

COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #56: FRIDAY 31 JULY 2020
LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+61(L3)=DAY 127



CovidCom is not trying to confuse Newsflash readers with the weekly table of statistics; we hope that they are relatively easy to understand. What we are doing is sharing with members of the MHA family the worrying and increasing infection rate; we undertook to keep you in the picture, and we continue to do that. As the graphic alongside says, you need to know!

Our City and our Province are racing towards the peak in Covid-19 infections; the next six weeks or more are going to be brutal. Hard as MHA has tried to protect residents and staff from infection, this rate increase was and is inevitable. Over the past four months we have shared with you details of the procedures and protocols which we have put into place in order to mitigate the advance of the virus into our facilities, especially our two Frail Care units. As a caring organization, and as the MHA family, we remain so grateful that no resident or staff member has thus far been hospitalized for a Covid-related issue, and no one has succumbed to the virus. Please continue to pray that this remains so.

Our Covid-19 picture, as of 12h00 today, is:

FACILITY	# OF POSITIVE RESIDENTS	# OF POSITIVE STAFF	# DE-ISOLATED	# STILL ISOLATED
CP Bradfield		12	11	1
CP Bradfield	10		2	8
Bedsitters	1		1	
Maranatha FC		6	6	
Maranatha FC	8		7	1
Maranatha Village		1	1	
Maintenance		1	1	
Aldersgate	1		1	
Epworth Close	1		1	
Head Office		1		1
TOTALS	21	21	31	11

CovidCom is reviewing the way it conducts business, on a daily basis. Staff then adapt accordingly. More than ever before, our Village residents need to do everything possible to keep themselves healthy and safe, and out of Covid-19's way. You know what you need to do---and what to avoid doing, at all costs! In the 16 March 2020 letter addressed to everyone in the MHA family we quoted a GP/Infectious Disease Specialist (identity unknown) who posted this on Facebook:

- Stop waiting to be surprised

- Temper Fear with Reason/Panic with Patience/Uncertainty with Education
- Think of others via clean hands and open hearts

This is a message worth repeating, especially at this time; a time when patience has worn thin, when fear is mounting, when loneliness can easily take over, when we are blaming bungling politicians and autocratic managers for inconvenient and unpopular decisions, and when we are finding it hard to know just who to believe anymore, or how to cope.

This is a time for courage and faith, but this is also a time to accept that we must continue making sacrifices. The vast number of our residents have accepted the rules and regulations set by government, and also by CovidCom. On a MHA level, many rules and decisions are not popular (not allowing in visitors, private domestics and gardeners, non-essential carers/companions etc). We urge everyone in the MHA family to understand and accept that CovidCom cannot make exceptions when we are dealing with 319 cottages, and almost 700 people. Please let us all walk this road together.

Celebration time!

MHA's first Village, Cassia Gardens, officially opened on 3 August 1985.

HAPPY 35th BIRTHDAY, CASSIA!!!!

We are not yet there

Were you ever guilty of this when you were a child? Your family and you set off on a long road trip by car, perhaps to Cape Town or the Drakensberg, or die ou Transvaal; you had hardly made it to the first dorpie when you asked your Dad, the driver: "Are we there yet?"! According to the dictionary, we use the adverb 'yet' in negative statements to indicate that something has not happened up to the present time, although it probably will happen. Most Dads probably just shook their heads, perhaps remembering when they had asked their Dad the same question, and just drove on, anticipating the same question to be repeated at the next town, and the next!

The quoted statement "We are not yet there" was made by Health Minister Mkhize during a visit to our city last week, in response to questions about whether or not the Eastern Cape Health Department should be taken over and placed under administration. He is reported to have responded that questions of a takeover had come up in parliament but "you take over when you get to a point where there's a whole breakdown of management, there's reluctance to follow instructions, there's an internal inability for people to be co-operative--but I don't believe we're there yet".

