitment and involvement".

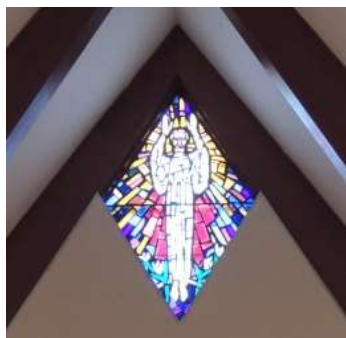
A CHURCH IS BUILT

1969

The Society continued to grow and the need for a new, larger building began to be felt. The first Sanctuary for Bryanston Methodist Church was built and dedicated in 1969. It was the beautiful A-frame building that we now call the “Chapel” and which served as the place of worship for seventeen years until the present church was built. This style of building was very fashionable at the time and made a very attractive building.



First Church



On 19 April 1969 the new Bryanston Methodist Church was opened by the Chairman of the District, the **REV STANLEY PITTS**. The wooden beams drew eyes upwards to the roof and the sun enhanced the colours of the stained glass window which nestled in the peak of the roof. The window, donated by the Women’s Auxillary, depicted Christ with his hands held out to bless the worshipping congregation.

1970

Bryanston continued to grow and flourish. In 1970 the old Southern Transvaal District under which Bryanston and the Johannesburg North Circuit fell was divided into the South Western Transvaal and the South Eastern and Swaziland Districts. The Rev Stanley Pitts remained as Chairman of the South Western Transvaal District in which the Bryanston Society was situated. The first four ministers, Revs Rundle, van Rensburg, Brown and Gouws, were resident at Bryanston but also had oversight of the newly fledged Randburg Society and in 1967 the Rev Brian Brown consecrated the

ground for the building of the first Randburg church. At the end of 1970 there was a change in staff and Rev Brian Brown left BMC to join the newly formed Christian Institute. He was succeeded by the **REV LEE VAN RENSBURG** and his wife Bonnie.

1971 In 1971 there were unexpected maintenance bills that had to be paid. Perspex shields were added to the north side of the building and the hall roof had to be repaired and the hall repainted. The Trust Committee received an offer to purchase the Parkhurst Methodist Church's pipe organ for the price of R 1.500 because that church was closing. BMC went ahead in faith and bought the organ. What a difference it made to the services!

1973 1973 saw an attempt to have combined services with Bryanston United Church (now St Mungo's). The early morning service at 08:00 would be at Bryanston United, the 09:30 services would be at both churches and the 19:30 evening service would be at BMC. These combined services did not last long and later each church returned to their old times of worship.

1974 During 1974 a book stall was put up at the back of the church. All sorts of books were available from modern translations of Scripture to children's books and gifts. During these years the "Bryanston Methodist Messenger" advertised the activities at the church – Sunday worship services at 08:00, 09:30 and 19:30, and Fellowship every Tuesday evening. There were also mid-week meetings – badminton, Women's Auxillary, Men's League and the 7:30 Club.

After four years, at the end of 1974, Rev Lee van Rensburg was succeeded by the **REV JOHN GOUWS** who ministered at Bryanston for five years before moving to Canada. At Christmas-time 1974 as "minister-to-be", he wrote for the Bryanston Methodist Messenger giving them his vision of Christmas as a

time “to share in building of bridges of understanding and hope in a world torn by strife and dissension. To hold before all men divided by colour, culture, nationality and denomination the all-embracing Grace of God”.

1975

Changes were taking place at Circuit level, too, and in 1975 the **REV RUSSEL HARRISON** took over as the new Superintendent minister. The Johannesburg North Circuit that BMC was part of included the Trinity, Forest Town, Parktown North, Randburg and the newly opened (1973) Honeydew Methodist Churches.

1978

Towards the end of 1978 the **WESLEY PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL** was opened on the eastern boundary of the site. This cost R95 000 but it now meant that BMC had not only an outreach to the children of the Bryanston community but the classrooms could be used by the Sunday School on Sundays as well. God was at work blessing the work among the children and young people of BMC.



Rev Roy Baker

At this time one of the Local Preachers in the congregation, **ROY BAKER**, felt called to offer for the ministry. He was a mature-aged candidate who was also a Circuit Steward. He was ordained in 1978 and ministered in the Circuit and served at Bryanston before being moved to St. John's Ecumenical Church, Parkmore in 1987.

The Bryanston **YOUNG WOMEN'S MANYANO** and the **WOMEN'S MANYANO** were established in 1978 under Rev Moleleki of the Alexander circuit.



The Women's Manyano is the Methodist Women's Prayer and Service Union (M.W.P.& S.U.), and stands for the holiness of life, purity of speech, temperance and service to the glory of God and for the extension of God's Kingdom.



The **YOUNG MENS GUILD** in the Bryanston society was also started in the 1970s. This is an organisation of Methodist men who have accepted the calling of Jesus Christ to engage in the holistic Mission of the church.

1980

Rev John Gouws was followed by the **REV HARRY NEL** and his wife Celia in 1980. The Nel family had attended BMC while he was Chaplain at St Stithians. His children attended Sunday School and were confirmed at BMC. He wrote of his time at BMC: "We received such a warm welcome from a growing and responsive congregation. We established a 'Walk through the Bible' study group which ran for three and a half years. Attendance at worship was good the church being full on most Sundays." The Christmas services were so full, even with extra chairs, that people were seated in the garden with a loudspeaker relaying the service.

1983

God continued to bless the Bryanston community and by 1983 once again more seating was required! When the Rev Harry Nel took over the membership was 1 200 and growing. That year the north and south transepts were added extending the side seating in the Church to accommodate ninety more people. This brought the seating to almost 275. By the end of 1983 the manse had been refurbished, and the driveways

tarred, and staff living quarters extended, all at a cost of R 35 000. The church was a hive of activity and mid-week youth work had been started.

1985 In 1985 a second manse was bought for the probationer ministers who served at BMC. It adjoined both the existing manse and the Pre-Primary School, and cost what was at the time a staggering amount – R150 000. All this added significantly to the space available for meetings, classes and offices and allowed BMC to expand the variety of youth work, especially for those in their teens and university students.

These were years of growth in all the sections of the congregation. The Sunday School continued to expand.

The **WOMEN'S AUXILIARY** was very active in working out their faith and showing the love of God to the needy. **ADRI DAVIDSON**, a long-time member of the WA, writes "We had a jolly fellowship and with the help of the congregation collected old stockings and curtains which were made into blankets for the needy. We also took soup to pensioners in Alexandra who came to collect their pensions once a month at the police station." Teas for seniors and jumble sales were also held as the ladies showed their faith in practical ways. The Women's Auxillary was part of the District and Connexional WA networks. They were also active in the International Women's World Day of Prayer services which took place on the first Friday of March each year.



The late 1980s were turbulent years in South Africa and the congregation and staff at BMC were forced to face the crisis and re-examine the role of the Christian Church in South Africa in the light of current events. The Methodist Church as a whole was responding to political events, as the drama that was

the South African scene, played out. These were the years when leading church leaders marched in protest but they were also the years that the Fourways Circuit extended their mission work northwards. Under the Rural Evangelism Committee churches were established at **REFILWE**, **RHENOSTER-SPRUIT** and **LANSERIA**. This was a Circuit outreach and all the societies in the Circuit were involved in raising funds and supplying preachers. **MRS BRENDA BUCHANAN** headed up the mission work at BMC and was their representative on the Rural Evangelism Committee. For a while the **REV ADAM ALLEN**, a Supernumerary minister who had been a missionary, worked among the new Methodist societies. These societies are still on the Preaching Plan today and are part of the Fourways Circuit.

