

# Encourage & Equip

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June & July 2020

## Please pray...

### Praise for:

- God's word that endures and is a constant source of comfort and encouragement.
- A Heavenly Father that is always at work.
- The ability for those who are able to gather safely at the church property.
- The support and encouragement we have received from our ECM family.
- Access to a counsellor and a competent physio.
- The opportunity to celebrate Luca's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

### Prayer for:

- The Romanian government and medical personnel and their response to increasing COVID cases.
- For wisdom in the choices we make as a family.
- Creativity in how to fellowship with and encourage those unable to gather on Sundays.
- Wisdom and creativity as how to serve children and families in these ever-changing times.
- That we daily find ways to serve those around us and bring glory to God.

Dear Friends and Family,

What a strange summer for us...no children's camps, no Bible holiday programs, no evangelisation in local parks- nothing that looks like a normal summer for us here in Romania, but God is still at work! When Jesus was persecuted by the Jewish leaders for healing on the Sabbath, his response is found in John 5:17, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working." Whilst God's work at this time may not look like the programs we are used to, we are assured that he is still at work to this very day. May the Lord give us eyes to see his wondrous works and wisdom to know how we can be a part of it too.

### Concerning curves

Like many other countries, as restrictions eased the number of active cases and deaths have increased. All over Romania more cases are being recorded and hospitals have reached capacity. Even here in Timisoara a military style hospital has been set up in an old football stadium, but even that is currently full. Entire towns where cases have spiked have been completely quarantined. Despite the increasing cases, the government does not want to put restrictions on businesses, workplaces and factories again, as they fear this will cripple an already weak economy. What has been communicated is to stay at home as much as possible, practise social distancing, wear masks in enclosed public spaces, use sanitiser and to wash hands frequently. Even with these measure in place, numbers continue to rise with current figures standing at 48,235 confirmed cases, 2,269 deaths and over 1000 new cases daily. Also, there is no information so far as to what will happen in September when the school year begins, so we wait and pray to see if Anna will be able to return for her final year of preschool and if Luca will be able to commence his first year. Please join with us in prayer for the government and medical practitioners of Romania, as well for us as a family as we make daily choices as to what we do, who we see, where we let Anna and Luca play and how we continue to care for Adi's parents.



### Flexible Fellowship

In the previous prayer letter, we shared that our church was now able to live stream from the church property, with Adi continuing to help out with the tech side of things from our apartment. Following the guidelines put in place by the government at the beginning of June, a small number are able to meet inside, or a larger number outside (weather permitting). It has been a great joy for those who have been able to attend, (albeit slightly strange with restrictions

One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.

PSALM 145:4

in place) but those of us with young kids who struggle with adhering to social distancing rules, have not been able to attend. For this and other reasons, there are many of us who are still watching from home. Whilst I am thankful that this possibility exists, I must admit that it is becoming more discouraging the longer it continues. Fellowship over Zoom has also finished up, now that some are able to meet face to face and others feeling 'zoomed-out'. Please pray that those of us unable to attend Sunday services will find other ways to fellowship. We haven't been providing any children's lessons over the summer, (as it would normally be on break), but myself and others have been thinking through and praying about various 'contingency plans' as to how we can be serving the children and families when summer ends.

### Time to.....

Without all the normal programs that would be keeping us busy over the summer, we have had a lot of time to fill. Whilst there a myriad of things that both Adi and I could be doing to fill our days (Anna and Luca make sure of that), it has been an ongoing challenge to prioritise the important over the urgent. A favourite bible story of Anna's at the moment is from Luke 10:38-42, where Jesus visits the home of Mary and Martha. It has been particularly apt at the moment where I find myself 'worried and upset about many things'. The constant challenge is to choose what is better, the one thing that is needed- listening at the feet of Jesus. This has certainly been an ongoing lesson during this pandemic- when so many things can be taken away in an instant- it is the Word of God that endures (Isaiah 40:8). We have been so appreciative of the support we have received from the ECM office in Australia, Dirk-Bart Houweling, our field director and Fey Cotter, my mentor, to recognise this as an unusual season. We have been reminded to not feel guilty for not being able to do all the 'normal' ministry that we would be a part of, to not become discouraged when other plans are not able to come to fruition either and to not compare ourselves to others. We have been challenged to seek out the opportunities that God gives us day by day. So, when a colleague needs mothers and their kids taxied



to the local zoo, or donated mattresses transported, a neighbour's bike needs fixing or a friend needs help building a fence, we are free to help. We have also had the time to participate in a children's ministry training run by Paul Dudley and watch the recordings from the Ridley College children's ministry conference, giving us more potential ideas to pass onto children's workers here. Personally, I have also had the time to be able to connect with a Christian counsellor through Zoom. It has been a blessing to be able to talk through various struggles that have accumulated since returning to Romania. I have also been enduring back pain since February and I am very thankful that after several futile attempts, I found a physiotherapist who has me back on my feet and sneezing without crippling pain. In the midst of all of this we celebrated Luca's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday! We were thankful to have a close family join us for the day to be able to play, open presents, share cake and celebrate together the amazing little, but ever growing, light that God gave us in Luca.

Thank you again for your ongoing partnership, support, encouragement and prayer during what is continuing to be an uncertain and challenging time for people all over the world. May we cling to our Lord, our rock, our salvation, our fortress so that we will never be shaken (Psalm 62:2).

God Bless, Adi, Jennifer, Anna and Luca

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in Europe*