

May 2025 Raised to Praise!



Bethesda's Vision Statement

"The local church and its members meeting the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children, that they may become disciples of Christ."



Dear Friends of Bethesda,

We want to share an important update with you regarding leadership at Bethesda Outreach and invite you to stand with us in prayer and support during this time of transition.

[Our Executive Director, Rudi van Jaarsveld, is facing a significant health challenge. He has recently been diagnosed with Multiple System Atrophy which is a rare disorder that involves a progressive degeneration of autonomic brain functions.](#)

Rudi and his family's trust is in Christ alone. The Bethesda Board desires to do all that we can to provide support and care. Please join us in praying for Rudi and his family as they walk this journey. ([Rudi's letter is below or click the link](#))

To ensure stability in leadership, the Board has appointed Michele Geurink as **Interim Executive Director**. Rudi will continue to serve in a **consultant role**, providing guidance and continuity during this time as his health allows. We are thankful for his ongoing steadfast wisdom and heart for Bethesda. Michele, a long-time friend and board member of Bethesda, has agreed to fill the interim leadership role overseeing our excellent staff team during the transition. ([Michele's letter is below or click the link](#))

With these challenges, **the work of Bethesda continues**. Our programs remain active, our staff committed, and our children well cared for. The Board is actively engaged, working closely with the team to support a smooth transition and overall ongoing ministry health.

The Bethesda Board will proceed with a search for **our next Executive Director**. A job description is available if you may have interest or are able to help us spread the word. Please **join us in prayer** as we seek God's direction in identifying the next leader who He is preparing for Bethesda's future.

Bethesda continues to rely on your faithful support. As you can imagine during this season, our **need for prayer and funding is greater than ever**. If you feel led to pray with us, give, or know others who would be willing to give or assist in any way, we welcome your involvement. For questions or further interest in helping, please email us at the addresses provided below.

We remain confident in God's faithfulness and are grateful for your partnership as we continue the mission He has given us.

The Lord is our refuge and strength,

Charles De Kiewit, Board Chairman (charles@central.org.za)

Don Whipple, Board Member (whip1030@gmail.com)

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Dear Bethesda supporters,

I am grateful for the opportunity to write you this note, to let you know more about my current health issues.

After struggling with my balance and coordination for 2 years or so, at the end of 2023, I sought medical help. A full year (and 4 doctors) later, in November 2024, a neurologist diagnosed me with a condition called Multiple System Atrophy after 3 days of intense, in-hospital testing. MSA is a rare neuro-degenerative disorder which causes the cerebellum and brainstem to shrink over time, and is usually fatal within 5 to 10 years from the onset of symptoms.

As odd as it may sound, I am thankful that a diagnosis has been made and I have an idea of what to expect, rather than not knowing. This is a notoriously difficult condition to diagnose, so the doctor did really well to pinpoint it early on.

What this means for Bethesda is that I will not be the person to lead Bethesda into the future, and someone else will need to lead this organisation as it continues to honour God by caring for these precious children that He has entrusted to us.

Thankfully, God has blessed Bethesda with a fantastic group of board members who are proactive in seeking His will. They have been working tirelessly to come up with a solution for my replacement, as well as taking care of my family and I through all of this. By the grace of God, and the board's planning and generosity, we should all be well taken care of in time to come.

I specifically want to thank Michele Geurink for her willingness to help out with the leadership of Bethesda at this time when it's most needed. I know that she will do an excellent job of leading Bethesda; and, with the support of our brilliant administrative team, our children and families could not be in better hands.

I do want to acknowledge that I fully believe that God can cure me if it's within His will to do so, and I continue to pray for that; but, I also know that if it is His will for me to go through this, that He will sustain me for the duration. My desire is that He will be glorified in this, one way or another.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the care of orphan and vulnerable children in South Africa. May God have His way in each of our lives, to the glory of His name.

Rudi van Jaarsveld





Dear Bethesda friends,

It is difficult to express the feelings one has at a time like this. In support of both Don and Rudi's messages to you, I say **thank you** for your care and support of the ministry of Bethesda Outreach. We have been blessed by God's faithfulness, provision and guidance in countless ways over the years. He has brought us this far, and He will continue to sustain

us.

I have been privileged to witness God's care for those whose lives have been touched by Bethesda since it began. Though I have not spent all of my years in South Africa serving at Bethesda, I have spent most of them working here either full time or involved in a volunteer capacity. I have been so blessed to watch orphans who came into our care as little babies reach adulthood through the grace of God. It feels like I have also "grown up" with this ministry, and if I count the years, I have lived here nearly as long as I lived my formative years in the States.

I have learned so much and been refined through my experiences here. Year after year I have observed God guide and sustain us through the hardships and the joys which are often intertwined with one other. We are in the midst of one of those intertwined moments again. We are witnessing the heartache of Rudi and his family as they face the uncertainty of an unwanted diagnosis and an uncertain future, mixed with the joy of knowing God's hand is sovereign in it all.

For Bethesda, Rudi has been a consistent, kind, and faithful leader for many years. I have learned so much from him while under his leadership, and as I am entrusted with his role for a time, it is my prayer that I can continue well in the manner with which he has led Bethesda. My goal is to keep my eyes on the Lord, seeking His will for each and every person and child affected by this ministry, and looking to Him as our loving heavenly Father and guide as we continue to serve Him at Bethesda.

Our hope comes from Christ alone. He is our rock, our refuge and our salvation. We shall not be shaken, and we put our trust in Him. (taken from Ps 62)

Michele

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

--James 1:27

PRAISE AND PRAYER

Praise

- God's faithfulness in times of change
- God's continued provision to Bethesda
- Renovations to the farm house have been nearly finished
- A godly and active group of board members who seek God's will and His best for Bethesda.



Prayer

- Wisdom for our board members as they look for the right person(s) to lead Bethesda
- Our children will come to salvation
- Steadfastness and courage in times of change
- Wisdom in making personnel changes and good plans for the future.