

Encourage & Equip

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Please pray...

Praise for:

- God's never-failing love, compassion and faithfulness.
- Treasured time over Christmas and New Year's with family and friends.
- Time away to read Scripture, fast and pray for future direction.
- Ability to be able to plan for this year and tickets booked to Australia.
- God's provision through His people that allows us to continue serving.

Prayer that:

- God would continue to guide us and motivate us in our desire to encourage and equip children's workers.
- We would be grounded in the Gospel and Scripture.
- Our local church's desire to start up discipleship groups and the potential for us to lead a group based on Children's ministry.
- We would plan well, but hold our plans loosely, trusting that God is ultimately in control.
- For grace, wisdom and patience as we raise Anna and Luca.

Dear Friends and Family,

A new year with new beginnings? Doesn't really feel like it does it? Whilst the temptation may be to throw our hands up in the air in despair and say, "Here we go again", we can take comfort knowing that our lives are in our Father's hands. We can affirm "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (Lam 3:22-23) We can choose to focus on the blessings that we have in Christ, rather than the disappointments of this world. We can seek to see how God is working in the midst of trials, rather than being overwhelmed by them. As we wake each morning let us remember that each day is fresh with God's love, compassion and faithfulness. We can affirm, "This is the day which the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:24)

Covid Christmas v.2

Who thought we would be celebrating Christmas Covid style once again? Last minute changes were the order of the season, but in the end, we were able to have some treasured time together with family and friends. Anna received a pair of ice skates for her birthday (6 Dec) and she had loads of fun skating with friends. We strolled through sparkling Christmas lights and warmed ourselves with delicious treats. We painted ceramic Christmas decorations and were invited to make and decorate Christmas cookies with another family. We visited neighbours on New Year's Eve and Luca and Anna tried their best to sing the carols they had learnt. At our Christmas Eve service, those children able to attend sang carols and recited bible verses they had learnt. Whilst we sometimes wished things had been different, and bigger events or gatherings had been possible, we were thankful for the smaller connections made and a time to stop and reflect with those closest to us.



Desire for Discipleship

Covid and the challenges it brought has affected churches in many and varied ways. For some, online streaming meant innovation and new audiences, whilst for others it brought strain, dissent, dwindling attendance and lethargy. Some individuals may have seen a renewal in their relationship with God, whilst others have been left worn-out, discouraged and disengaged. In response to this, our local church is in the process of setting up intentional discipleship groups to engage and encourage one other. The desire is to have both small discipleship groups for general Christian growth and others based on ministry areas. We have been approached to lead a group based on children's ministry. The aim would be to further equip the Sunday School volunteers in children's ministry skills, as well as encouraging and edifying them in their personal walk with Jesus. Please pray with us as we seek guidance in this request, think through the potential content, and that people would be open to the opportunity to grow in both their ministry skills as well as their own Christian maturity.

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

PSALM 145:4

Inspiring Unity

As some of you would know, we had our first child-free overnight getaway since Anna was born (she is 7 now) at the beginning of December. These past two years of the pandemic has caused us to be primarily 'reactive', engaging in ministry opportunities that the Lord opened to us under the restrictions of Covid. We felt the time had now come to be more 'proactive'. Our desire was to set apart focused, uninterrupted time to fast, pray, read God's Word and seek the Lord's direction for the next stage of our lives and ministry. It was a fruitful time spent reading, reflecting and praying through Ephesians. God really highlighted the desire for unity and the necessity for encouragement and building up. We were challenged by the call to use the specific gifts that God has given us "to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Eph 4:12-13) We were able to have uninterrupted and ongoing conversations (any parent understands how hard they are come by) and spent time discussing many aspects of our ministry and family life including accountability, priorities and planning our next steps. As a result, we have shared our thoughts and plans with our field leader, my mentor and key ministry workers to keep working towards the goal of encouraging and equipping children's workers.

Prudent Planning...

Whilst it almost seems unnatural and unrealistic to plan after the events of the past two years, we are stepping out in faith and trying to plan for this coming year. The first event is the ECM Romania Prayer Days, to be held from 4-6 March. All the ECM missionaries working in Romania will come together for a time of sharing, prayer, fellowship, encouragement and fun. We haven't been able to hold it in person for the last two years, and whilst our team leader (who is based in the Netherlands) is unable to join us physically, the rest of us are eager to meet face to face. This will be the first time that I, (Jennifer) and the kids will meet some of our other colleagues in person, as the last time the Prayer Days were held (back in 2019) both kids were sick and only Adi was able to attend. Next, because the ECM Biennial conference was cancelled (yet again), us Aussies decided that we would try to have our own mini gathering. So those missionaries associated with ECM Australia are planning to meet in Berlin between 11-15 April. If we manage to pull it off it will be an incredible time to reconnect, encourage one another and be fed from God's Word. We are planning to stay on an extra week in Berlin to meet up with Adi's sister and her family, who live in Germany, and haven't seen in over two years. Lastly, the long awaited furlough is being planned! Because of Anna's schooling we are tied into travelling within her summer holidays. Tickets have been booked and we plan to arrive in Australia on the 14th June and heading back to Romania on the 6th September. We have already started contacting some churches and, whilst there is no way to know what things will look like four months from now, we pray that we will be able to see as many of you as possible. It will be a joyful and long-awaited reunion.

Once again, we want to thank each of you for your continued prayers, encouragement and support. These past two years have been like none other, but we have been reassured through your prayers and encouragement that the Lord is still at work and we are thankful to be empowered to be a part of his Kingdom building here in Romania.

God Bless, Adi, Jennifer, Anna and Luca

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