1986

In 1986 the Rev Nel, and his wife Celia, left for the United Kingdom and was replaced by the **REV DAVID NEWTON** and his wife Darryl. The congregation had been growing apace and David Newton was assisted by two second ministers – first **REV DAWN SLABBER** in 1988 and **REV JENNY SAMDAAN** from 1990 to 1993.

In 1986 there were twelve small groups (**FELLOWSHIP GROUPS**). **MANDY HACKLAND** was asked to coordinate them as part of a volunteer team. She relates that at that time each group decided on its own what they would study. And all she had to do was contact the leaders from time to time. Then BMC hosted a **LAY WITNESS WEEK-END** which involved morning and afternoon coffee groups. Mandy was invited onto the committee to organize the groups. Mandy remembers that there were about twenty groups involving about two hundred people. She relates: “The week-end was like nothing I had ever experienced before and a few groups continued to meet, so the number of people involved climbed. They were still independent and occasionally we would meet to compare notes about what people were studying, but it was all very low key”.

1988

The people at Bryanston began to reach out even further. **DAVID HERITAGE** tells the story of the founding of the **FATHER'S GROUP**. "On the weekend of August 28 1988 about 5 men from BMC went to Edenvale Methodist Church where Ron Page from Westville, Durban and Ron Rand from America launched Father's groups in Gauteng (then the Transvaal). Ron Rand, an American pastor had struggled for years to get "Christian" men to engage meaningfully with their wives and children. Their church, after watching a film series by James Dobson, decided to do something about it". They put together a series of Bible verses in the form of an "oath" or "pledge" and agreed to meet once a week. The BMC men agreed to form a group so the Father's Group was born. The founders were **DENNIS GEE, JOHN PETTERS** and **KEITH THOMSON**.



The BMC group is less formal than their American counterparts and everyone gets a chance to participate. They meet every Friday morning at 05:45 for worship followed by devotions by one of the group and prayer at the altar rail. They then break up into small "buddy" groups for caring and sharing. During the mid-1990s they initiated the "Blanket appeal" for distribution to the poor. This is a yearly appeal and continues to the present time.

1989

The **BRYANSTON MIDDAY CONGREGATION** began life as a society of the Alexandra Circuit. From the 1970's it met at 3pm under the Superintendence of the minister in Alexandra. Sadly, during the time of **REV PHILIP SHONGWE**, there was conflict between this Bryanston 3pm Society and the Alexandra Circuit. The result of this conflict was that the Alexandra Circuit then asked the Bryanston (Johannesburg North) Society not to allow this group to meet in the church as they were causing dissension and that their

membership had been suspended. This “dissenting group” was locked out of the church.

The group decided then that they would not seek another place to worship as they still considered themselves members of the MCSA within the Alexandra Circuit and that they would continue to worship at Bryanston albeit under a tree. (Some older members of BMC will remember the Tea Tree just on the side of the original church building, and that is where they continued to worship).



Bishop Themba Mntambo

BISHOP THEMBA MNTAMBO recalls this as follows: “the Rev. Shongwe requested me to assist in bringing resolution to the matter and to enable reconciliation to take place. My first meeting with the group was under the tree, and to say it was volatile is an understatement”.



Bishop Peter Storey

Meanwhile this group had made representations to the then **BISHOP PETER STOREY** who directed Rev Mntambo to intervene, first by meeting with the group to hear their complaints, secondly to meet with the Alexandra Circuit leadership to hear their side of the story, and to report back to him. Unfortunately the conflict was not resolved as both parties wanted to have the problem resolved their own way.

The group continued to worship under the tree, organising their worship on Sunday and holding their weekly organisations’ meetings. This did not last for long as many of them followed those who had gone to Trinity Linden. Bishop

Mntambo writes that “It was during this time that discussions were underway for me to move from Trinity to Bryanston, and when that eventually happened, this group then asked to be allowed to return to Bryanston. We then made it clear that we would allow them to do so only if they agreed to become members of the Johannesburg North Circuit since the Alexandra Circuit was not willing to have them back. So this group became part of the Bryanston Society within the Johannesburg North Circuit.”

This upheaval had a negative effect on the **YMG** and subsequently throughout the 1990's and until mid-2009 it continued to decline.



By 1990 the work at BMC had grown so much that more accommodation was needed. As the Youth work and members increased so did our permanent staff. Extensions and upgrades to the accommodation were made and completed by March 1990 at a cost of R 160,000. By now the congregation numbered just under 1 600.

This was a time of steady growth. God blessed BMC with ministers with vision and leaders who worked tirelessly for the extension of God's kingdom in Bryanston. During these years the Methodist Church of Southern Africa embarked on the Journey to the New Land and was seeking a new way forward with Geographical Circuits. Separate Quarterly and Local Preacher for black and white congregations became a thing of the past as the Circuits became integrated.



REV COSTA STATHAKIS, with his wife Marge, arrived at Bryanston in 1993 and he was assisted by the **REV COLIN PILKINGTON**. The **REV THEMBA MNTAMBO** joined the ministerial team to promote transformation at Bryanston.



BMC was ready for the next step. Inspired by the motto “To know, to grow, to minister” around the logo depicting a triangular representation of the church with a cross in the middle, the vision grew.

1994

The **COUNSELLING DEPARTMENT** was started in 1992 by **CATHY BATH** and did extensive bereavement counselling. In 1994 **MARGE STATHAKIS**, a qualified clinical psychologist, became the resident full-time counsellor. She was joined a year later by **CHARMAINE VILJOEN**. The Counselling ministry grew enormously and soon became known for its service to the whole community.



Marge Stathakis

1995

The **YOUTH WORK** took a positive turn with the appointment of **DELME LINSKOTT** as youth pastor in 1995. He served until he felt called to the ministry and became a candidate minister.

Costa saw how the number of worshippers was increasing and challenged the congregation to think of building a larger sanctuary at a cost of no less than R 3 000 000. This was 100% more than the cost of the original church.

The plan was to retain the original church as a Chapel while the new church would seat 650 people, with overflow capacity in the foyer to seat another 100. Costa called the congregation to prayer and twenty or so people met to pray. No decision



Foundations for the new Sanctuary

could be made by so small a group but they agreed that a larger church building was necessary.



**Rev Costa Stathakis
& Betty Baker at
fundraising lunch**

By the end of 1995 the plan for the new church was finalized and the number of members was increasing. The first step towards the building project was when 92% of the congregation voted in favour of the project. One third of the total cost had to be in hand before the Methodist Connexional Office would agree to the project going ahead. On the same day one member pledged R1 million towards the cost of the building. Thereafter a Finance Committee was appointed to present an outline of the funding scheme to the members of the congregation and offer each member the opportunity of pledging a once-off or a regular

amount over five years.

Mandy Hackland relates: “One day I walked to the building site. I stepped over the outside wall of what was to be the new sanctuary and stopped in surprise. The wall was only knee-high, but the shape of the sanctuary was defined – and here I met God. He was here – present in this building already, even though there was not much of it at this time. I had no doubt that this was to be His church, part of His plan, for the city of Johannesburg”. She was right! God blessed and continues to bless BMC and its ministries.



