

Mission News and Prayer Letter

Wonersh Church

Summer 2021

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I am surely with you to the very end of the age. **Matthew 28:19**

Viva and Mim Friday— an update from Uganda

As the UK comes out of COVID restrictions, Uganda is just beginning to feel the consequences of the Delta variant. Schools were closed again in June, and a 42-Day Lockdown started on 18th June.

There is an estimated deficit of 27,000 hospital beds for the treatment of COVID-19 patients and insufficient oxygen supplies. The costs for ICU is an average of between £1200 - £1800 per day, which hardly anyone can afford. Infections and deaths have been increasing rapidly.

The supply of vaccines is sporadic. About 1 million people so far have received one dose and half have received 2 doses. Death is taking young people as well as old people.

In the communities, there is increased Gender Based Violence. Most children have been out of school for about 18 months and many are likely to never return to school. Teachers have deserted the teaching profession and many will not return since they have discovered options that are more lucrative. Many businesses have collapsed. Burglary and theft is rife.

Churches are trying to run on social media platforms and TV, which is not as accessible to most Ugandans.

CRANE is running a special camp for street connected children in partnership with Government for 200 children. They are also providing families with food aid, catch-up education resources and medication.

Please pray that CRANE staff who are in the communities on the frontline will be safe from this virus.

Please pray for the morale of the team as many work from home and as they grieve loved ones.

Please pray that we would find ways of continuing to reach the children and families.

Please pray that the network and local churches would be salt and light in this situation. Pray for the leaders who are overwhelmed by counselling needs.

Please pray that the Government will get better at providing health services to the communities.

Ema and Viorel Tulpan



Across Romania there are very few Covid restrictions now and things have opened up considerably.

The family good news is Ema and Viorel's son Caleb has received excellent Baccalaurate exam results - an average of 9.93 out of 10! Here they are at his college graduation. Caleb hopes to go to University College Dublin in the autumn, please do pray for the process of scholarship approvals which would enable this to happen.

This summer camps can start again: both the boys are counsellors at Mission In Action (MIA Camps) and they will be doing that in August.

The church family meets as usual and all are well, they are excited to be planning a river baptism probably in September.

In the meantime, Viorel has restarted the adult orphans group, they meet every other week in the garden for a BBQ and then Bible study. Here is a photo!

Ema says 'Please thank our Wonersh family for everything, for their continuous prayers and generous support. Our special gratitude for this year's gift of money, we are deeply touched. Thank you for keeping us in your prayers, we do the same and thank God for you. It is wonderful to know and feel that we belong together to God's kingdom!'



Charlotte R—WH

Charlotte recently moved back from Wales to live in Bramley with her Mum (Chris G) in order to support her better. This last year has proved that working from home is possible!

Charlotte is still full-time and works on Short-Term Placements for those looking to serve with a WH team. They are particularly developing placements in the Middle East and are seeking God for the best ways of vetting and preparing people for high security locations.

News from the Middle East: WH workers in a large refugee camp wrote in July: *“There is still a lot of concern / fear about the vaccine despite the ravaging third wave of Covid in this region . E.g. all 5 of the expat staff in the camp are now double-jabbed, however amongst our local staff, there has yet to be a single person vaccinated. This even though most of our staff are well-educated and open-minded. It seems that this is mostly down to the power of negative feeds in social media. Please pray for a significant change in the uptake of vaccines.*

Also... we are asking God what we could do in Mosul (Iraq) which was almost totally destroyed by ISIS in 2014. People have started to return to rebuild their homes and lives. Three of us visited in July to assess two main areas: the viability of establishing businesses to help in the process of rebuilding communities; and to see what the main needs were for the young people in the city.

See this video: https://youtu.be/6tVtLo_mM_Q to have some idea of what we walked into. Please pray that the Lord would lead us in the way forward.”

Bishop Sospeter and Kibondo Diocese in Tanzania



Bishop Sospeter thanks God that the Diocesan Synod was able to be held recently and went well. He also reports that harvests in their area have been good this year, and he and his wife Betty are in much better health than they were.

Covid-19 has not affected the country greatly though they do have some cases. They are still able to visit churches and hold services and large gatherings, with precautions. He asks us to pray for the Bible School to run smoothly and get enough students and funding. It currently has 20 students training to be lay leaders of village churches. In the past it has been supported by a German mission and had a German mission partner teaching there, but she has now returned to Germany.

