

MARIA KATKUS-NEWSLETTER-DECEMBER 2012

Dear valley church of Christ, I hope that this letter finds you in good spirits. I pray that you all continue growing as a congregation and in your faith as a body of Christ. As some of you know I have not been able to write you a letter because I have not had a computer. I thank God for allowing me to get one now and for the next few months that I will be able to keep in touch with you. Please understand my situation and forgive my lack of communication.

For those of you that keep up with me on Facebook you know what I have been during the week by the posts I write. I have been extremely busy with work involving the orphanage for the past few months because of great new opportunities. Since a lot of teens started their senior year or eleventh grade, they have needed a lot of help and encouragement. The Saturday night bible studies still continue with the oldest girls, Lord willing the college group that we have been connecting with will start to join us. There is a church about thirty minutes away that consists mostly of college students because it's so close to their campus who have been coming to help by teaching the teen boys class during the week and have been coming on weekends a few times to play with the kids. With that churches preachers help on transport we have been able to bring about nine of the oldest boys and girls with us to the bible study he holds at one of the church members dorm rooms on Fridays. Since all colleges are on break until February we won't be able to continue until the students come back. But that has been added to one of the weekly things. Everyone enjoys going there because they can see that people in their own culture can follow Christ and it's not a white man's religion. Please pray that these college girls will be persistent and take over the girl's bible study. I have full confidence that the preacher and his helper will be consistent with the boys study, but from the girls part I'm not sure. We are also continuing with our young girl's bible study on Mondays, because of the New Year and new grades I hope that the class will grow in number. Please continue to pray for them and for their hearts to be open to Gods word. I have a new lesson plan for them in these few coming months. We will focus on the stories of the New Testament, and do a lot of skits and songs that have to do with that story. For their age group they will have a blast.

The women's shelter ministry is still in place, sadly I have not been able to cook or teach them how to sew like I have been for the first year because of finances. But God is still good because He has been opening doors with them still by building relationships. I make it a priority to go visit them once a week to sit, talk and to eat an evening meal. I was blessed to be asked to help make some food for their Christmas party that they held for their sponsors and the ladies there. I decided to make them some American Christmas goodies and they really enjoyed the new strange things 😊

New Goal: There is a couple with five young children that do outreach ministry in a place here in the city that everyone is afraid to go near. They have been supported for the past year by a church not quite far from Johannesburg to show Gods love to the homeless people in that area. They are one of the few couples that I know that don't let the color difference get in the way of sharing Gods word and telling them about Jesus's love. Their kids are also very involved in evangelism, because they bring other children in their home and that in itself draws the parents in. These couples are very humble and strong in their faith because of the risk they took and what they gave up to come to this area. I went to visit them twice and I was amazed how everyone in the community knows them and respects them because they have been shown kindness too. There are some new project ideas that they have to share Gods word with the locals and I'm very interested to help.

I hope that you see what all has been happening here in Johannesburg and that you remember that God is at work with the people, He is making things happen, and He is showing His love to the lost. Please continue to pray for people's hearts to be open, for the leaders here and for God to use me in whatever way He wants. I see my responsibilities here within ministry, but I am excited to come see you all in a few months. I look forward to worshiping with you on Wednesday and Sundays. I look forward to the ladies class, the uplifting from the leaders, the youth group and many more things. However, I know that I have to do what I am given an opportunity at here. Many prayers for you all.



(an attempt at a BBQ with two teens from the orphanage)



(A four year old girl from the shelter)



(The people that I stay with allowed for about 20 teens from the orphanage to come over and have a pool birthday party for this 17 year old boy)



(A family here

that I am very close too)



(Africa's version of a moose)