The Church Council later agreed to give each worshipping member R50 and urged them to use their talents to raise as much money as possible in the next three months. The people were to take the money away with them and return it to the church on a stipulated date. The project, which became known as “Bricks 96”, became manifest in many activities, ranging from markets to car boot sales and each day at BMC was characterized by various functions and fun events. In excess of R200 000 was raised during this period, including an amount of R 50 000 raised during a Golf Day.



The chairs and many items in the new church were sponsored by individual members in memory of their loved ones. The account ended with the hope that the debt would be paid off by 2001 but due to the dedication and commitment of the church members the debt was cleared a year earlier in 2000. By this time the membership was over 3000 and the worshipping congregation numbered 1250 each Sunday.

Mandy relates: “On the Sunday before the grand opening Costa made us laugh in church. He asked what we would do the following week when we all had to find new seats – and what he would do when he wouldn’t know where any of us was sitting. The new building was *our* church. We had poured our prayers, our minds, our skills, gifts and energy into the project.”

Outside the Chapel was a pine tree where people gathered to drink tea after the morning service. As the Chapel was integrated into the new building the tree would have to be sacrificed. The tree was cut down but lived on in the form



of small crosses made by **DES SCHNUGH** which were given to the people who attended the dedication service for the new church.

Mandy Hackland's poem about the old church and it's tree

A large pine tree, magnificent and green
Stood staunch outside our graceful church
Shed beauty, grace and power within its fold
Birds reared their young
The apron of green grass beneath was gentle
And the cooling shade gave cheer to many
before and after worship
Many enjoyed a welcome cup of tea
A chat and friendly welcome
It fell one day in January 1996
where it had dauntless stood.
To prepare the place
Where future folk will gather
To praise the Lord!
However, it will live on in this gift to you
"This little cross from the tea tree"



A NEW ERA – A NEW CHURCH

1996

The building of the new church began on 7 January 1996 when the first sod for the new sanctuary was turned by the Rev Costa Stathakis. This was followed by the laying of the foundation stone ceremony in June of that year. The church building was completed and the complex was officially opened on 13 October 1996 at 11:30 by the then **PRESIDING BISHOP, STANLEY MAGOBA**. The celebration of the opening was full of joy. God had inspired, guided and provided for the people to build a brand new church. On the previous Sunday the morning service had taken place in the almost complete building while the evening service took place in the Chapel. A youth service was the last official Chapel service of the era.



Rev C Stathakis unveiling the plaque



Presiding Bishop Stanley Mogoba & Bishop Peter Storey

The dignitaries attending the dedication service were the Presiding Bishop Stanley Magoba, **BISHOP PETER STOREY**, Circuit Supt **REV. DR BRIAN HUTCHINSON**, Resident ministers Revs C Stathakis and Themba Mntambo, Circuit Stewards **PROF D SADDINGTON** and **MISS JOAN BEVAN**, Circuit Treasurer **RAY MILLARD**, Architect **RON FANDAM**, and Building Contractor **T BARTLETT**. The **REV STANLEY PITTS**, who had dedicated the Chapel in 1969, and his wife Daphne were also present.

The Dedication Service was followed by a lunch prepared by the ladies of BMC. The sermon was preached by the Presiding Bishop while the resident ministers led the service. The Order of Service included the Vision for BMC.

THE VISION OF BMC AND ITS ROLE IN THE “NEW” SOUTH AFRICA

The vision and future roll of the Bryanston Methodist Church (BMC) has been the subject of sustained prayer and meditation for many years. The theme of “People Touching People” remains the mission of BMC, with these key elements:

TO KNOW GOD TO GROW TO MINISTER IN HIS NAME

Trusting in Jesus Christ, BMC will prayerfully pursue the following considered objectives:

- Strengthening the existing BMC base by empowering all it’s people to minister to the needs of all at BMC and the community at large, while becoming a truly dedicated and family-focused church with:
- Family praise and worship
- Expanded counselling services
- A dedicated prayer centre
- A multi-level scriptural study structure
- Teaching facilities at BMC – including an EDU centre
- Planting churches further north

The final cost, including the magnificent organ was R4 000 000 and by the year 2000 the loan had not only been paid back but BMC was able to

purchase land in Diepsloot and Lonehill and make a substantial tithing contribution to the Methodist Church Millennium Fund which cared for the poor.



The prison ministry started off as the **SAMARITAN MINISTRY** in 1996 with **CHRIS JACKS** as coordinator. The Rev Costs Stathakis asked him to visit one inmate at Leeuwkop Maximum Prison whose studies were being sponsored by BMC. The ministry grew until BMC was sponsoring up to 40 inmates studying various courses. David Heritage

relates that Samaritan Ministries was instrumental in opening a computer centre at Leeuwkop Medium C Prison. Soon a group of parolees and ex-offenders were meeting at BMC once a month on a Saturday morning as a support group under Samaritan guidance.

1997

In 1997 Costa and Marge visited America. Among the churches that they visited was the Willow Creek Church. They returned with the conviction that when God guides God provides.

1998

The young people have always been a very important part of the BMC society. Costa had a dream in 1998 which set the course for future development. **ARTHUR PRESTON** was employed as the Children's Pastor. After attending a course in Chicago, USA, he initiated the **PROMISELAND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**. By 2006 there were 850 children and 40 volunteer teachers in the programme. The children grew spiritually and were nurtured in their prayer lives and serving others.



THE NEW MILLENNIUM



With a congregation of 3000 at the end of 2000 Costa's vision was exceeding all expectations.

With the new millennium came the chance to buy the property on the corner of Eccleston Drive and Grosvenor Road. This became the Counselling House which grew to be a service to the whole community of Bryanston and even further afield. Volunteer counsellors were trained in Basic Counselling and more advanced courses, and the ministry continued to grow. The House was also used for meetings and the grounds provided much needed parking bays.

By this time the office block had become too small and a new triple-story office block with halls and storage was designed. On 4 February 2001 these buildings were dedicated by **BISHOP PAUL VERRYIN**.



With the new church building and the spirit of enthusiasm that accompanied it, BMC and its ministries continued to grow.

One of the first new ministries of the new millennium was the **MOBILE MEALS MINISTRY** which was started in 2000 by **BRIAN VAN DER WALT** and **IAN PITMAN**. They saw the plight of the homeless people living along the river at the bottom of Bryanston Drive and decided to do something about it. Later, due to difficulties with the police, they moved up to the BMC campus.

Still later this ministry was expanded into the Mobile Meals of today where volunteers from the congregation make soup on Thursday mornings which is

then taken to various places in Randburg and about 350 displaced people are fed every Thursday.



Costa remembers the **OUTREACH SERVICE** at the Dome, Northrand as one of the highlights of his ministry at BMC. Seven thousand people attended the service with two thousand making a first-time and re-commitment to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The singing was led by music groups from BMC under the direction of **ROWAN ROGERS** who was a pastor at Randburg at the time. This was a wonderful outreach to the wider community by the people of BMC.