On a daily basis, media reports tell us otherwise; the Eastern Cape Health Department is consistently letting sick people down and putting healthcare workers' lives at risk, through inadequate facilities, shocking hygiene conditions and insufficient PPE. Cases of infection and death in our Province recently went unrecorded for a whole month, making a mockery of provincial and national statistics in the process. To add insult, today (31 July) is the closing date for applying for 74 essential posts at the 4000-bed Field Hospital in Korsten, funded by the German government, via VWSA. Even with fast-tracking applications, going through the process of sifting, verifying qualifications and the accuracy of essential information provided, and then initial orientation and training, it will be weeks before that Field hospital is running efficiently. This should have commenced weeks, if not months, ago.

The Health Departments are not yet there? The definition of 'yet', shown above, indicates that something probably will happen at some future time. What happened to the word and the undertaking called definitely?! Hospitals should definitely be ready by now; healthcare

workers should definitely have all the PPEs they need by now. A robust plan of action should definitely be in place by now.

Can you imagine if MHA had adopted the “not yet there” approach?



COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #55: FRIDAY 24 JULY 2020
LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+54(L3)=DAY 120

COVID-19

NEED TO KNOW

As expected, Covid-19 infections continue to challenge our two Frail Care facilities. Staff remain disciplined in terms of adhering to hygiene regulations and procedures, and they arrive at work, shift after shift, with great courage and with dedication to their calling. As an organization we frequently praise our frontline staff, and every other staff member, for their loyalty and professionalism, but in reality we cannot do enough praising and thanking. So, whenever you come across a MHA staff member, please give them a warm smile, a thumbs-up, and the promise of a hug when the Coronavirus monster eventually allows us. They all richly deserve that!

We remain grateful that every staff member and resident who has contracted the virus, to date, has recovered.

Summary (as at 12h00 on 24 July 2020):

FACILITY	# OF POSITIVE RESIDENTS	# OF POSITIVE STAFF	# DE-ISOLATED	# STILL ISOLATED
CP Bradfield		11	11	
CP Bradfield	8		2	6
Bedsitters	1		1	
Maranatha FC		6	4	2
Maranatha FC	8		6	2
Maranatha Village		1	1	
Maintenance		1	1	
Aldersgate	1		1	
Epworth Close	1		1	
TOTALS	19	19	28	10

MHA continues to incur unbudgeted costs in the war against Covid-19, and we remain so grateful that we have the financial ability to absorb these. Up to 30 June 2020 we have spent:

Transport of Frail Care staff	R 176,000
Relief staff	R 102,000
COVID tests	R 142,000
Sanitizing of facilities	R 108,000
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	R 70,000
“Risk Allowance” paid to FC staff/Managers	<u>R 74,000</u>
	R 672,000

Arise, Captain Sir Thomas Moore!!



In the 30 April 2020 Newsflash we acknowledged the 100th birthday of Captain Tom Moore, England’s fundraising hero.

Last Friday, 17 July 2020, on a beautiful midsummer’s day, Capt. Tom was invested as a Knight Bachelor at Windsor Castle. The ceremony was

performed by 94-year-old Queen Elizabeth II; wonderful media images showed two kindred spirits, both having been on active service during WWII, both in good health, and both obviously enjoying the uniqueness of the occasion; it was held outdoors, and at a time in history where Covid-19 has prevented other investitures. The Queen invited him to tea, but he declined (he had a prior engagement!).

Gardeners and Housekeepers:

Our Managers are still being asked by residents for permission to allow privately-employed gardeners and domestic housekeepers back to work. CovidCom made a decision that privately employed personnel would not be allowed to return to any MHA facilities; this decision remains in force, and in all likelihood will continue until after the infection rate flattens.

MHA Management continues to consider ways in which the gardening/cleaning needs of residents can be safely addressed, even if partially. In the meantime we ask that you respect the decision, taken with the best interests of residents’ wellbeing in mind.



