

# The Hunter Family To Knysna, South Africa

Church Planting | Theological Education | Biblical Counseling

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Matthew, Janet, Suzani (Matthew's mom), Anja and Herb all went caroling at the hospital on Christmas Eve.



Ocean view from our new accommodation in Brenton



December beach youth activity



Lee-Zario was chuffed to be wearing the same colors to church as Pastor Herb. Nala is looking on.

*Dear Praying Friends,*

*January-February 2026*

Greetings from Knysna, South Africa. As 2026 began, Herb challenged our church family that it is important to make plans, but in making plans we must remember that God's plans are so much better than ours and we must submit our plans to Him. It reminded me of a favorite verse in Isaiah 55:9, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." This verse has become very real to us in recent weeks. Let me share what God has been doing here in South Africa.

January began with us settling into our coworkers (the Coons) home. Since they are away on furlough for the first half of 2026, we are staying in their home in beautiful Brenton on Sea. We are now living very close to several church members, so we have hosted families for meals and have people stop by for coffee/visits. This has provided many opportunities to disciple our church folks as they seek to grow in Christ.

With the Coons being away, we have extra responsibilities at church and in other ministry outreaches. In mid-January, South African kids begin a new school year, so before our teens returned to school this year, we took them on a fun beach activity at Buffalo Bay, close to Knysna. The waves were big, so they had fun surfing on their body boards. Please pray for our teens to get to know Christ better and to be a testimony in their schools.

With George gone, Herb has the responsibility for all the preaching at church. In early January, he preached the last couple of chapters in Romans, thus finishing a year long study of this wonderful, theologically rich book. He also began a new study with the men at the Tuesday morning Ironman Bible study using a biblically based book on fear and anxiety. On Thursday evening, we have been doing a verse by verse study of Revelation with the folks from our church. On Tuesday nights, he is working through the Book of Proverbs with our dear friends in Rheenendal. Every second Saturday morning, he teaches an Introduction Biblical Counseling course at the Biblical Leadership Institute at our Knysna Hope ministry building. Needless to say, Herb spends many hours preparing to preach and teach God's Word. Pray for each of these outreaches!

In addition to the preaching and teaching, Herb continues to meet regularly with several counselees. "A" and "N" come for weekly sessions and they are showing real growth in their Christian walk. Both of them are faithfully attending church and Bible study. Please continue to pray for "T" who we have mentioned previously. He continues to battle depression and has pulled away from us in recent weeks. Janet is meeting with ladies from the church and discipules them in the Word as well. Pray for the ministry of God's Word in the lives of those we minister to.

In the midst of all our busy lives, Herb noticed in mid-December that he was feeling more tired than usual and he occasionally felt nauseous. He thought it was just due to the pressures of moving house, extra responsibilities at church, etc., but in mid-January, he went to see our family doctor. She sent him for bloodwork, which he did immediately. Within two hours of having his bloodwork done, Herb received an urgent message telling him that he was in kidney failure and he needed to be admitted to the ICU at Knysna Life Hospital.

We drove immediately to the hospital where he was admitted and had to undergo multiple tests that afternoon. Nephrologist Dr. Leigh Johannes, arrived and introduced

herself and told us that she would attempt to discover why his kidneys were failing, but first she had to keep Herb alive! Needless to say, we were shocked to hear that as we had no idea of the seriousness of his condition.

Herb spent four days in the ICU at Knysna Life Hospital with acute kidney injury. Bloodwork revealed that he has myeloma casts on his kidneys which were causing his kidney failure. He was released from hospital with a dialysis port inserted in his chest so that he could receive dialysis twice a week. He was referred to an oncologist for further myeloma testing.

On January 27, the oncologist confirmed that Herb has a rare blood cancer, called multiple myeloma. It comes from the bone marrow. The myeloma is what is causing his acute kidney failure. In early February, Herb had a bone marrow biopsy and a total body MRI to see how much the myeloma had damaged his body. Praise God, Herb doesn't have any lesions in his bones and he is considered a "standard risk" patient.

Once the test results were in, Herb's oncologist set out a treatment plan. Herb needs to do three months of intensive chemotherapy, followed by a stem cell transplant. The chemo will be done by an infusion one day/week in the city of George, an hour's drive from us. Then he will take other oral medications. The stem cell transplant will occur in Capetown late in the year. This treatment is expensive, but our insurance company has agreed to pay in full. Thank you Lord! Needless to say, this was not our plan for 2026, but God has allowed Herb to face this serious health trial. We continue to trust Him and rest in His steadfast love. This also means that our travel plans for furlough 2026 will have to be cancelled. We might make it back to North America at Christmas time to visit with family, but ongoing chemotherapy treatments along with twice weekly dialysis visits make international travel out of reach at the moment.

In the middle of Herb's cancer diagnosis, Janet had back surgery where her L5/S1 discs were fused in her lower back. She was hospitalized for 4 days in George Mediclinic and then was sent home for 6 weeks of bedrest. She has healed well. God has been so good during both of our illnesses. Our church family and missionary coworkers have cared for us with meals, visits, shopping and transportation. Their love has been evident.

Through all the trial/tests of these two months, God has been faithful. Thank you for all the messages and prayers that you have prayed on our behalf. Please continue to uphold us in prayer as we begin Herb's chemotherapy journey. His chemotherapy is set to start in early March.

Also, please continue to pray for our church's need for a building. You can watch a video of the property on our church website ([www.knysnawestbiblechurch.co.za](http://www.knysnawestbiblechurch.co.za)). Simply click on the "building update" tab and you'll get a good look at the property. We are seeking to raise the funds to purchase The Coons have been actively sharing this need with their supporters as they are on furlough right now. God has already provided approximately 60% of what we need already and we are so excited to see how God will supply the remaining 40% so that we can purchase this property and finally have a place to settle and call our own. If you're interested in contributing, you can send funds to Baptist Mid Missions (our account is #702823) and designate it as "Building Fund." We are waiting on the subdivision approval, and once that is approved then we'll be ready to make the purchase. The longer the delay with the subdivision approval, the more opportunities for God to meet our need in advance of the purchase! The buildings are ready to be used, with just a little elbow grease required to clean, paint and set everything in order!

We are so excited to have Megan home to visit us for a couple of months. She arranged to do her student teaching practicum at a private school in our town. So, she heads to Oakhill Primary School each week and has enjoyed the experience thus far. Since she also pursued her ESL certification (English as a Second Language), she has been given some students with English as a their second language to help them get better English skills. Please pray for her through this experience.

Thanks for joining us on this adventure of reaching the lost for Jesus and planting churches. We're blessed by you!

Love Herb and Janet.



Herb received his first kidney dialysis treatments through a temporary neck port, which he affectionately called "the bagpipes"



Herb now has kidney dialysis at the Renal Unit twice a week. Monday and Friday



Janet arrived home with a walker and a back brace.



It was a long drive from Cape Town, but Megan has arrived!