2004

Once again the people at BMC reached out to those in need. This time it was to the children of **DIEPSLOOT**. In 2004 the ministers, Costa Stathakis and Themba Mntambo appealed to the congregation for help to start a Saturday morning programme for children in Diepsloot. Themba had been meeting in a steel container with a group of people who called themselves “Methodist” for some time before the land was bought. BMC had purchased a “small holding” where the Diepsloot Methodist Church would be built and there was sufficient space for other structures as well. The first buildings to go up were the church and the manse. The Saturday school met at first in the old farm house. The name “**AKANI**” comes from the Shangaan word meaning “to build” and Akani was established to build up the children of Diepsloot. The mission statement was “Akani- every child can”.



GLORIA DAVIDSON, one of the first volunteers, tells the story. That first day there were five volunteers, **NESSA TOBIN** (who became the first Chairlady), **SURETHA ZANG**, **PETRO**, **MAPHAMOLO** and Gloria herself. “We went out to the property where there was only the farm house and invited



Opening Ceremony

four little boys off the street to come and join us in the house for some fun, singing, dancing, worship and sport. It has been one of the amazing experiences of my life – to watch it grow to the HUGE up-liftment programme it is today”. Soon other subjects like arts and crafts, mathematics, chess, cooking, sewing, and knitting were added. Counselling also took place and all these activities were organized by volunteers from BMC.

When the numbers got to 75 every room in the house was full. Costa and Themba insisted that no child be turned away. A group of BMC volunteer ladies made sandwiches to feed the children and later when this was no longer necessary as the children were being fed a meal each day, they met, and still meet, to see what they can do to help Akani.

The Rev Costa Stathakis writes: “Mention should be made of the involvement and commitment of **JOCK SEELIGER** who spearheaded the acquisition of the Diepsloot



and Lonehill land. He served on the **BOPHALONG** committee for a number of years”. Bophalong is the parent committee that oversees the work at Diepsloot. Tribute must also be paid to one of the BMC volunteers, **JOHANN STRAUSS**. He was a trustee on the Board for many years as well as being a

Saturday morning leader before handing over to **MARIJKE GORDON**. Another Saturday leader who served until the Saturday school closed earlier this year was **LYN SUMNERS**. Both these volunteers have passed away but tribute must also be paid to all the BMC volunteers who have given of their time and talents to help the children of Diepsloot.

During his time at BMC Costa initiated the principle of **TITHING** to outside ministries from the full income received from the congregation. The Church Council agreed to this tithing which enabled BMC to assist other struggling congregations with their building and other projects. This policy is still part of BMC giving today.



Gracepoint

purchased Costa head-hunted Gary Rivas who was ministering in East London. He invited Gary and Jacqui to spend time with him at BMC in preparation for starting the church at Lonehill". One hundred BMC members moved with them to form the core of the congregation. BMC undertook to fully finance Gary and Jacqui for the first year, two-thirds for the second year and one third for the third year. At first they met at the Crawford School but now have their own beautiful church called "Gracepoint".

Another outreach from BMC in 2004 was the church in Lonehill that today is called **GRACEPOINT**. The **REVS GARY AND JACQUI RIVAS** who were ministers at BMC at the time were seconded to start a new church at Lonehill. Costa writes that "After the property was



**Bishop Gary and Supt
Jacqui Rivas**

Another project was **OVERSEAS MISSIONS** undertaken by the Mission Department under the leadership of **TINA NOCKLER** (now Hackland). Teams went to places like Nepal. The Mission Department is still active and missions to Mozambique are undertaken each year.

2005

Costa left BMC at the end of 2005 to minister to the people in Plettenberg Bay. He paid tribute to the BMC congregation who, he said, were “always gracious and generous in their giving of time, treasure and their talents”. He said that “the Church Council members were courageous in taking risks for the extension of the Kingdom of God. No challenge was too large for them to fully and sacrificially engage in”. He also paid tribute to the full-time staff members during his ministry, too many to mention individually. Ministers who served with Costa and Marge over the years include the **REVS THEMBA MNTAMBO, GARY AND JACQUI RIVAS, DENNIS GEE, BRENDA TIMMER, JOHN GILLMER, SMANGA BOSMAN** and **SVA WAQU**.

2006

His place was taken by the **REV CHRISTOPHER HARRISON**. 2006 was the year of BMC’s Golden Jubilee. Chris remembers it as a year of wonderful celebration. **SELWYN MACFARLANE**, one of the leaders, and **OLIVIA ZIETSMAN**, who had been Costa’s secretary since 1996 wrote a short history of BMC for the occasion.



Rev Christopher Harrison

JOHN GILMER continued to serve at BMC for another couple of years. He was an expert at setting up and running small groups. The small home groups now became “**PAL’S GROUPS**” and the number of groups grew apace. These were fellowship groups as well as being Bible Study groups and many firm friendships were cemented among group members.

During this time the numbers of the evening service increased greatly due to the part-time ministry of **REV DR DION FORSTER**, who at the time was Dean of students at **JOHN WESLEY COLLEGE, PRETORIA**. Dion now lectures in the Theology Dept at Stellenbosch University.



Rev Dr Dion Forster

2007 At **AKANI**, the numbers continued to grow and by 2007 there were 550 children on Saturdays and 500 children each week-day of the term at the pre- and kindergarten school. **NESSA TOBIN** had retired and been replaced by **SURETA ZANG** who was a qualified teacher. During this period the first new



Rev John Gillmer at the opening of the Bophelong soccer fields

hall and ablution block were built. Next the Main Hall, industrial kitchen and girls' and boys' ablution blocks were built. There are now two halls which serve Diepsloot in many ways. Sports fields followed. The grass for the soccer field was planted by a group of volunteers from BMC who spent a Saturday morning doing the job. This proved to be a happy family outing for the volunteers and their families! Next trees were planted around the soccer field and once again it was a job done by BMC volunteers.

Other adult activities were also established on the land at Diepsloot. **MARIETA NIGHTINGALE** spearheaded a craft group which became a viable source of income for its members. This developed into the sewing centre called **THEMBELETHU** which continued for many years. When they experienced difficulties finding paid work a few years ago they were helped by **DEBBIE CLOETE**. There is still a sewing group but they now work as individuals. A wrought iron furniture workshop was also established. All the work relies heavily on donations, not only from the Fourways Circuit but from

outside donors as well. **DAWN CANNING** retired and after a few short term teachers in charge the Principal is now **MRS THOKO MBENSE**, a dedicated teacher and member of BMC.

2009

When John Gillmer followed Costa to Plettenberg Bay to take over the work that Costa had been doing there, **MANDY HACKLAND** took over as full-time staff member in charge of **SMALL GROUPS**. Mandy and a small team of BMC volunteers wrote all the study material for the groups.



Mandy Hackland

We held a combined **SEDER / PASSOVER SUPPER** during Holy week. This was attended by nearly 350 people with Rev Demetris Palos presiding. This was a great success as we experienced Passover and got to meet the greater BMC community.



The year 2009 saw several new ministries established at BMC. A number of these were established by lay people.



Feeding the poor had for many years been an important part of BMC's ministry. The "BUCKET" ministry was started through the vision of a man in a small group. Mandy Hackland remembers that the man's name was Neil. He told the group that he was going to buy a bucket and fill it with groceries for the poor.

The group liked the idea and soon the Christmas bucket ministry had become part of the ministry of BMC. Today it exists as the food ministry and packets of food rather than buckets are given to the needy each Christmas. A modern innovation is that dog and cat food are also collected for various animal rescue centres.