“Everybody has a summer holiday/Doin' things they always wanted to”



Do you remember “Summer Holiday”, a 1963 film starring Cliff Richard? It was about three young men who persuaded their London Transport employers to lend them a double-decker bus; they converted it into a holiday caravan, which they drove across Europe. The film was a box-office hit, had a few catchy songs, but very forgettable! Sir Cliff, born Harry Rodger Webb, will celebrate his 80th birthday on 14th October! Tempus fugit ☹

Do you even remember what a holiday was?! Our locked-down lives crave for ‘a holiday’; to go to The Willows or van Stadens River

Mouth for the day or for a weekend, to go to the Mountain Zebra Park or to Kruger, to travel down the Garden Route or to see the flowers in Namaqualand, to drive through the Karoo, or even to go overseas to visit new places or see family and friends. Right now, we will happily even label a day trip somewhere, or a visit to the seaside, as ‘a holiday’! We know that some or all of these will be possible again in the future (mid-2021?), but for now we must stow away our suntan lotions and cameras, our beach towels and cozzies, our anoraks and beanies, our passports and road maps, and stay safe and healthy in and around our homes, until the Covid-19 storm has passed.

On a sombre note, our not being able to go on ‘a holiday’, or others coming here for a holiday, has impacted horrendously on the tourism industry. South Africa is listed as one of the top 15 countries that is being impacted by the near-closure of the international travel industry during the pandemic, and it is predicted that this country’s economy will lose at least 3% of its GDP as a result of the impact on the tourism industry. In the worst-case scenario, this could result in a GDP reduction of 8%. We are at number nine on the list of the 15 most impacted countries; some of the others are Mauritius, Ireland, Egypt, Spain, Jamaica, Thailand, Croatia, Portugal and Greece.

Jamaica will be the hardest hit in the world. With tourist spending making up 20% of the Caribbean island’s current GDP, its best-case scenario is an 11% reduction in GDP. In the worst case, Jamaica’s GDP could reduce by an almost unbelievable 32%. Projections are based on three possible scenarios: a lockdown lasting four months; one lasting eight months; and one lasting twelve months. The impact on the global tourism industry, in the worst-case scenario, is a staggering US\$3.3 trillion. Hotels remain empty, and cruises liners, airplanes, tour busses and staff stand idle.

Yes, sombre news indeed, but tourism and travel will return; we just don’t know when. In the short-term, if we are able to, let us just celebrate being able to venture out to watch the whales off Schoenies, or the elephants at Addo, or the variety of wildlife at Kragga Kamma Game Park (50% discount for pensioners on a Wednesday!!). As the Roman philosopher Seneca said: “The whole future lies in uncertainty: live immediately”. This should help to keep us positive and focused in these negative and uncertain times ;-)

PS: Spare a thought for John and Liz Machin of Cassia Gardens. They went to New Zealand in February to visit family, and they remain stuck there, still unable to get a flight home. We wish them well!

Be courageous!!

We leave you with these four comforting and inspiring lines from the hymn “What a friend we have in Jesus”:

Have we trials and temptations?/Is there trouble anywhere?/We should never be discouraged/Take it to the Lord in prayer

COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #54: FRIDAY 17 JULY 2020

LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+47(L3)=DAY 113

C VID-19

NEED TO KNOW

Across the world, and within MHA, it has been apparent for some while now that Covid-19 is a vicious and unpredictable virus, and you ignore it at your peril. If not taken seriously it will wreak havoc, as it has done and is doing. America and Italy are classic but tragic examples. Equally, if it is confronted head-on with courage, discipline, resources and an intelligent battle plan, victories are possible. This time last week your Newsflash painted a worrying picture; infections within the MHA family were escalating at quite an alarming rate, despite the best efforts of everyone. The infection tally had risen to 29 residents and staff, in total. Today we can share a very different picture:

FACILITY	# OF POSITIVE RESIDENTS	# OF POSITIVE STAFF	# DE-ISOLATED	# STILL ISOLATED
CP Bradfield		11	11	
CP Bradfield	2		2	
Bedsitters	1		1	
Maranatha FC		6	3	3
Maranatha FC	7		3	4
Maranatha Village		1	1	
Maintenance		1	1	
Aldersgate	1			1
Epworth Close	1		1	
TOTALS	12	19	23	8