They have completed most of the requirements for opening the Health Centre. The remaining needs are to finish the required buildings, find a competent Medical Director and staff, obtain medicines and more equipment.

In March the President died and leadership passed to the Vice-President Samia Hassan, who is the first female President of Tanzania. The transition seems to have gone very smoothly and she is well respected within and outside the country.

Wonersh and Shamley Green School

There has been a very happy atmosphere in school this term, with the children settling back in well after the winter lockdown and, thankfully, relatively little Covid-related disruption.

This term has seen a wonderful range of opportunities for the children to resume sporting fixtures and offsite trips, including a two-night stay for Year 4 at Henley Fort in Guildford and a fantastic week-long residential for Year 6 at the CYE sailing centre in Chichester. Year 5 enjoyed a visit from a local wildflower expert who is supporting the local community in rewilding parts of the natural environment.

Headteacher Tim Cheeseman has expressed the school's gratitude for the church's recent donation, which has been used to purchase a range of new books for the children, as well as some new furniture and fun ways to display books in the infant library, which the children adore! This supports the school's aim of giving children access to a wide range of books and nurturing a love of reading in every child.

The children enjoyed their recent opportunity to meet David at his first school assembly and are looking forward to him becoming a regular visitor next term!



YMCA DownsLink

It has not been an easy 6 months for the YMCA, grappling with the increasing challenges of the wave of mental ill-health among young people, and 18 months of working with Covid restrictions taking its toll on staff. However, there are still so many positive stories to share.

In particular we are delighted to have received a **'Hope Beyond'** Covid grant from Allchurches Trust which has allowed us to set up chaplaincy sessions at our YMCA in Guildford. Our Guildford Foyer is a 24-hour supported accommodation for young people (16-24). We provide a safe home to 30 young people in Guildford every night and a significant proportion of these are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Elly McKay-Smith, our Eastbourne Chaplain will be leading chaplaincy in Guildford.

Speaking about setting up chaplaincy in Guildford she said: *"It has been refreshing to work with such a variety of young people from such diverse backgrounds and find commonality through the love of cooking and sharing a meal together. We have even been planting a variety of different vegetables to use – squashes, aubergine, tomatoes, basil and mint included!"*

The role of our Chaplains is to spend time with the residents in their projects, cooking and eating with them, chatting, playing board games, and generally just being there for them. They enable our young residents to feel heard, valued, and accepted as well as helping them to feel part of the wider community. Speaking about the difference chaplaincy made to him, one young resident said:

'It gave me the chance to talk to other people in a place I feel comfortable – rather than a random person in a place I don't know. And thanks to the chaplaincy and the volunteers, I am where I am now.'

If you'd like to read more great stories, visit the YMCA DownsLink website, for example this story about a former resident who then moved on to work with the YMCA:

<https://www.ymcadlg.org/ymca-resident-raising-money-for-youth-homelessness/>

And this story about our recent launch of a digital mental health service: e-wellbeing for adults:

<https://www.ymcadlg.org/mental-health-adults/>

Tearfund

Tearfund is a great mission partner working in 50 countries, both for disaster relief and long-term development.

One current example from the Democratic Republic of Congo:



Oudo is just 11 years old, yet has already suffered so much. When his village was attacked, his family was forced to flee, leaving everything behind – including the school that Oudo loved attending.

The family now live in cramped conditions in a camp filled with thousands of other people who have also fled for their lives. 'We are suffering,' Oudo says. 'At home I ate well every day. Here we hardly eat and are never full. I miss my house, but I won't go back because there are lots of wars.'

More than 3 million children like Oudo have fled their homes in the DRC. Tearfund is doing all we can to support them, but with coronavirus, the recent volcanic eruption in Goma and other disasters, our resources are being stretched like never before.

Millions of children like Oudo have so much God-given potential, but right now all their parents can focus on is their survival. Please keep them in your prayers. 'If other people can pray for me, let them pray to God to give us food, a house and to bless my mother with a job,' asks Oudo.

Thank you for your continued support – your gift and prayers will be a lifeline for people living in one of the most dangerous places on Earth. For more about Tearfund's wide range of work, browse the most recent annual report on the internet: <https://www.tearfund.org/about-us/annual-report> or read <https://www.tearfund.org/stories/>

Members of the Mission Committee are: Caroline Stearman, Alex Vinall, Keith Bateson, Liz Tilley, Jane Boswell and Nick Bamber. Please do get in touch if you want to find out more about our Mission Partners or Giving.