



NEWS FROM CENTRAL

January/February 2019

LONELINESS – a 21ST Century Epidemic!

While loneliness has long been recognized as a social issue, researchers today are warning that loneliness has become a major health issue, not only for the elderly but for our youth as well. Professor John Cacioppo, head of the University of Chicago's Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience has found that our increasingly individualistic society is fraying our social connections as we move away from concern for others. CARP, Canada's largest advocacy association for older Canadians, has discovered that Isolated or lonely seniors are four or five times more likely to be hospitalized, and 60% more likely to experience dementia or cognitive decline. Of even greater concern is the 22% of high school students and the 41% of university students who report feeling lonely, worried and anxious. It seems that rising numbers of young people feel that, although they spend an increasing amount of time on social media, their emotional well-being is deteriorating.

Today, churches are some of the few places where an individual can simply walk in and be welcomed without question or cost. Churches bring people together physically, mentally and spiritually. Becoming a part of an age-friendly community, taking part in cross-generational interactions, and volunteering are recognized as positive ways to cope with loneliness. It seems to me that the religious comfort, volunteer involvement and intergenerational companionship offered by churches such as Central offer relief from this modern epidemic. If you know someone who is lonely, encourage him/her to come, get involved, make new friends, and feel supported. By responding to the needs of the lonely, we are bring reality to our motto "Come as you are".

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Thursday	January 3, 10,17,24, 31	Minister's Bible Study
Saturday	January 19	Family Ministry Brunch
Sunday	January 20	Communion
Monday	January 21	Alpha Program
Saturday	January 26	Mike's Lunch Baskett
Thursday	February 7,14,21, 28	Minister's Bible Study
Monday	February 18	Family Day Skating Party
Saturday	February 23	Mike's Lunch Baskett

HOW CENTRAL SERVES

Rachel's Home



In 2006, Elsie Botha was the Director of Central's Children's Ministry when a casual conversation with Dr. Johan Redelinghuys, who works both in Africa and in Cambridge, compelled her to become involved with Rachel's Home, an AIDS orphanage in Lesotho. When Dr. Redelinghuys described the terrible plight of these children, often left to die by the side of the road with no family or support, Elsie experienced a vision to help. Elsie contacted Hilda, the creator and the administrator of Rachel's Home, and her husband Godwin, to see how Central could assist. Starting small, Elsie had the children collect pennies to buy pillows and pillow cases, which were then decorated by the children and carried to Rachel's Home by Dr. Redelinghuys.

As interest in the project grew, a team from Central travelled to Lesotho to build classrooms, sew school uniforms, and make the orphanage more secure. For children who had never received much love, these strangers who were willing to play with them, comfort them, and provide new clothes, shoes and school supplies for them, were amazing. From initial shyness on both parts, the children quickly became attached to the strangers who would pick them up or play with them. Needless to say, the folks from Central had a great time too. Leaving was hard for everyone.

In 2012 another team arrived to build showers and baths, and to improve security for the orphanage. With this trip, Elsie began to realize that the political climate in Lesotho was changing and, indeed, Rachel's Home has had its share of troubles. Hilda's battle with cancer, the political uncertainty, and increased violence within Lesotho now make it impossible to travel there.

But Elsie's vision of helping has survived, and many AIDS orphans have found a safe haven and received an education, with many going on to high school and college or university. With Elsie's leadership, the power of prayer, and Central's generous donations, these forgotten children have not only survived but been given the health, the education, and the support they need to live productive, happy lives.

Need help from an elder? Please contact Denise McLellan at dmcclell@uoguelph.ca or John Saliba at johnhanan@yahoo.ca

Make sure you don't take things for granted and go slack in working for the common good; share what you have with others.

.~Hebrews 13:16, The Message