This tells us that, as of now, a total of 31 members of the MHA family have shown symptoms of being infected with the virus (19 staff and 12 residents). Of those, 23 have been through the mandatory ‘isolation’ period, and have recovered and been de-isolated, and 8 are still in isolation. No hospitalization has been required, and there have been no Covid-related deaths. We must continue to thank God for His protection, but we must also acknowledge that the procedures and practices which have been put in place by CovidCom, and executed so diligently and professionally by each and every staff member, have been a major contributing factor in this war, to date.

We cannot be complacent, and this is no time for celebrating. The worst is still to come. We must continue to persevere, to be on our guard, and to be disciplined in protecting ourselves and others. All staff and all residents have sacrificed so much over the past four months; we pray that you will be given the strength and courage to continue to fight Covid-19 in this way. Thank you.

Seneca was a Roman philosopher who lived 2000 years ago. His wisdom and his works are still quoted today. Three sayings attributed to Seneca resonate loudly today, in the context of what we have reported above, about Covid-19:

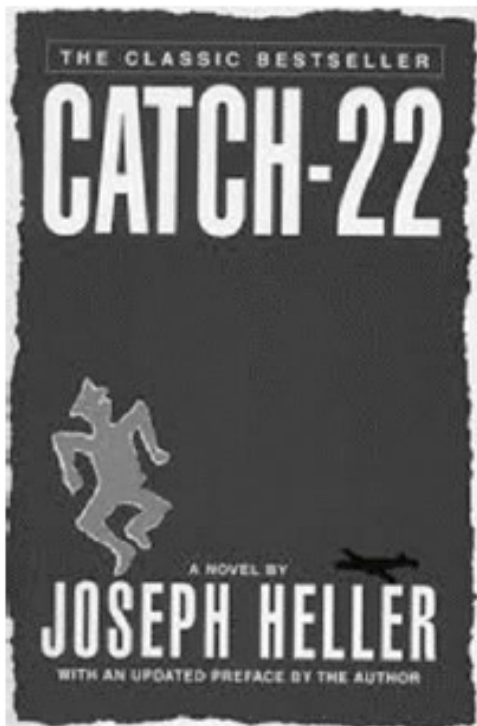
There are more things that frighten us than injure us, and we suffer more in imagination than in reality

Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end

Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity

Looking ahead; praying for change; staying positive

Our President appears trapped; this is the time in our country's history, and in his life as our Commander-in-Chief, when he has to display bolder leadership, act decisively, get rid of all



the grossly incompetent people in positions of power, put the people first and his political career second, and speak frequently to the people. We must hope that, like with Churchill, he will be remembered for carrying a nation through a terrible war, and not for the people he protected or trod on or abandoned. This is not a political commentary, but a statement of fact. President Ramaphosa's challenge is the challenge of other world leaders too; people first, career second (and yes, as with Churchill, even if his political career grinds to a halt once the war has been won). So how does this tie in with the book cover shown alongside? "Catch-22", published in 1961, is often cited as one of the most significant novels of the twentieth century. Set in WWII, it examines the absurdity of war and military life through the experiences of the anti-hero Capt. John Yossarian and his cohorts, who attempt to maintain their sanity while serving, so that they may return

home. It is also famous for coining the universally used noun "Catch-22", describing:

- a frustrating situation in which one is trapped by contradictory regulations or conditions
- any illogical or paradoxical problem or situation; dilemma
- a condition or regulation, preventing the resolution of a problem or situation; catch.

