



IN TOUCH JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Greetings from the Board of Management.

Update: Appointment of a Minister

Following prayerful consideration, and consultation with the Congregation and Consultative Committee, a unilateral decision was made to appoint Rev. Mark Holden, Anglican Minister from Beaufort West as the future Minister of St Francis. However, on Thursday 9th January, tragedy struck, and we were informed that Rev Mark Holden had suffered a debilitating stroke. He was admitted to George Hospital where the stroke was confirmed. Rev Holden was unable to move or speak and was subsequently transferred to Mossel Bay Hospital on 13th January 2025. He has now been moved to the Mossel Bay Step Down facility.

St Francis United Church have rallied around his wife, Tania, who remained at the Anglican Church in Beaufort West without any visible means of financial support. The Board donated R5000 from the Social Outreach Fund to assist her with immediate needs. A further amount of R8723.00 was contributed by the congregation on Sunday 1 February 2025. It is likely that Rev. Mark Holden will be incapacitated for at least 12 months. Please continue to pray for him and his family at this traumatic time

The Way Forward

The Anglican Bishop, requested that the Management Board of St Francis wait until the end of February to allow the Anglican Church to source an alternative candidate, and also to adequately assess the prognosis of Rev. Mark Holden. However, the majority of Board members felt that the sourcing of a Minister for St Francis should proceed without delay and be extended to other Protestant Churches and denominations.

Congregational Meeting: 1 February 2025

A meeting was held with the congregation after the Worship Service on Sunday 1 February 2025. The majority of members of the congregation voted in favour of advertising for a Minister from other Protestant denominations, but not excluding the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches. In the meantime, we will continue to pray for God's guidance and our obedience to His leading.

St Francis needs YOU: new Board Members required for 2025/2026

The Board is responsible to the congregation for the running of SFUC. Please consider prayerfully if God is calling you to serve Him on the Board of Management, and, if so, approach one of our existing Board members.

We express our heartfelt thanks to our nucleus of available preachers, and members of the Clergy, who have faithfully shared the Word of God with us to date. Sadly, we had to say goodbye to Ds Herman Retief, who decided to retire at the end of 2024.

A final Word

1 Samuel 3:10. The Lord came and stood there, calling as at other times, "Samuel, Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Isaiah 6:8. Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me."

George Pavey

Chairman: Board of Management

A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER



Christmas 2024 was truly a joyous occasion at St Francis. 120 people attended our Carols by Candlelight Service. The manger scene, created by Jeff Seabra and friends, was very realistic and captured the sacred atmosphere of that first “silent night.” The audience raised the roof as they sang the beautiful carols played by Ronelle Kruger on the piano and Andries on the guitar.

161 people of all ages attended our very special Christmas Day Service, led by Pam Victor. The SFUC Singers delighted the congregation with their rendition of the much-loved Christmas song “When a child is born”. Even Nestor, the long-eared Christmas donkey made an appearance! The joyous celebration, community spirit, worshipful atmosphere and pertinent message were a great blessing to all, especially our visitors, whose faces beamed with Christmas cheer as they left to celebrate Christmas with their families.

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NEW MEMBERS CORNER

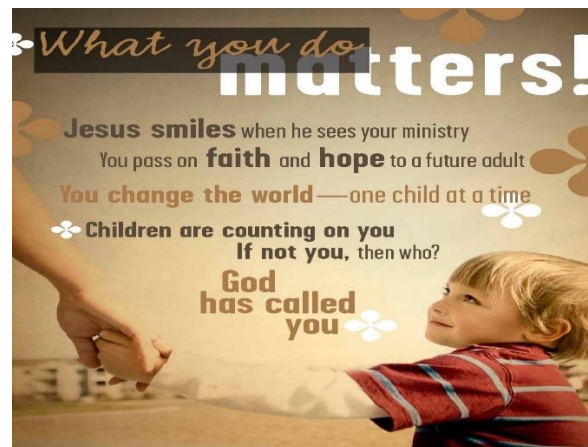
WELCOME TO GERALD AND ANN HINDLE

Gerald and Ann Hindle joined the St Francis Family on 5 November 2024, having previously attended Christ Church, England. Ann enjoys arts and crafts and refurbishing, and Gerald enjoys gardening and walking. They have 7 grandchildren and are both great animal lovers. Welcome to you both and we trust that you will be richly blessed as you continue to worship with us.

BRING IT ON!



Teachers of SFUC Youth Church all geared up for 2025. From left to right – Brenda Ahrens, Hanniki Main, Truus Grater, Mary Lou Burgess-Simpson, Barbara Eaton and Jill Seabra.



JOY GROUP NEWSFLASH

Start the new year with a burst of joy, fellowship and fun. The first meeting of the Joy Group takes place on **Tuesday 25 February 2025 in the St Francis Church Hall at 2.30 p.m.** **If you have FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) you won't want to miss this one!**



WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

GUESS WHO! Yes - the handsome hulk is Viv Grater and the beautiful bride is Truus Grater on their wedding day - 4th January 1975.



This wonderful couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on 4 January 2025. May God continue to bless you both with many more years of love and happiness.



HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY DELPHINE!



Delightful Delphine celebrated her 90th birthday recently surrounded by cherished family and friends. Congratulations Delphine!



IN MEMORIAM

We express our sincere condolences to the family of Mari Ford, who passed away on 31 December 2024. May Mari rest in the peace she so richly deserves.



Pam's Ponderings

Okay! I admit it. I am a steam train fanatic. I love steam trains! From the Flying Scotsman - London to Edinburgh, the Elgin Market steam train from Cape Town to Elgin, and the most beautiful journey of all – a steamtrain trip from Robertson through the vineyards, with complimentary wines from the renowned Robertson Cellars. I squealed like a child when the Iron lady, Amanda, chugged into the Robertson station. The sound of the whistle, and the smoke billowing through the air, evoked childhood memories. As a child I would sit on the swing in the backyard and watch in wonder and excitement as those trains sped by at lightning speed – steam trains, electric trains, diesel engines.

They always had a purpose and destination and knew exactly where they were going. They ran at full throttle, full steam ahead; yet they also sometimes ran out of steam and had to stop for a while. Sometimes they had to be diverted onto another track by the signalman or change direction.

The life cycle of a train indeed often reflects our own spiritual journey. We begin knowing it all, forgiven, redeemed, transformed by the love of Jesus Christ - certain of our life's purpose and destination. Then we run out of steam, life happens, we are derailed and find ourselves on a track we had not planned or anticipated. In moments of quietness, we reflect upon our lives, and God, our Father, places His hand upon our shoulder, gives us new strength for the journey, and we find our way back to Him. A much deeper faith and trust replaces our earlier self-assurance and self-centredness, we discover renewed purpose and fulfilment in service to others. When the time comes for us to get off the train at the heavenly platform, we are assured that we will hear our blessed Master's words: *Well, Done, good and faithful servant*