

December 2023



Dear Friends and family,

The Gospel of John reminds us *"The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him."* (John 1:8,9) and then Jesus himself spoke to them, saying, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* (John 8:12)

Amazing statements. Light, even in the midst of darkness. Light that shines in the darkness.

We only need to turn on the news, or look around us wherever we live and we see the darkness of a world in sin. Christmas and the birth of Jesus reminds us of the incredible gift we have received when He came into the world as God in human form, to save us from our sins. John 1:12a says *"But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God."*

Knowing Him brings light into every area of darkness in our lives. This is the message of Hope the people of Belgium need.

This Fall has been a busy one for us. Much of our ministry remains the same year by year with preaching, teaching, pastoral and marriage counselling, youth work via camps and weekends, mentoring of young leaders, and community involvement.

We would ask you to pray for wisdom as we seek to follow God's leading in planning our daily schedules. Activity can override ministry and we want the Gospel message to prevail.

Both churches in Houthalen and Zwartberg are taking this message via personal cards to homes around the church buildings. Tensions are rising, terror levels have escalated and warnings to avoid crowded areas have been given. People live in fear and need hope. May the cards we carry house to house, be an encouragement for people to look to Him who gives light, who gives hope.

We are busy with the last preparations for Christmas services as well as plans to visit with our kids and grandkids. This will be our 39<sup>th</sup> Christmas in Belgium. The churches and traditions here have become our family and culture, but we still miss our family and friends in Canada and the U.S.A during these holidays; therefore we will keep mixing the 2 cultures and bridge the distance with the wonder of internet ☺

Thank you for your prayers. Thank you for praying for the people of Belgium. Thank you for your continued prayer for Stephanie. Thank you for your friendship and the faithfulness you have shown to us for so many years. We are blessed by you. This is a gift.

**Blessed Christmas, and God's richest blessings for 2024**

In Christ,

Peter and Joanna Gifford