



6 January 2024

Dear Freedom Church family

Sars and I are currently away on annual leave, and for the first time in many years, we find ourselves between churches. In one sense we've said goodbye to Freedom Church and hello to New Life Church, but in another sense, our hearts haven't quite caught up to the reality that we will end our holiday and not go home to Graaff-Reinet. We've realised that if Sars and I are feeling a degree of uncertainty and unclarity about the future for Freedom Church, then you, our Freedom Church family, could be feeling some of that too. It is for that reason that we've drafted this letter clarifying three important areas.

Firstly, the new senior leaders of the church.

Let me start by assuring you that the task of finding a new couple to lead Freedom Church remains one of the top priorities of our national leadership team, led by Ps Byron Chicken. (He will share a message in church tomorrow morning that speaks into this.) The national leadership team have allowed Sars and I, and the church elders to participate in the process of finding the next couple to lead Freedom Church, and we have all sensed God's leading for us to be slow and prayerful in this stage rather than rushing to appoint leaders that might not fit well in the long run. Having said that, Ps Byron will be starting the process this month of inviting couples to prayerfully consider leading the church. What we are all praying for is God's will to be done: for the right person in the right place at the right time. Jesus is building his kingdom, and He will never build one church at the expense of another. He loves Freedom Church, and we are eager to discern His will in terms of her next leaders.

Secondly, the eldership of the church.

The elders of Freedom Church will remain the same as when we were leading the church. They are Richard and Jenny Biggs, Dawie and Avrielle Putter, Graham and Brenda Murray, and Roaul and Wendy-Lee Strydom. They will be overseeing the pastoral and the business aspects of the church, ensuring both spiritual covering and good governance throughout this transitional period. The elders have seen numerous changes in leadership over the past four decades, and they are confident that this leadership transition is from God and that He will provide the right leaders.

Thirdly, the staff team.

We are blessed with an outstanding staff team that Sars and I trust completely to plan, manage, and run everything at church on a day-to-day basis. They are Amy Loots (administration), Sherilee du Plessis (leading kids and youth ministry, and our missions work), Christie Putter (leading worship and production, and EFL), Veve de Pearce (assisting Sherilee), Herman (groundskeeper), Lee (resources & café), and Avrille Putter (assisting Christie). Although the staff team are fully capable and they have our complete confidence, Sars and I will continue to meet and assist the staff team regularly throughout this transitional period.

On a practical pastoral level, should anyone in the church need special guidance or prayer or care during this time of transitioning leadership, the first place to go would continue to be their Small Group leader or ministry team leader. If they are not yet part of a Small Group or a Serve Team, they can text Amy on the church mobile phone at 066 513 3184, and the need will be sent to the appropriate staff member, elder, Small Group leader, or ministry leader for their assistance.

The elders and staff are going to rely heavily, perhaps more than ever before, on our phenomenal volunteer teams. We are so grateful to God for every one of the over 200 Jesus-loving, church-building volunteers that are passionate about making a difference through serving others at Freedom Church. In the transitional space we're now navigating together, we believe God is calling all of us to stretch in our personal leadership capacity, to deeper levels of prayer and trusting Him, and to a heightened sense of ownership and taking initiative.

In summary, Sars and I are fully committed to doing all we can to lend our leadership to the excellent and capable staff, elder, and volunteer teams until the new senior leaders are in place.

This is the church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth.

1 Timothy 3:15

I look forward to being there in person on Sunday 21 January. Please don't forget that we will have a special Team Night at church for ALL volunteers in all teams that Sunday evening from 18:00.

With all our love,
Do & Sars