



methodist homes **MHA on the Bay**

No. 42
Christmas 2025



A SPRING OF NEW BEGINNINGS , Angelo Brooks

As I write this letter, I am looking at the vibrant blooms and considering the longer days that signal the arrival of Spring. It feels wonderfully symbolic in that, just as our gardens are bursting into life, I find myself in my own season of new beginnings. I am filled with the same energy and promise that this time of the year brings.

My first few weeks at the helm have been a whirlwind of introductions, learning and, most importantly, connection. From the moment I walked through the doors, I have been met with the most incredible warmth and welcome. To every resident who has stopped to share a greeting or a story, to every staff member who has taken the time to explain the nuances of what makes our villages and workplaces so special – thank you. You have welcomed me with open arms, and I am profoundly grateful.

What has struck me most in these early days is not just the beauty of our facilities or the efficiency of our operations, but the palpable sense of **“community”** that thrives at MHA. I have witnessed our team's dedication firsthand – not as employees performing a task, but as caring individuals who know our residents' names, their stories, and what matters most to them. This is the true heart of MHA, and I am proud to be a part of it.

My focus during this initial period, apart from 'getting down to business', is to listen, to learn and to understand what makes you all love MHA in the way that you do.

What works well and where you see the opportunities for us to grow and improve together. Your insights are invaluable, and I am committed to being present, accessible and always ready to listen.

As we look to the future, my vision is to build upon the strong foundation that already exists, and I am excited to work with our dedicated team to enhance the lifestyle, services and sense of belonging that defines our MHA community.

The welcome I have received is the best possible start, and it only strengthened my belief in the bright future we will create together. A special mention and thanks go to our founder President, Rev. George Irvine who gave me the most wonderful welcome, and blessing, on my first day at the office. It was a truly humbling experience, and we pray that our Almighty Father will continue to bless Rev. George. A word of thanks also goes to our Board Chairperson Michael Burmeister and director Malcolm Stewart who together, ushered in my first day at MHA.

As we head into this special season of Christmas, it is my prayer that we all will experience the true joy that only Christ gives, and that we will show love and kindness unto everyone we meet.

Abundant blessings to all and....TO GOD BE THE GLORY.

Angelo Brooks – CEO.





HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As mature, retired humans, do we still need to be setting New Year's resolutions? Or have we earned the right to live however we please?

According to Google, we should still set them! Apparently, resolutions aren't just for the young and goal-driven; they're good for our health and longevity too.

And when considering age and attitude, one almost naturally recalls the well-known poem *Warning* by Jenny Joseph of Birmingham. Written in 1961, when she was just 29 years old, it has become a delightful anthem of rebellion in later life. On the right is an extract.

So whether you choose to set some new goals this year or simply plan to enjoy the freedom you've earned, may 2026 bring you joy, laughter, and just a tad of purple playfulness!

But most of all, may good health and much happiness follow you wherever you may wander in the New Year. ❤️



WARNING

By Jenny Joseph

When I am an old woman
I shall wear purple
With a red hat which doesn't go,
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and
summer gloves
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for
butter.
I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired
And gobble up samples in shops and press
alarm bells
And run my stick along the public railings
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick the flowers in other people's gardens
And learn to spit.
You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go
Or only bread and pickle for a week
And hoard pens and pencils and beermats
and things in boxes.



MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL BURMEISTER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

In the last two Christmas editions of MHAOTB I mentioned my visit to Berlin, when as a 14-year-old I was a member of a choir which toured Europe. This Christmas, I again recall our performing in a beautiful church on Christmas morning, singing "Adeste fidelis" and the song about the geese. We had Christmas lunch with a local family, followed by a visit to The Wall. The family stood on a platform and waved to the extended family members on the eastern side. It was a sad, drab and wet day for all as that impenetrable stark wall, barbed wire and guards with dogs kept this family apart.

I re-visited Berlin this September past; what an amazing change! The wall has gone and the city is now undivided. Only short pieces of the wall have been retained in their original form, whilst other portions have been left standing but have been beautifully graffitied and are works of art. The old remains as a reminder of man's inhumanity to man, and the new serves as a living example of what can be done when people choose to rid themselves of the bad past.

Their renewed thinking enables them to live in peace and tranquility with one another. A visit to the

memorial church, left in its bombed state after the Second World War, now stands as a wonderful memorial to peace among nations.

The transformation and restoration of peace and beauty in Berlin reminds me of the Christmas season we are now entering. We are invited to come, all of us faithful, joyful and triumphant, to behold and adore Him and focus once again on the message of peace and goodwill to all men that it espouses. May we in this special time that we share with our families and loved ones keep in mind Paul's exhortation to us to "carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the will of Christ". Let us put "Christ" back into "Christmas". But let's not overlook that this command is not restricted to family or friends or those close to us, but to all with whom we come into contact in our daily lives.

And so, on behalf of the Board, I wish every resident, every member of our loving, dedicated staff and all associated with our organization a Blessed Christmas!

Mike Burmeister





MATILDA'S STORY *by Matron Nelhari Windell (Maranatha Frail Care)*

I have always loved and had pets, but none like Matilda. She's different. I wanted to rescue a pet to see it transform under my love and care.

And so Matilda's story began.

Matilda is a dearly beloved Senegal parrot. Unfortunately, she had had a rough start in life; her flight and tail feathers never developed. Due to her previous owner's lack of knowledge, she had plucked out many of her feathers. Matilda had only been fed sunflower seeds and peanuts. Whilst parrots love these treats, a diet like this can cause serious health issues such as fatty liver disease, behavioural problems, vitamin deficiencies, aspergillosis and many other illnesses. Like humans, parrots need a balanced diet of fresh fruits, vegetable pellets and a small quantity of healthy seeds.

