

Vitality amidst Tragedy and Barbarity

March News 2021

Dear Friends,

We bring you Easter greetings from Christ Church Loresho, Nairobi, and much thanks for your support. What a joy it has been to see this church growing over the last few months. Our congregation has grown to 66, including 44 children, most of whom come without parents from the slum at the end of our road.

A good problem to have!

Of course, rapid growth during a pandemic poses its challenges! As we are still meeting in our home, we have been trying to find new ways each week of fitting in more people whilst still trying to follow COVID protocols. Thankfully, we have a veranda and garden and the neighbours have not yet complained much about the noise. We have searched hard for a larger venue but finding somewhere suitable in our neighbourhood is proving to be hard. With the rainy season approaching, we have been wondering how we will cope. Last week the president announced another lock-down for Nairobi, so our problem is solved temporarily as we have been forced to go on-line. Please pray that we find a venue that will enable the church to continue to grow and to reach many with the good news of Jesus Christ. We have a slum of about 10,000 people at the bottom of our road and another slum of 100,000 people just 10 minutes' walk away. In addition, we know several expatriate and Kenyan middle-class families who are not yet committed believers but have expressed interest in the church. There is an immense opportunity here for gospel outreach and discipleship. As we discuss and explore potential ways forward, pray for good decision-making that is guided by the Lord.

Vitality amidst Tragedy

We are so thankful for Solomon, a man who has come faithfully to church with his 1-year old daughter. He lives in a dusty 2-roomed house and makes a living by recycling charcoal and running a community eco-friendly toilet. He has helped Ephraim and Peter, the two Bible students who are working with us, to get to know many people in this slum. Together, they have begun a Bible study in Solomon's home and have had up to 17 people attending. On Sundays, Solomon supervises the children in church, helping them to work on their colouring sheets and to take part in the service. Many children come hungry, having not eaten breakfast. Solomon and others help organise the children so that they are orderly and don't grab the snacks and drink we have before Sunday school.



Children gathered at Solomon's house to watch the online service

In February, Solomon's 4-month old baby died very suddenly. Of course, we were all shocked. Kip', Ephraim and Peter visited the home several times to pray, sing and read the Scriptures with the bereaved family. Each time, Solomon invited his neighbours and friends, keen for them to hear the comforting words of life which only Christ can offer. Kip' led the funeral service in Swahili. Please pray

for this family, that they would continue to trust in Christ even amid such sadness. Pray for improved health for Solomon's wife and 1 year old daughter. Pray that as the church becomes established, God would give us wisdom in knowing how to help not only the spiritual needs but also the physical needs of those living in serious poverty.

Barbarity and New Life in Christ

Kip' recently went walking in the slum and came across two ladies who were fighting. Later, he addressed the issue of fighting in the after-church discussion time. Those from the slum admitted that they see fighting every day. One lady, who has told us of grim stories within her own family and community, later told me how helpful this session was. "It is in these discussions after church that I feel challenged and go away knowing that I have to change," she told me (Rachel). Praise the Lord for his work in this lady's life and pray that she would persevere in following him even when friends mock her.

Lockdown



Refreshments after church before lockdown 2 started

We are now adjusting to schools and churches being closed once again. We are producing on-line services and Sunday school but most of those in the slum are unable to access these. Children are particularly vulnerable, with parents often absent or out at work. Please pray for Peter and Ephraim as they consider how they can safely continue some form of outreach in the slum even during this third wave of COVID. Pray for those in whose lives God has been at work. During our Sunday school groups, one boy recently admitted "I need to stop stealing." Another girl (Ann) shared "I am not yet a Christian but I want to learn."

Family Life

We are again hosting Bako, a family friend from Madagascar, who is recovering from a second operation for a detached retina. She is so thankful for the prayers of many and has been a blessing to our children as she watches them play.

Ezra is really looking forward to starting school, next term if schools open, and is praying hard for COVID to go. Bethany has just turned 4 and is wonderfully healthy.

Thanks so much for your prayers. May God sustain us all to keep rejoicing in Him even during these trying times.

Love

Kip', Rachel, Elijah, Ezra, Susanna and Bethany



Bethany's 4th birthday. Baku is sat at the far end. Can you tell from the background which event from Christ's life we had recently celebrated?

For more about our work see <http://www.ufm.org.uk/member/kip-and-rachel-chelashaw/>

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