

THE BLACKWELLS CHURCH PLANTING IN SOUTH AFRICA

10 October 2021

Dear Prayer Partners,

Both of our congregations here in South Africa are generally doing well. We were able to begin holding services again at **Swartland Baptist and Grace Baptist** when the lockdown was lifted last month. The teens were particularly encouraged that we have been able to restart the Youth meetings! In the church services we are currently working through a sermon series on characteristics of a biblical church. Our midweek Bible study series is on spiritual warfare. Marc is teaching a biblical perspective in contrast to popular misconceptions and teachings of charismatics and others. Also, each week Nancy meets with various ladies in the church to encourage them.

Zimbabwe missions:

For the past year and a half, we haven't been able to physically go to Zimbabwe due to border restrictions. But in mid-September these were lifted, and we were able to go. There were some complications, but we thank the Lord that the Zimbabwean embassy in South Africa gave us a letter of permission. We ended up needing that letter three times during the border crossing!



Pastor Mike & Mary

Plaxedes & Pastor Shadreck

The primary reason for going was to meet with the pastors and finalize the details of the training program for their students. We divided the program into two parts: a two-year basic Bible course, followed by a three-year intensive pastoral training which includes mentoring and apprenticeship components. The pastors were very excited as we worked through all the details and a plan took shape. They have five students that started studying this month. Please pray for the funds to provide them training materials.

Another important goal during this trip was to introduce the pastors to an NGO that teaches better farming practices for rural situations. We were given a tour of the demonstration farm, and the pastors were encouraged by the simple techniques that could improve their own personal farming and that of their congregations. Crop losses are often an issue due to variable rain patterns, but the men were shown how to plant and maintain small plots to feed their families even during a drought.

A final and unexpected benefit to this trip was that God used Nancy to help save Mary's life by diagnosing extremely high blood pressure. At 183/125 Mary (pastor Mike's wife) could've had a stroke and died at any moment. We took her into town to see a doctor and with blood pressure medication she is now stabilized.

Thank you for praying for us and supporting our ministry here, *Marc, Nancy, & Matthew*