



THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

Tuesday, 08 September 2020

Dear friends

As we emerge from the first wave of Corona virus infections with relatively few deaths and a positive recovery rate, let us not become complacent, but remain vigilant as we begin to open our churches and return to in-person services.

This month I want to bring you up to date with some of the challenges that we have been coping with as a family over the last while.

In October 2019, at the very start of the first part of my visit to the eThekweni Presbytery, I was hospitalised with a DVT in my right leg. I was sent home, told to rest and I was put on blood thinners for three months. I had just fully recovered from the DVT when Lockdown hit and we were all plunged into virtual house arrest, which we understood was necessary to keep the most vulnerable in our society safe and healthy.

My mom suffered from a congenital kidney disease, Polycystic Kidney Disease, which led to her kidneys being enlarged and causing her to struggle with abnormally high blood pressure along with other complications. During 2019 they removed the right kidney and she began dialysis. The plan was to remove the other kidney and she was admitted just before lockdown, but she picked up an infection. The doctors decided simply to contain the infection and then send her home. Then on the 24th July, she had a fall at home and broke her hip. She was admitted and was doing pretty well but developed pneumonia on the 27th July. Sally and I saw her at lunch time on the 28th July and we knew that she did not have long to go. She knew we were there but was struggling to breathe and was on oxygen. Her blood pressure was abnormally low, and we could see that her heart and lungs were taking strain. We came home to tell the family and then, on the way back to the hospital my lifelong friend and colleague, Raoul Comninos, phoned to say that she had gone to be with the Lord. He had been allowed to see her and had spoken the 23rd Psalm over her before praying for her. During his prayer, she went to be with the Lord.

During lockdown both Sally and I contracted COVID and then, just after my mom passed, I developed a sever and painful gastro infection. I was treated for that, but they also tested my kidney function and it transpired that the COVID has negatively affected my kidney function.

I share this with you not because I believe my problems are any more or less serious than yours, but because I know there are many praying for me and my family. I want to thank and ask you not to stop doing so, and let you know that your prayers for us and our family are being answered.

This last weekend, after consultation with the GS, I attended the memorial service of Glen and Vida Rafferty, killed on their farm outside Newcastle on the 29th August. The service was led by retired Methodist bishop, Sandy Dickie, an old friend of the family and I brought a