This is where our President appears to find himself; he's in a Catch-22 situation. He must return to making bold and courageous decisions, instead of trying to please those who are waiting in the wings to wrestle power away from him, or to protect their own agendas, schemes and arrangements. If he is brave enough to do this (his track records says he is, but

his message to the nation on Sunday 12 July lacked courage and conviction) then there is a good chance that:

- the people of this country will return to behaving responsibly during these critical Lockdown days
- those with delegated authority (Health, Police, Army, Economy, Governance) will do what is right for all, not just for some
- he will intervene in the shambles called the Nelson Mandela Bay municipality and its council; the rot is palpable
- he will bring a team to the Eastern Cape to sort out the terrible mess, once and for all. A journalist recently wrote the following about our Province:

“The crises we are experiencing are not the making of Covid-19: It is the confluence of years of corruption, inefficiency, maladministration and cadre deployment at every level of provincial and local government. It was a collapse waiting to happen. It took a tiny, malicious virus to bring us to the brink. The Eastern Cape needs a new dawn. It needs a deep cleansing of its government and a national plan to make that happen. The province needs a strong voice, the president’s, preferably, that says enough is enough – not one who waves happily while driving around a parking lot in a dodgy ‘medical scooter’”.

Let us all look ahead; pray for changes; stay positive; be a part of the solution and not the problem. Let us also continue to live in community and move forward in faith, as the MHA family, and remain mindful of the plight of others less fortunate. If we don’t do these, we won’t win the battles and the war, and defeat the enemy on our terms. Those who have chosen to live in the Eastern Cape and in Nelson Mandela Bay, especially the elderly and the vulnerable, deserve more; deserve better.

2019: stay away from negative people

2020: stay away from positive people

COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #53: FRIDAY 10 JULY 2020
LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+40(L3)=DAY 106



Within CovidCom and amongst our staff we knew that the day would come when the COVID-19 monster would visit MHA; we just didn’t know when, where or how. We worked tirelessly to prepare for the challenges, and we are confident that we have done everything in our power and used all resources to delay the inevitable onset of infections and ‘positive’ test results. It is cold comfort to say this, but we truly believe that the high level of our preparedness is a major reason why MHA has endured over four months of the threat of the dreaded virus entering one or more of our facilities. Also, as Psalm 23 reminds us, this formidable ‘valley’ is one that we have to walk along, together; our faith in God will keep us alive, and carry us through!

But the virus is here, in MHA's midst, as the statistics below will show. It comes at a time when the pandemic is accelerating out of control in South Africa; Lockdown measures are now virtually useless. It also comes at a time when SA has become the world-leader in the 'doubling rate' category; this particular rate is used to determine how fast COVID-19 cases take to 'double' from a certain date, and SA's has reached an average of 14 days. Put simply, if SA's daily infection rate was 5000 people on 1 July, it will climb to 10000 people by 14 July, and 20000 per day by 28 July, and so on. SA has registered more COVID-19 cases in the past two weeks than it did in the previous 12 weeks of lockdown; yesterday alone there were 13734 new cases reported. This is truly frightening, but it is never too late to say this again: wear a mask, sanitize, practice social distancing, restrict or avoid visiting, go shopping as seldom as you can; support and encourage those you know who are frightened or lonely or alone or struggling to cope with these abnormal times; keep yourselves as active and as healthy as you can; and pray for your own safety, pray for our staff and their loved ones, pray for your neighbours, and pray for our City's residents, especially those who are also fighting hunger, poverty and the onset of winter.

As at 11h30 on Friday 10 July 2020 the known Covid-19 infection statistics within MHA are (previous week in brackets):

- CP Bradfield Frail Care staff=11 (10)
- CP Bradfield Frail Care residents=2 (0)
- Maranatha Frail Care staff=5 (2)
- Maranatha Frail Care residents (3 now de-isolated)=6 (3)
- Maranatha Village staff=1 (0)
- Nurse/carer Agency staff=0 (1)
- Maintenance Team staff=1 (0)
- Bob Zeiss Bedsitters resident (now de-isolated)=1 (1)
- Aldersgate resident=1 (1)
- Epworth Close resident (not on site)=1 (0)

TOTAL 29

All the infected cases were confirmed by the standard swab test undertaken by Ampath Laboratories (a nurse uses a long 'ear bud' device to collect a small sample of saliva from the back of the throat). Staff who have tested positive (they carry the virus in their systems) do not report for duty during the mandatory quarantine period, and all positive residents are in self-isolation, or in one of our isolation facilities, until the mandatory isolation period is over, and it is safe for them to be de-isolated.

