

A New Chapter!



joshnmandapidgeon.com

14th May 2020

Vol. 57



Please Pray...

» **Praise** the Lord that after one day short of six months, we finally received our residency permits to stay in Romania until at least January (until renewal).

» **Pray** for good health, energy and rest, as we continue to work out how best to invest in life locally in Vâlcea, especially considering the current restrictions.

» **Praise** the Lord for the almost three decades of mission of International Teams Australia and its many workers who have faithfully served in many locations and ministries.

» **Pray** for the many preparations for September's RWN conference, that God will take care of each detail, and help us discern what we need to do with each step. **Pray** also for wisdom as we continue to develop the RWN website.

Strength for the Journey...

The longer we live in Romania, the more we realise that 'normal' will probably never describe our days, and, the more we realise that that's okay. Whether we are trying to simply pay a bill, open an account, go food shopping, or work on our Romanian-designed house, every day has its challenges. Where once we could achieve five things in one day, many days here we are grateful to achieve two.

We would be lying if we said the insurmountable change in our lives over the last year hasn't been exhausting and with it, sometimes discouraging, but we are continuing to revise our expectations, put in realistic boundaries and routine, and work on being gracious.

And, of course, it's amazing how when we dwell on God's word, what seems impossible receives fresh perspective. As I read a devotion recently on 1 Kings 19:1-9, I found myself taking a deep breath and exhaling in agreement. "...A wise friend asked me, 'When's the last time you felt refreshed? Maybe you need to allow yourself to rest and to enjoy a good meal.'... Just as after God renewed Elijah's physical strength and was able to continue with his journey, when the 'journey is too much' for us (vs 7), we might need to rest and enjoy a healthy and satisfying meal. For when we are exhausted or hungry, we can easily succumb to disappointment or

fear. But when God meets our physical needs through His resources, as much as possible in this fallen world, we can take the next step in serving Him."

We appreciate all of our prayer team, family and friends who stand with us in this journey through the good and hard days, and ask that you would continue to uphold us before the Lord, as we lean on Him with each and every task set before us.

Residency Permits...

Thank you again to all who stood with us through the arduous journey of applying for our visas and subsequent residency permits to be able to stay in Romania. We are so grateful for all the help we received along the way, and that we were able to take hold of our little pieces of plastic, permitting us to stay here until January 2021, when they will be due for renewal. We have been told that all being well, we should be eligible for a five year visa at that point. Prayerfully this will be the case.

Corona Virus...

Many of you have asked how we are going with the current pandemic. Thank the Lord that we are well and healthy. In fact, on last view, the Valcea region where we live, still has one of the lowest records of cases in Romania (see covid19ro.org for stats). We are grateful for the Romanian government's prompt action, particularly considering the influx of Romanian's returning from other EU countries where almost half a million work. With Romania's state of



emergency declaration, we are currently required to wear masks anytime we leave our house, as well as carrying self-declarations stating the exact location we are going to and our purposes. Most places remain closed apart from some supermarkets, pharmacies and other essential shops. It has been good to see some companies make the move to allow online payments now, which is a big step from this paper and stamp-driven society. Some restrictions are set to be eased from tomorrow, 15th May, allowing us to move a little more freely around town. Unfortunately, educational facilities aren't expected to return until the new school year in September.

Isla now hasn't left the house since the first week of March, and Josh and I have only left a few times each, to do our fortnightly food shopping, or to pay our quarterly garbage bill and council rates which we currently can't do online. Whilst we are very thankful for the available space in our house and back-

yard, and Isla loves smothering our dog, Sully, some days are more challenging than others, and we enjoy trying to do different things to relax and change-up the scenery.

Ticks...

Some of you will be aware of the recent tick infestation at our place after the land next-door was cleared for use by the nearby mechanic. With a lack of trees and shrubbery to occupy, our land and Sully have become the new inhabitants. Thankfully, our house and our family haven't had any issues, but Sully has received more than his fair share. We have easily removed over 100 ticks from him over the past few months, and at one point we thought we might lose him. With vets shut due to the pandemic, we did what we could (removing 40 ticks in just one day) and thankfully with drops, he has recovered. We have given him new drops about every 3 weeks to keep them away and pray that the ticks will migrate soon.

Isla...

As well as ticks migrating, our roof has also become a haven to some sparrows after the shrubs were removed, and Isla has found plenty of entertainment from the tractors and rollers. Like all of us, our social butterfly is missing seeing friends at church and around town. She has, however, had a burst in her level of vocabulary and learning, and now enjoys serenading us with many songs, counting up to 20 and down from 10 to blastoff, singing ABCs and saying the days of the week. She also loves shouting 'buna' (hello) to everyone who walks past our balcony, and having a conversation with our elderly neighbour (neither understanding what the other is saying). She is a delight and brings much laughter, though of course brings her two-year-old challenges.

Ministry...

Due to much of our ministry being done from home anyhow, a lot of our day-to-day life has continued, just with added challenges. We continue to work on developing the Rroma-Workers Network website. I'm very grateful for Jeremy (who lives in another part of Romania), who has been working with us on this project, and that His website knowledge, along with Josh's coding and technology abilities, are helping this project go beyond what I would be capable of achieving. We continue to pray for direction as we seek to make the website secure and easy to navigate and use for the workers from all across Romania. There are so many workers with valuable resources that would be an asset to all Rroma workers, and we want to encourage these to be made available.

