

Newsletter Geanne in Africa



Hi everyone!

"I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them." – Isaiah 42:16

Warm greetings from Europe this time! It has been a while since I wrote you an update and many things have happened. For sure it have been unfamiliar paths over the last months, but I know that God has been leading me in so many different ways. He is turning the darkness into light and makes the rough places smooth. I am excited to give you an update and tell you what has been going on in Melusi and my life over the last months.



A small update

The last newsletter I wrote in November of 2022. That seems like such a long time ago. December is always a special month in Melusi. It is the time that the summer holidays start in South Africa. Before that we had a special afternoon with our teenagers to close off the year. We played a lot of special games and we had lots of fun together. After that it was also good to have more time to rest and especially to spend more time as a community. We enjoyed to celebrate Christmas and New Year's together and to give our homeless and destitute men more attention. Many of them didn't celebrate Christmas for years and it is very special for them to be part of our Melusi community. It was also a big blessing for me to have Anna around. She became a really good friend since she was part of our Melusi team in 2019-2020. Over Christmas she visited us and it was so special to spend time together. She was also a big help in the kitchen for me as the team was small because of holidays and I had to cook so much. It was great that we could do it together. Then in January we started with all our ministries again. It always fills me with such joy to see how the children come running to the car when we return for kidsclub and to see our teenagers again after some weeks. It is such a blessing and privilege that they love to come to us and such an opportunity to share the good news with them. I am thankful that we could start well in the new year.



Hope for broken lives

One story that made me think a lot in the months of December and January was the story of one of our guys. Unfortunately it is such a typical story of our homeless and addicted men. I would like to share it with you and give you a little glimpse of the reality we deal with in this ministry. Around half a year ago a big, tall man full of tattoos arrived at our doorstep. He looked a bit scary, but was very friendly and adapted easily in Melusi. Sadly he had a long history with drugs and relapsed many times. Next to that he struggled mentally and spiritually. The first months he was with us, he did very well and improved a lot. He even confessed his faith in Jesus and got baptized. That was a miracle! In the end he found himself a job and a small room to stay. We were so proud of him. He made the deal with one of our leaders that he would come every day after work to tell him how he is doing and to be accountable. That went well for some weeks, until one evening he didn't show up. We all knew something was wrong. The next day he came and admitted that he took drugs again. Crystal meth. A drug that destroys your mind completely. He didn't take one dose, but multiple. Because of the fact that he was honest to us, he was allowed to come back. The first days were hell. He didn't sleep, had hallucinations and felt terribly sick. He made it though and stayed. Slowly he started to recover and we found out that he used to be a chef. So he came to help in the kitchen. That was a big blessing to us, but also to him. He enjoys it to do something that he likes to do. We encouraged him to take time and stay a little longer and we pray that this time he will do better. It is such a hard ministry with many disappointments. But we believe that there is hope in Jesus and that we should not give up.



Unfamiliar, but special ways

Some weeks after we started our ministries again in January, I left South Africa for Europe. It is good to be here and spend time with friends and family. It has been also such a blessing to visit Melusi teammates who left. Little did I know though that these months in Europe would change my life completely. I had some thoughts and the feeling that change would come, but I never expected it this quick. With so much joy in my heart I want to tell you that I am in a relationship. In October 2021 a group from a church in Germany came to Melusi. That was when I met Harry. We stayed in contact and the contact grew over the last nine months. We phoned a lot and got to know each other very well. When we met in January we officially became a couple. In the weeks that passed since then we have been thinking and praying a lot about our future together. God has been leading us so faithfully and showing us the way. To make a long story short: we have decided to marry this autumn and stay for one year in Germany while Harry is still working there. Afterwards we want to go in missions together, even to Melusi maybe, and we are praying that God will show us where and how. That means for now though, that I will have to say goodbye to Melusi. I will leave after Easter to go back to South Africa and come back to Germany in the beginning of June. That farewell will be hard and I start to process it slowly. Melusi has been my home for the past eight years. But I also know so sure that this is the right way and I am so very thankful that God brought us together and gave me this incredibly special gift. It is a testimony of His guidance and of how He is leading all things. He will also lead what will come and make the rough places smooth for us. Our God is so faithful.

A challenging future

That God is faithful we also believe for the future of Melusi. However, we are facing some extreme difficulties and insecurities at the moment. The situation in South Africa is very unstable. We still have powercuts multiple times a day which affects not just us in Melusi, but the whole economy. Next to that the visa situation isn't getting any better. Instead it seems to get worse. The past months no one who applied received a volunteer visa. Even the application of Priscilla from Switzerland, who wanted to come for some years, was denied. It seems to be a trend as we hear from many other organizations that they face the same difficulties. It makes us sometimes wonder what the future for Melusi holds. Who will be the team in some years? Who will be our leaders? How will we do all the ministries? It is not always easy to face all this uncertainty and it can make you feel so powerless. We do believe however that God is King and that He leads and has a plan. To the verse of Isaiah 42 I quoted above is connected the well known song 'Way Maker', "Way Maker, Miracle Worker, Promise Keeper, Light in the darkness. That is who You are. And even when we don't see it, You are working." That is what we hold onto and what we believe. God will make a way for Melusi.



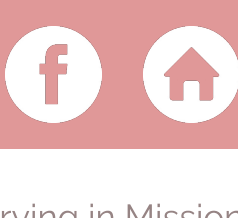
Prayer Requests

- Praise God that I found Harry and for how He leads and guides us. Pray for wisdom and guidance as we carry on and that God will show us the way step by step.
- Pray for the time I will be in Melusi. Pray for a good farewell and for strength and courage for me, but also for the team who have to say goodbye again. That is not easy.
- Pray for our men. The story I told is unfortunately one of the many stories. Pray for restored lives, pray that Jesus touches their hearts and that He sets them free.

Thank you!

I would like to say thank you so much for your support and prayers. It means so much to me that you stand behind me and behind Melusi. A lot will change over the next months. We will keep you updated. We will send you an email in some weeks with practical information about how we will finish the (financial) support once I am back from Melusi in summer. Next to that we will let you know how you can stay in contact and can keep supporting by prayer. Your prayers are of great value and I truly appreciate them. Be blessed!

Geanne



Geanne serves with Serving in Mission, an international mission organisation. On their website www.sim.org you'll find more information about who SIM is.

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