A frequently asked question is: What is the difference between Symptomatic and Asymptomatic? To answer this we should throw Presymptomatic into the mix!

Simply put, this is what the definitions mean:

Symptomatic: the person presents with symptoms such as fever, headache, cough, at the time that the virus was isolated from his/her throat (the swab test)

Presymptomatic: the person presents with NO symptoms such as fever, headache, cough, at the time that the virus was isolated from his/her throat, but develops symptoms later

Asymptomatic: the person never develops symptoms, even though the virus was isolated.

CovidCom also wishes to share the following with you:

- No Residents' Meetings will be held in August. Please delete this from your diary
- Regarding the facility for receiving visitors at CP Bradfield Frail Care or Bob Zeiss Bedsitters, so that residents, family and friends can once again see each other face-to-

face, this is in the final stages of preparation. Clearly defined and disciplined protocols and supervision first need to be put in place, and this is urgent work in progress

- Village halls will still remain closed, other than for library/hair salon access. We totally understand the importance of the halls to community life, and CovidCom is liaising with the Managers in this regard. Your safety comes first
- No private gardeners or domestic housekeepers will be allowed to return to work for the foreseeable future
- We have purchased 3 pulse oximeters (a small electronic device, attached to a finger, that estimates the saturation of oxygen in a person's blood, and measures the heart rate)
- Pathology laboratories across the country are swamped, and cannot cope with Covid-19 testing. Added to this is the fact that a test is just an indicator of a person's status (testing positive or negative) at a point in time; a person can be swab-tested on a Monday, get the (negative) result on Friday, but contract the virus (undetected) on the Wednesday. CovidCom is urgently reviewing the extent to which testing is still going to be carried out, and professional advice has been sought. We will continue to do everything in our power to identify infections, and to isolate those involved.

This weekly "Need to know" section is longer than usual, or desired, but it is critically important for all MHA residents, staff and those within the wider MHA family, to know what is happening regarding Covid-19 inside our facilities and, equally important, what CovidCom and the rest of the team are doing to address the new challenges which come at us hourly.

Ten fundamental rules for seniors:

1. Talk to yourself. There are times when you need expert advice
2. "In style" are the clothes that still fit
3. "One for the road" means going to the loo before you leave the house
4. Your people skills are just fine. It's your tolerance for idiots that needs work
5. The biggest lie you tell yourself: "I don't need to write that down. I'll remember it"
6. "On time" is when you get there
7. It would be wonderful if we could put ourselves in the tumble-dryer for 10 minutes, then come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller
8. Lately, have you noticed people your age are so much older than you?
9. Growing old should have taken longer
10. You still haven't learnt to act your age, and hope you never will.

COVID-19: NEWSFLASH #52: FRIDAY 03 JULY 2020
LOCKDOWN@LEVEL 3: 36(L5)+30(L4)+33(L3)=DAY 99



Some of the CovidCom members met on Tuesday 30 June 2020. We share with you some of what was discussed and agreed:

- — Infection statistics within MHA, updated daily, would be shared with residents every Friday, via the Newsflash
- — As at 13h00 on Friday 03 July 2020 the known Covid-19 infection statistics within MHA are:
 - CP Bradfield Frail Care staff=11 (precautionary testing of all residents done; results awaited)
 - Maranatha Frail Care staff=3
 - Nurse/carer Agency staff=1
 - Bob Zeiss Bedsitters resident=1
 - Aldersgate resident=1
 - Residents de-isolated in the past week=3
- Any resident who tests positive, and who must go into self-isolation, must be identified by the Manager to inform fellow residents in his/her facility (village or bedsitters). To expand on this:
- There is no shame or stigma attached to being tested positive (it's an air-borne virus)
- MHA has a duty to inform fellow residents in the infected person's facility only, not beyond
- Sharing the information will be limited to:
 - o XXX (name) has tested positive
 - o Respect that he/she is obliged to self-isolate in his/her cottage/room for 14 days
 - o NO visitors are allowed
 - o Offer him/her encouragement, your prayers, and any assistance, practising social distancing
 - o A follow-up test will be carried out after 14 days, after which he/she is then de-isolated
- All the Village halls would remain closed until further notice
- Visitors coming into any facility would still not be allowed, until further notice
- Domestic housekeepers (MHA staff or private): it was agreed that the CEO would address a letter to every Village resident (since done)
- All the necessary procedures and protocols are in place to deal with Frail Care and Bedsitter residents who become infected.