BRENDON STRAUSS, the current **JOSEPH'S STOREHOUSE** coordinator tells us the story; "During Costa's time, too, **EILEEN BENN**, **BRENDA ALLISON** and other members of the congregation collected and distributed "sell-by-date" food to numerous poor communities on a daily and weekly basis.



In 2009 Joseph's Storehouse was founded in response to God's call to feed and look after the poor. We based our ministry on Matthew 25:35-36. *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink"*. Brendon was appointed by BMC to approach food companies and supermarkets to try to source food for the poor, vulnerable and homeless.

He relates: “We started off small but through God’s grace the ministry grew. In 2009 I was receiving about 100kgs of food a week from just one supplier and feeding about 40 people a week with this food. I had one assistant helping me on a part-time basis. We are currently receiving on an average about 22 tons of food a month and feed on an average 3000-4000 people a month. We have 17 supplier stores from which we collect, on average, 9 to 10 each day. We distribute food to 65 organisations”. Eight of these organisations are connected to BMC and include Mobile Wheels, Akani, and



Lazarus Christmas party

the **LAZARUS MINISTRY** which feeds the homeless. The Lazarus community meets every Tuesday in the hall. After a service taken by a local preacher they receive a hot meal and a parcel of food. Joseph’s Storehouse serves groups based in Diepsloot, Alexandra, Soweto, Katlehong, Ivory Park, Thembisa and Orange Farm.

We want to thank our suppliers like **WOOLWORTHS, SPAR, PICK ‘N PAY, BREAD BASKET, GOD’S GARDEN** and **THRUPPS/MUGG & BEAN** for their generous giving of sell-by date food. Without their assistance this ministry would not be possible. Brendon acknowledges: “Most of all we thank God for growing this ministry and allowing us to be His hands and feet to carry out the God-given mandate to feed the hungry”.

Another ministry was established at this time by **PAT KNIGHT** called “**TOUCH THE HEM**”. This is a ministry to women. It is a day of worship, meditation, testimonies and for some, meeting with the Lord in a way they have never experienced before. The Father’s group serves the lunch and prays for the ministry



while the meetings are in progress. This ministry has grown and spread and the “Touch the hem” team now run these special days for women in various churches in Johannesburg and even as far afield as East London.

The first Chairlady for the **SATURDAY WOMEN’S MANYANO** was **MRS. DAISY NGAZANA**. In the time of **REVS WAQU AND BOSMAN**, the Sunday Women’s Manyano was born, with **MRS BILANKULU** as Chairlady. Later came the Thursday 14h00 and Thursday English (18h00) Women’s Manyano.

The Women’s Manyano is united to promote diversity in the church and supports no discrimination (age, race, socio-economic status). It is a caring and listening organization driven by prayer. It promotes the values and norms of Christian life.

At around this time **SYLVIA SHEPHARD** began a **KNITTING GROUP**. This is a happy group of women who meet to knit jerseys and beanies for the poor. The children at Akani receive jerseys, red, blue and yellow according to their grade at school. Many other organisations have also benefitted – **ZOLA CLINIC, KIDS’ HAVEN, HOTEL HOPE**



Wearing the Knitting Group jerseys

and ministries at BMC. The group still meets every Thursday morning to knit for Akani and other children in need.



The **YOUNG MENS GUILD** grew from strength to strength from June 2009, when the new executive was elected, during the **REV MANDLA GAMEDE**’s tenure. The new executive was composed of brothers **T. TSELA**

(additional), **Z. XABA** (additional), **A. NKOMO** (ex-chair, additional), **E. NKOMO** (DDSR), **A. LEGWALE** (Treasurer), **M. BAZI** (Secretary) and **G. MBINYASHE** (Chairman). Some fell along the way and were replaced by others, with the exception of brothers A. Nkomo, E. Nkomo, A. Legwale and G. Mbinyashe who continued until the term end in 2012.

The YMG seeks to:

- Promote loyalty to the teachings of Christ through; *habits of prayer, Bible studies, Purity of life, acceptable family values.*
- Encourage members to serve better the Kingdom of Christ here on earth
- Promote abstinence from all evils, and
- Develop its members Evangelically, Devotionally, Educationally and socioeconomically

2010

In 2010 the Samaritan Ministry was re-named and became the **“SECOND CHANCE MINISTRY”**. Here the focus is on offering Christ’s hope to offenders, ex-offenders, their families and the receiving communities. The ministry continues to focus on Leeuwkop Correctional Centre with courses like Heartlines. BMC has offered the Pen-Pal ministry to offenders and also supports the running of the Alpha course at Leeuwkop Prison.

“MEN OF SIGNIFICANCE” conferences were held each year from 2010-2012. Guest speakers focused on issues relevant to men. These conferences were well attended and there was a great demand for copies of the talks and presentations.



Rev Dr Leon Klein

A number of ministers served with Chris. The **REV DR LEON KLEIN**, who has a doctorate in family psychology, was one of them. He did counselling at BMC but was also mandated by Conference to help set up counselling centres all over South Africa,

through the NCCDM – later to become the GCM. During his time at BMC Leon wrote a number of books on healthy living for Christians.

The **REV DEMETRIS PALOS**, who had been set aside to run the **CONNEXIONAL HIV/AIDS MINISTRY**, served as an associate minister and then continued to minister at BMC as a Supernumerary.



Rev Demetris Palos



Rev Mandla Gamede

The **REV MANDLA GAMEDE** was a very

caring minister to the 12 o'clock congregation. He had a number of local preachers in the congregation and held special meetings for them caring for each one individually. During his ministry the 12 o'clock congregation grew until the Chapel was packed each week and they moved the service into the Sanctuary.

At this time, BMC reintroduced the role of **EVANGELIST**. Mrs **MARGARET MOOKA**, Mr **VINCENT NCAPAI** and Mr **BENDIE JABULANI 'SHAKES' MASHININI** completed the necessary qualifications to take on the responsibilities of this position. The Order of Evangelism is a Lay Ministry of the Biblewomen and Evangelists called into the service of evangelism and church growth. Evangelists and Biblewomen who are called to this service are trained for a minimum of two years and the training includes attending classes at college as specified by the EMMU. The duties of an Evangelist are many but are focused around pastoral work and preaching.



Vincent, Margaret & Shakes

The **REV VUYELWA LEGWALE** was in charge of Pastoral Care at this time. She organized the week-long Healing Services in 2012 run by **REV MIKE ENDICOTT**. These were a wonderful success and there were a number of people who experienced healing, not only physical but emotional as well.



Rev Vuyelwa Legwale



**Rev Janet Verrier at
St Stithians**

Other ministers who served at BMC during these years were the **REV JANET VERRIER** (Cope), who led a mission to Zimbabwe. Janet left BMC to become a chaplain at St Stithians College. **REV FIONA CALVEREY**, a very creative and talented person, served for a short time and then left us to go to Lyttleton.

REV MARTIN BEUKES came straight to BMC from the Seminary as a probationer and spent a year with us before being put in charge of the Ridgeway congregation. It was at this time that **RIDGEWAY** became a part of the Methodist Church, under the oversight of BMC.



Rev Martin Beukes



A **CHAPEL** in the Care Centre gardens was completed and opened on 15 September 2010. This Chapel has become a favourite venue for small intimate weddings. This garden is also where we have our Easter Sunday sunrise service.