At her Cape Town home she had been kept in a small cage, with the wrong type of perches. This led to her getting bumble foot, a painful condition. Parrots need natural perches of different shapes and sizes to support their feet and keep them healthy. Dowel perches are not suitable for them.

Having travelled in a small wooden travel box, she arrived in October 2024. Matilda was ready to start a new chapter of her life. And so was I. I fell in love immediately, and although sad for her past I was excited about building a future with her and by the challenge of getting her better; perhaps the nurse in me jumped out!

Slowly Matilda and I started the journey to recovery and once she started eating properly, her feather quality soon began to improve, tiny little feathers started growing where there had only been baldness. To help her thrive, I built Matilda a big flat stand. This was quite safe, as she could not fly. The bumble foot had to heal slowly. It was done by wrapping the perches with soft cloth; some people put sandpaper around perches to keep nails short but end up causing more harm than good.

Parrots are incredibly curious birds that need lots of attention, stimulation and foraging toys. Their toys are meant to be chewed and destroyed – natural behaviour for them! Without enough enrichment, parrots can become bored, which may lead to self-mutilation or feather plucking.

Matilda has filled many people's days with her cheerful chirps as she spends her time in my office, travelling to work with me, happily settling into her spot for the day. She quickly became part of the team, greeting everyone with her whistles and excited squeaks. She even visited Head Office a few times! Of course, she absolutely stole the show each time and loved showing off her new feathers. Her bright personality and friendly nature brings smiles to everyone who meets her.

There is so much excitement and so many feelings of achievement with the appearance of every new feather. Every time Matilda enjoyed something new to eat it was rewarding for me. Our affection has grown and developed into a very strong bond, coupled with a huge sense of protection. This truly was love at first sight.



FROM THE EDITOR'S PEN:

Dear Readers,

Thank you for encouraging words I have received in one way or another over the past few weeks; it will be my privilege to take the baton from my predecessors in terms of editing. I will always be mindful that Ron Cleland, Malcolm Stewart and Michele Brooks were the A Team that created MHA On The Bay.

They set an extremely high standard which I will strive to maintain. Thankfully Malcolm has agreed to assist in an advisory capacity, and Michele will continue to be responsible for the layout and printing, which means you should be receiving a delightful publication!

alison@methomes.co.za





The HO HO HO of Christmas!

Have you ever wondered how Santa, seemingly effortlessly, manages to stay jolly and youthful? What is his secret to such lasting good health and boundless energy?

Well, according to Google, it might just be his famous "Ho Ho Ho!"

You see, laughter is way more than just a sign of good cheer, it's a powerful form of therapy with incredible physical, mental, and social benefits. Laughter lowers stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline, which helps to undo the damage caused by chronic stress. It also boosts blood flow and can even help reduce blood pressure, all of which lowers the risk of heart attacks and strokes.

But the benefits don't stop there. A good laugh also strengthens the immune system by increasing the production of infection-fighting antibodies and activating protective immune cells, helping the body to ward off illness. Santa knows you must be in excellent health to travel across the time zones of the world at a speed of three million miles per hour to deliver billions of presents!

On the mental and emotional side, laughter triggers the release of our "feel-good" chemicals; endorphins, dopamine, and serotonin, which elevate mood and create a sense of overall well-being. Humour also acts as a natural coping mechanism, helping us face challenges with resilience and perspective. And let's be honest, Santa probably needs as much help as he can get when squeezing down those narrow chimneys!

Even Santa's memory and focus benefit from all that laughter, as studies show that laughter improves attention, problem-solving skills, and memory which is extremely useful when you've got a very long list of names to remember!

And of course, laughter brings people together, strengthens relationships, builds trust, and cultivates teamwork; an absolute must when managing a workshop full of mischievous elves and a team of robust reindeers!

The secret's out! So, take a hint from Santa this festive season; laugh often, laugh loudly, and let your own *Ho Ho Ho* keep you healthy, happy, and full of the Christmas spirit!

Ho, Ho, Ho!

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me22 tortoises?

This special story begins at Annesley Gardens, where years ago a few tortoises appeared in the complex. Never anticipating this outcome, the village soon saw the little colony flourish and today there are twenty-two of them!

As their numbers grew, Val Badenhorst took a special interest in this fast-growing family.

Using her noddle, she soon polished up her computer skills and began marking each tortoise with nail varnish and recording them by colour, gender, size, and month of birth. Sizes range from Dirty Harvey, the largest at 17.5 cm, to tiny Baby at 4.5 cm. Newly hatched tortoises average a length of 3.5 cm. Val measures them on graph paper, much to their annoyance, but it ensures as much accuracy as possible. Baby tortoises arrive roughly one hundred days after the eggs are laid.

Val has also mastered the art of telling males from females: males have a longer tail, a concave plastron, and a protruding gular used for wrestling rivals. Females have shorter tails and a flat plastron. In a festive touch, Val's markings are red and green, no not specially for Christmas; she just chose those colours randomly!

Occasionally the tortoises set off the fence alarm, and once a tortoise was caught in the gate. Fortunately, quick-thinking groundsman, Albert Segwati, was nearby and rescued it in time. It's now healing very well.

The tortoise family snack heartily on white hibiscus and can be found frolicking around the common areas of Annesley Gardens on sunny mornings. And the afternoons? It's siesta time amongst the aloe plants!

Simply a testimony to the diversity of life, this little Testudinidae family have become a blessing to the many people in the village who love them.