Upcoming Events

Third RWN Conference
21-25 September @ Harghita



88% Current Support

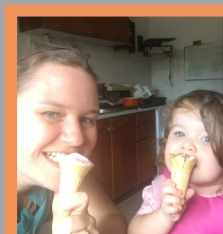
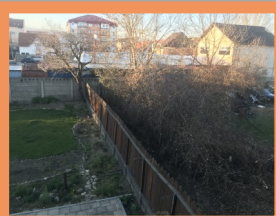
We are forever grateful to all who partner with us through your prayers, financial support and encouragement. Please continue to pray that God will provide for our spiritual, mental, physical and ministry needs, and let us know if you'd like to join our partnership team.

www.pioneers.org.au/give

Our Contacts

Our Work Email:
jnm.pidgeon@gmail.com

Pioneers:
PO BOX 200,
Blackburn VIC 3130
www.pioneers.org.au
info@pioneers.org.au
(03) 8814 4444
1800 78 78 89 (free call)



Photos: Activities around home during Covid-19; Isla's 2nd Birthday; Collecting our residency permits with our pastor; Our neighbouring land being cleared; Lining up to do food shopping.

Also, we are grateful that with the timing of the corona virus, we have been able to reschedule our third RWN conference for 21-25 September, without losing our deposit. Although we would have loved it to have been held this month (4-8 May) as originally planned, we can see God's hand in the delay, and we pray that the new dates will provide the opportunity for even more workers to come, and more sponsorships to be provided to make this possible. We appreciate your prayers as we continue to prepare each detail and that God will provide for each need. Sponsorships to enable workers to attend can now be made via: pioneers.org.au/give. In the 'My Donation is for' box, please write 'RWN 2020 Conference'.

We would also like to encourage our prayer team to uphold all our Rroma workers, as they face a multitude of challenges in their ministries. Some had to promptly return to their sending countries, and many who remain have little or no access to the communities. Some local authorities have allowed escorted access to deliver essentials, and some have continued to hold street evangelism. Social distancing is almost non-existent in Rroma communities, and most Rroma are now out of work, making their situations even more dire. Without fresh water and other essentials, sanitary protection from the virus is also unavailable to many. Rroma have been considered scape goats for many reasons over the centuries, and the spread of covid-19 is sadly often attributed to them. Pray with us for each of the RWN workers to know what they can do within the current limits, and that God will have his hand of protection over each of them.

From International Teams to Pioneers...

As of 10th May, it is a joy to now be able to announce this new chapter as we have been officially accepted as members of Pioneers of Australia. We feel welcomed into our new sending organisation and look forward to where God will lead our family as we adjust to a new way of operating. Many things regarding our ministry will remain similar to the way they were, but of course we recognise the opportunity to refresh some aspects of our work and lives with this change.

We are truly grateful for International Teams Australia, for their support and provision and friendship over the past twelve and a half years (for Manda), and for us as a family. As the organisation closes its doors, we will miss our International Teams family in Australia and globally. Wayne Coady (Personnel Director ITAU) writes:

"I've had the privilege of working alongside Josh and Manda over the last 18 months as Member Care Co-ordinator for ITeams AU. They have an amazing calling to work with the Rroma and organise that work through the Rroma-Workers Network, and it's been great to see them take their first steps in Romania as a family. It's been sad for all of us to see the closure of ITAU and a complex process of finding new homes for our missionaries. It's been good though to see how the Lord has led this process and that even in this He has His hand. It's with our blessing as an organisation that the Pidgeon's join Pioneers. I feel like this is a good fit so that makes me happy. I know I won't be having as much contact with Josh and Manda and that makes me sad. Bless you Josh and Manda, we look forward to what God is going to do in your journey in Romania."

Our decision to join Pioneers has been the result of much prayer, many conversations, and plenty of reading and research into a variety of organisations. We want to thank all who have played their part in this process, whether praying for us, having discussions with us, or writing references. We have been encouraged with every step, and feel at peace with the journey God's taken us on. We are thankful for the Pioneers team, and are encouraged by their wholistic values and policies. We can see a wonderful partnership building between them, us, and our sending church, Castle Hill Baptist. God really has been in it all! You can find out more about Pioneers on their website: pioneers.org.au.

What now...

Thank you to all of our team who help uphold our ministry, through prayer, finance and encouragement, as we are reminded over and over again just how much it takes a team to keep us here. Reflecting both Pioneer's requirements, as well as some adjustments based on the fact that we've been living in Romania for almost nine months, we now have a revised budget. In the coming days, International Teams will be sending out letters to our financial supporters regarding transferring their support over to Pioneers. We'd like to encourage our financial team to swap over your banking details as soon as possible, as we can't fully transition to Pioneers until this step is complete. If you have been considering joining our team, now is a great time to do so, to help us raise the remaining funds required to allow us to focus on the task God has sent us here to Romania to do.

Pioneers have been very accommodating to our needs, within their requirements. In the coming months and year, we will seek to fulfil specific Pioneer training requirements, such as their orientation and security training. Some of this will be achievable online, however, other necessities will have to wait until we return to Australia for our first Home Assignment. We look forward to meeting those serving faithfully behind the scenes in their Melbourne base, as well as slowly being introduced to those spread across Europe and even further.

In His Hands,

Josh, Manda and Isla