This was the year South Africa hosted the **SOCCER WORLD CUP** and BMC used this opportunity to undertake a number of evangelism events: children's bible club, screening of matches. Our musicians put on a fantastic performance of the spiritual musical "**THE WITNESS**". At Diepsloot Bophelong we installed a big screen to show matches in our free fan park, we held a children's crusade with drama and dance groups.



The **AKANI SCHOOL** grew by leaps and bounds and Dawn Canning became the Principal. In 2011 a school was built to house from Grade 000 to Grade 1. The funds were donated by the Metmar Trading Company. Classrooms for Grade 2 were added in 2011 and Grade 3 in 2013. The Akani Metmar School was dedicated to the Glory of God by the Rev Gary Rivas, the Circuit Superintendent, on 15 September 2011.

In 2011 David Heritage started presenting the **HEARTLINES** course in Medium B, Juvenile Boys Centre at Leeuwkop Prison. This is a course that covers eight Christian values – namely Grace, Compassion, Acceptance, Forgiveness, Responsibility, Perseverance, Honesty and Self-control. Soon he was asked to take the course into two more Medium Centres and a Maximum Centre. On an average about forty people attended each course.



A support group for paroled ex-offenders in Diepsloot was begun. They met on a weekly basis at the site of the Diepsloot Methodist Church for prayer. The Heartlines course was presented and the parolees were encouraged to help the community.

2012

Rev Christopher Harrison had a passion for evangelism. He was part of the **ALPHA MINISTRY** in Gauteng. Alpha is a course that introduces people to the basics of Christian living. The Alpha courses are still run as part of the School of Discipleship and have been a blessing to many at BMC.



The **SCHOOL OF DISCIPLESHIP** was run twice a year for people who want to study further. Courses on all aspects of the Christian life continue to be held; from in-depth Bible study to the Christian way of handling money. Both the ministers and lay volunteers lead these courses. **MANDIE AGRELLA** is the current coordinator.

**Nonhla Khawula**

We suffered a shocking loss on the death of **NONHLANHLA 'NONHLA' KHAWULA** in June. She had been a long-standing member of the staff. Nonhla, as she was

known, had spent the last years of her life, dedicated to the growth and development of Small Groups

2013

At the end of 2013 a Commission of Enquiry was appointed by the Presiding Bishop to review the life and ministry of BMC. This was a difficult time in the life of BMC and some members chose to leave.

REV DR NEIL OOSTHUIZEN came to join the ministry team at BMC on Christmas Eve 2013. He was an Old Testament scholar whose sermons brought new Biblical insight to the congregation. He was moved to Ridgeway in February.

**Rev Dr Neil Oosthuizen**

2014

As a consequence of the Commission of Enquiry there was a redeployment of ministers within the Circuit in March 2014. Rev Dr Leon Klein subsequently accepted an invitation to Kuilsriver Methodist Church. Rev Mandla Gamede is involved with the Qiniso Trust, which aims to protect family stability in the community where “child-headed households” are rife. Rev Vuyelwa Legwale entered the Chaplaincy. Rev Christopher Harrison retired and is now Director at Fresh Bread Ministries.



Rev Dalene Jordaan

The new ministers at BMC were **REV DALENE JORDAAN**, **REV JACQUI RIVAS** and **REV FESTUS MARUMO** who were assisted for a few months by the local preacher, **ERICH ROBERTS**, a long-time member of BMC now living in Cape Town. The Rev Demetris Palos remained

as a supernumerary minister. After a few months, Rev Jacqui Rivas returned to Gracepoint.



Rev Festus Marumo

BMC hosted the **ANNUAL CENTRAL DISTRICT SYNOD** from 22 – 25 May. The Sanctuary was turned into a conference venue and our halls were utilized for meals. About 300 delegates were here for the four days. Our staff were amazing in that they were able to put this important event together in just two weeks!

When Mandy Hackland retired to concentrate on her writing **NADJA ATKINSON** took over the Small Group ministry. There are over 700 people meeting in 80 small groups, classes and connect groups each week.

The **SENIOR'S TEA** is a very special occasion on the last Thursday morning of the month. About 50 elderly people meet for fellowship and an excellent tea

which is provided by **JENNY PATRICK**. Special Senior's pastors provided leadership and volunteers help with the tea and visiting the sick and those unable to get out. The pastors, and senior's pastors down the years were **BRENDA BUCHANAN, NOREEN MACKENZIE, PENNY HICKS, CAROL GRAY, MERILYN INNES, LESLIE ROBERTS** and **LORRAINE NADAS**. The work with the Seniors now falls under Pastoral Care at BMC and is part of the portfolio of **GERHARD DE JAGER**.



The **WOMEN'S AUXILIARY** meet twice a month for fellowship and social meetings. **PAM CLOUSTON**, the President of the WA is also the Women's Auxillary representative on the **CHURCH UNITY COMMISSION** and BMC holds a Church Unity service each year. Members of the WA belong to the **SANDTON ECUMENICAL GOODWILL ASSOCIATION** which is made up of members of BMC, St Mungo's, the Bryanston Catholic Church and St Michael's Anglican Church. SEGA organizes the Women's World Day of Prayer service every year on the first Friday in March.



Pam Clouston

In the **ANNUAL REPORT** (BMC Life) for 2014/2015 the BMC ministerial team relate: "During the past year we have faced many changes in the life of BMC. Some have been difficult – and some have been encouraging. Through it all we have been aware of the fact that BMC is God's Church and the Bride of Christ. As we have journeyed through the year we have seen much evidence of God's hand on the ministries which we have been called on to carry out. Many people have been blessed by the work of our faithful volunteers and the staff, leadership and ministers on a day-to day basis. God has been at

work through His congregation and we give Him all the glory for what has been achieved”.

2015

After 11 years as a BMC outreach with support from Gracepoint Methodist Church, the **AKANI DIEPSLOOT FOUNDATION** was formed and Akani is now a Section 21 company. Akani now falls under the Circuit and is no longer the sole responsibility of BMC.

Rev Dr Neil Oosthuizen had returned to BMC in Oct 2014 and we had the joy of seeing him and **HELEEN ROETS**, who had been a staff member at BMC, getting married. Neil was also responsible for establishing the **BMC SOCCER TEAM** which continues to win matches in inter-church games.



BMC Soccer team - winners!

Sadly in August BMC members experienced the tragedy of losing Neil in a motorbike accident. He was dearly loved by all the members at BMC and the funeral service at BMC was attended by over 1 000 people.



Thuli Buthelezi

Another tragic loss, was the sudden death of **NOKUTHULA ‘THULI’ BUTHELEZI**, our Hospitality Co-Ordinator, after a brief illness. Her bubbly personality had endeared her to everyone who worked with her and her loss was felt by all.

The **REVS FESTUS AND LEA MARUMO** were transferred to Northrand to replace the **REV JOHN BAILLIE** who had emigrated to Australia.



Rev Dr Pete Grassow



Rev Lunga Songca



Rev Similo Sanqela

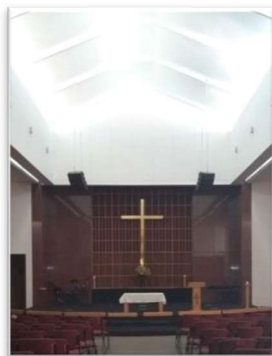


Our Diamond Jubilee year, started with a new group of ministers.