CovidCom and staff are doing everything possible to keep residents and themselves healthy, and to prevent the Covid-19 virus from entering any of MHA's facilities. This requires a Herculean effort, and equally requires co-operation and some significant sacrifices by residents. This is what we have all been doing since the middle of March, and these efforts and sacrifices cannot be underestimated; they are largely what kept the Covid monster away for so long. We all knew that the virus would eventually come into our facilities. CovidCom and staff accept this; there's no point in looking backwards; there's no point in dissecting what we did or didn't do right; no one is to blame; we just roll up our sleeves, and get back onto the battleground. Every day our nursing and caring staff finds ways to do their duties better, more effectively, and to protect themselves and those they care for. We will continue to do this, every single day, until the war is over.

Please continue to praise and pray for all of our staff, our frontliners, as they fight on behalf of those who cannot.

The sacred space

Rev George Irvine of Aldersgate submitted this beautiful, thought-provoking piece, which we share with you now, with his permission:

Living in the Already and the Not Yet is the sacred space we all inhabit.

Living in the Already we can appreciate the air we breathe. We can savour the food we eat, we can smell the flowers along our path.

Living in the Already we can listen to a friend, letting that person tell their story without interrupting her or him. We can embrace a spouse, or say sorry when we need to and forgive when we have been hurt.

Living in the Already we can celebrate that the special things in life are free, and come to know how grateful we are for what we have been given.

Living in the Not Yet means knowing that not everyone is healed from debilitating illnesses.

Living in the Not Yet means knowing that bad things happen to good people.

Living in the Not Yet means that evil still has power to corrupt, shatter and destroy.

There are two insights that stay with me.

One is that if I am not careful, living in the Not Yet depresses me and makes my life unbearable, so each morning I am learning to celebrate the Already.

But what about the Not Yet?

Here is my second insight. The Not Yet will not last forever. I have come to see over the years that good is stronger than evil, that love is stronger than hate. I guess that this is what St. Paul was getting at when he wrote: "The kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdom of our Lord and Christ."

Give me strength!

A visiting pastor attended a men's breakfast in the middle of a rural farming area of the country. The group had asked an older farmer, decked out in bib overalls, to say grace for the morning breakfast.

"Lord, I hate buttermilk", the farmer began. The visiting pastor opened one eye to glance at the farmer, and wondered where this was going.

The farmer loudly proclaimed "Lord, I hate lard". Now the pastor was growing concerned.

Without missing a beat, the farmer continued "And Lord, I know that I don't care much for raw white flour". The pastor once again opened his eye to glance around the room and saw that he wasn't the only one feeling uncomfortable.

Then the farmer added “But Lord, when you mix them all together and bake them, I do love warm, fresh biscuits. So Lord, when things come up that we don’t like, when life gets hard, when we don’t understand what you’re saying to us, help us to just relax and wait until you are done mixing. It will probably be even better than biscuits. Amen”

Within that prayer there is great wisdom for all when it comes to complicated situations like we are experiencing in the world today. Stay strong, everyone, because our Lord is mixing several things that we don’t really care for, but something even better is going to come when He is done with it.

“The world is changed by your example, not by your opinion”

“We must always change, renew, rejuvenate ourselves”

“Because that’s what kindness is. It’s not doing something for someone else because they can’t, but because you can”