The Rev Dalene Jordaan remained with us and the **REV DR PETER GRASSOW**, **REV LUNGA SONGCA** and the **REV SIMILO SANQELA** joined us.

Rev Demetris Palos passed away in February after a brief illness. For nearly twenty years he ran a **WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY**. The number fluctuated but for most of the time fifty or more people attended. These were carefully prepared deep Bible Studies which will always be remembered by those who attended them. Demetris was also responsible for looking after the HIV/Aids ministry to the community from BMC.

We completed an upgrade of the front of the Sanctuary (the Chancel), the foyer and the AV room in August. The architect was **ROGER DAVIES**, a member of BMC, and the project co-ordinator was **CAROL ROODT**, a member of staff. The builders were **MANDM CONSTRUCTION** and the AV upgrade was undertaken by **PRESTIGE SOLUTIONS**.



The Fourways Circuit Women's Manyano hosted the **DISTRICT WOMEN'S MANYANO CONVENTION**. As BMC, we were particularly proud and honoured to host the WM business sessions. The whole Convention was a resounding success with several hundred Manyano members from around the district attending.

The Bryanston Women's Manyano is under the leadership of **REV LUNGA SONGCA**, assisted by WM Co-ordinator, **MS PINKY MONYAUSI**, and three Chairladies and their Executive Committees.



We also have Women's Manyano at our **LANSERIA** Preaching place which is affiliated to the BMC Women's Manyano. The Women's Manyano was established by **REV GUZANA** and, in the same year, 2 WM mothers and 1 YWM young lady, were robed. Currently,

there is a membership of 9 WM mothers, and the Chairlady is **MRS MOLEFE**.

THURSDAY WM meets every Thursday at 18h00, and currently has 22 members. Office bearers are Chairlady: **MRS POPPY MPOLOKENG**, Secretary: **MRS NATHI NDAMASE**, Assistant Sec: **MRS NOLWAZI NGOBENI**, Treasurer: **MRS REFILOE NTSELE**, CCS: **MRS NOLIZWI MJOBO**, and two additional committee members

SATURDAY WM meets every Saturday at 14h00, and currently has 56 members. Office bearers are Chairlady: **MRS REBECCA MOKOKA**, Secretary: **MRS AYANDA MALI**, Assistant Sec: **MRS BONGI KAKANA**, Treasurer: **MRS LULAMA NDLELENI**, CCS: **MRS NONKOSI NDONDO** and five additional committee members

SUNDAY WM meets every Sunday at 10h00, and currently has 79 members. Office bearers are Chairlady: **MRS SAMORA MAKASI**, Secretary: **MRS NONTUTHUZELO MABHONGO**, Assistant Sec: **MRS LAURETTE NYANGINTSIMBI**, Treasurer: **MRS NTSOAKI RAMAPHOSA**, CCS: **MRS FEZEKA MAMFANYA** and five additional committee members

BMC Women's Manyano membership is growing fast and is currently 157 mothers all committed to serve the Lord in Prayer.

The current executive of the **YMG** is brothers **N. SELEBE** (Chairman), **S. KUYASA** (Secretary), **B. NDAMASE** (Recording), **M. LUPHONDWANA** (Treasurer), **P. MDUTSHANE** (DDSR), **H. TYEMELA** (additional) and **L. GULUKUNQU** (additional). They are leading a membership of 41. Meetings take place on Sundays from 10am to 11h30am.



YMG Planned Mission work and outreaches in the community are:

- Seminars and workshops on men's issues
- Development of Facilities for needy communities
- Missionary work and Evangelism
- Education interventions and outreach
- Support for places of safety e.g. Orphanages, HIV affected homes, Child headed homes etc.
- Discipleship in witnessing and winning souls to the church and the YMG.

Current programs include:

- Uniform drive for the school in Lanseria
- Blanket initiative for the community in Lanseria
- Women's dinner
- Leeuwkop Prison mission



Rev Lea Marumo with the YWM

The **YOUNG WOMEN'S MANYANO** has become a spiritual home for many of the young women within the church. The spirit of sisterhood has become one of the main anchor points which speaks to the spirit of Manyano. God has seen us through good and bad times but we have

seen God's amazing love and Grace manifesting on our lives. We are more than determined to walk with the Lord and to work for God through giving and touching the communities around us. As the Young Women's Manyano we know that our names are written on the palms of His hands. We are loved by God and we shall continue our walk with the Lord.

The **FATHER'S GROUP** elected a new Chairperson this year, **ALAN BENNETTS**. The BMC Father's Group is a place of deep fellowship where life-long relationships are formed. They continue to participate in prayer and support for the local police stations (SAPS) at Sandton and Randburg and the Metro Police at Marlborough. For the last three years the fathers have also prayed for justice and peace at the Constitutional Court and Union Buildings.



The **WESLEY GUILD** at Bryanston Methodist Church has existed on and off since before 2009, when there were about three Guilders who would robe during holy communion services. They started to meet on Saturday afternoons and the number grew to five guilders, by the end of 2009. A committee was elected led by chairperson sister **NOMANDLA NXASANA** (2009-2011). Five new members were

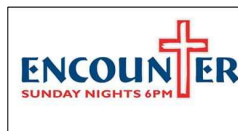
robed during the period of 2011-2013 with Brother **KUYASA PANDA** as Chairperson and started to meet on Wednesday evenings.

The youth movement has been active in the life of the church as well as within the Fourways Circuit and Central District. Under current chairperson Brother **AVIWE DYILI** the Wesley Guild has grown both in numbers and spirituality. It supports and maintains good relations with Guilders from Lanseria preaching place. In 2014 it identified an orphanage home in Alexandra Township and assists were possible.



A number of guilders from different circuits across the country have made BMC their temporary home during their short stay in Johannesburg. One of those visitors in his two year stay with Bryanston Guilders answered his calling into ministry. In 2015 the Wesley Guild had the honour of hosting its first annual thanksgiving service that was led by Connexional Youth Coordinator **REV LUXOLO MANTINI**, and in September 2016 for the first time twenty five new Guilders from Fourways Circuit Wesley Guild were robed at the Bryanston 12:00 service.

The **BMC EVENING SERVICE** is led and planned by our **YOUNG ADULTS**. It is a contemporary service which we have called **#ENCOUNTER**, inspired by Jacob's encounter



with God - a place set aside so that we can have a weekly encounter with God. The service is held in the Chapel, used as a Fellowship Café during the morning services.

The service addresses relevant topics that young adults, youth and older members of the congregation face on a daily basis. It is a very interactive service where during discussion time the congregation share their personal encounters and testimonies in relation to the preached theme. At the end of every series, the Young Adults committee plans a creative arts service to offer ministry through creativity.



This service is also a home for **CONFIRMATION** group as they journey towards being confirmed.

Our Youth and Young Adults Pastor, **STANDFORD JANUARY**, has helped create a vibrant community of youngsters who attend Friday evening gatherings as well as Sunday morning services.



Confirmation class of 2016



Our Children's Pastor, **BERNICE SMITH**, together with **BONNIE BHEYA** and a team of volunteers have continued our tradition of building a strong, caring and dedicated children's ministry. Our children meet during the Sunday morning services (08:30, 10:15 & 12:00). We also have regular Holiday Clubs during the school holidays and either an annual camp or sleep-overs.



IN CLOSING

We thank God for our **MINISTERS AND THEIR FAMILIES** for their faithful service to BMC. Under their leadership we look forward to a wonderful Jubilee year filled with God's blessing as we celebrate His faithfulness on our journey into the future.

We acknowledge the contribution made during the past 60 years of all those who have served as **SOCIETY STEWARDS, FINANCIAL STEWARDS** and other **LEADERSHIP** roles at BMC – group leaders, ministry leaders and leaders of organisations.

We wish to acknowledge the many members of **STAFF** who have served with dedication and loyalty over the past 60 years. Your love for the growth of God's Kingdom in our community has meant that BMC has been able to be the light on the hill for visitors and those who choose to call this their spiritual home.



Special mention must be made of the long service (15 years or more) of some of our staff: **SINAH MOLOKO MOGANO (1990)**, **HOWARD SEBAKA MASHABELA (1997)**, **TETSANE 'TINY'**

MATHEBULA (1996 - retired), **CHRISTINE WRATHALL (1999)**, **ECOLLET MAUMELA MASHABATHAKGA (2001)**, **ZAK DOILE (retired)**.

We wish to thank every **VOLUNTEER** who has ever served at BMC. Your loyal and devoted service, while perhaps not mentioned specifically in this recount of our history, is acknowledged with love and gratitude. You have been Jesus' hands and feet in our community and have enabled BMC to minister to God's people, both near and far.

And, last but not least, we wish to thank everyone who has called BMC 'home' - our **CONGREGATION**. Your support over the years has blessed the lives of so many people, many of whom you don't know, have never met and have no idea of the impact BMC has had in their lives.

**MAY YOU KNOW GOD'S RICHEST BLESSINGS
AS YOU CONTINUE TO CELEBRATE YOUR JOURNEY OF FAITH.**



MILESTONES ALONG OUR JOURNEY IN FAITH

| | |
|--------|---|
| 1956 | First discussions about forming a new Methodist Church took place |
| 1959 | First Sunday School opened at Bryanston Shopping Centre |
| 1960 | The Sunday School needed more accommodation and moved to Bryanston Primary School |
| 1961 | First Hall opened |
| 1962 | Sunday school services moved to the Hall |
| 1963 | Expansion to the Hall and staff quarters built |
| 1967/8 | Manse built |
| 1969 | New church (now the Chapel) built |
| 1978 | Driveway paved with brick – previously sand |
| 1978/9 | Wesley Pre-Primary built |
| 1983 | North and South transepts in the church and new staff quarters built |
| 1985 | Second manse bought |
| 1990 | Offices and additional toilets built |
| 1996 | The New Sanctuary opened on 13 October 1996 |
| 2000 | Counselling House opened |
| 2000 | Debt on the new church completely paid off |
| 2001 | New office block and hall complex opened |
| 2004 | Akani opened as an outreach of BMC |
| 2004 | Lonehill Society established (now Gracepoint) |
| 2005 | Church at Diepsloot opened – an outreach from BMC |
| 2009 | Joseph's Storehouse feeds the hungry in Diepsloot |
| 2012 | The Chapel becomes a Fellowship Café after the Sunday services |
| 2012 | Counselling House becomes the Pastoral Care Centre- now the Family Care Centre |
| 2016 | Upgrade of the Chancel in the Sanctuary, the foyer and the AV room. |

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Here is a list of some of the ministers who served at BMC. We remember those who have passed on to higher service with gratitude for their dedicated service to the Lord at BMC – the Rev Vivian Harris, Rev J B Webb, Rev Roy Baker and, more recently, Rev Demetris Palos and Rev Dr Neil Oosthuizen.

Rev **ALLISTAIR RUNDLE** – BMC's first full-time minister now retired and living in Claremont, Cape Town

Rev **BRIAN BROWN** – living in the United Kingdom

Rev **LEE VAN RENSBURG** – living in the USA

Rev **HARRY NEL** – retired and living in Yorkshire in the UK

Rev **DAVID NEWTON** – retired and living in Bellville, Cape Town

Rev **DAWN SLABBER** – retired and living in Meadowridge in the Cape

Rev **JENNY SAMDAAN** – Chaplain at St Stithians

Rev **COLIN PILKINGTON** – left the ministry

Rev **COSTA STATHAKIS** – retired and living in Australia

Rev **THEMBA MNTAMBO** – Bishop of the Limpopo District

Rev **BRENDA TIMMER** – now minister at Pinetown, KZN

Rev **DENNIS GEE** – retired and living in Pennington, KZN

Rev **SIVIWE WAQU** – now in the Alexandra/Johannesburg Circuit

Rev **GARY RIVAS** – Bishop of the Central District

Rev **JACQUI RIVAS** – Superintendent of the Fourways Circuit

Rev **JANET VERRIER** (Cope) – Chaplain at St Stithians

Rev **JOHN GILLMER** – retired and living in Plettenberg Bay, Cape

Rev **SMANGA BOSMAN** – minister at Glen Methodist Church, Pretoria

Rev **FIONA CALVEREY** – minister at Lyttleton

Rev **ROLAND GREENLAND** – (BMC/Diepsloot) minister in Kimberley

Rev **CHRISTOPHER HARRISON** – retired and living in Bordeaux, Randburg

Rev **MANDLA GAMEDE** – living in Randburg

Rev Dr **LEON KLEIN** – minister at Kuilsriver, Cape

Rev **VUYELWA LEGWALE** – minister at Weltevreden Park, Roodepoort

Rev **MARTIN BEUKES** – minister at Hibberdene, KZN

Revs **FESTUS** and **LEA MARUMA** (BMC and Gracepoint) – ministers at North Rand

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been a great privilege and joy to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the Bryanston Methodist Church and write about the history of this very special community of people. I want to thank everybody who shared their memories with me, some of whom have been members for forty or more years. These are wonderful memories going back to picnics and Sunday School classes among the proteas.

I want to thank especially those who wrote their memories down so that I had a record of what they said. Parts of all these submissions have been incorporated into the text.

This book is a team effort. I (Joan) wrote the text, Stan edited what was written and Kerry and Carol put it all together and saw to the lay-out. It was a pleasure working together. It was amazing to find out how God has used BMC to bless the Bryanston community in so many ways. It was also inspiring to see what volunteers at Bryanston have accomplished for the Kingdom of God.

I want to thank all those who supplied me with brochures recording BMC's past history – **PAM CLOUSTON**, **NEVILLE WATSON** and **GEOFF SLADE**. Thank you to those who supplied photographs – Carol Roodt, Pam Clouston and **ANNE HALL**. Other photographs came from the archives at BMC. Typescripts were provided by **OLIVIA ZIETSMAN**, one written with **SELWYN MACFARLANE** and the other her own records. In addition I used two books for information – my chapter on the Methodist Church in Johannesburg in "Open Doors" and a few pages from David Heritage's book "A Hope-filled Calling The Story of a 21st Century Prodigal Son".

God has blessed BMC greatly in the past
and will continue to do so in the years to come.

Greetings and thanks from the team –
STAN AND JOAN CHILVERS, KERRY WETTON and CAROL ROODT.



For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

(Jeremiah 29:11)