



God is not Surprised!

Manda Lewis

At the beginning of this year I headed to Del Rio Resort at Wiseman's Ferry for a two-day [prayer retreat](#). As I spent time reflecting on the words in Matthew 19, I wrote:

"Nothing is ours - it's all Gods! If we claim that anything is rightly ours we have not submitted our lives and 'treasures' to God. What do I need to surrender to God to enable me to follow Christ 'perfectly'?... With man this is impossible but with God all things are possible."

As I continue to strive to let God hold the reigns of my life, my prayer is that this may be evident in all the decisions I make and in all of my relationships.

These last few months have been full of trials and joys, however, kicking the year of by going [skydiving](#) was just the beginning and more exhilarating than I had dreamed!

It was great to spend the [Australia day](#) weekend with [Kez](#) as we headed into the city to join in the hype of the festivities; and yet, I also felt my Aussie-ness tug on my heart, making sure I purchased my Aussie flag, gold jumper and Ken Duncan poster to take to Romania with me.

Remembering once more the privilege we have of living in such a wonderfully blessed country, I spent the last weekend in January being humbled as I shared in the lives of nine refugee families at our [ITeams family weekend](#) down at Teen Ranch in Cobbity. It was a precious time to spend with those who I got to know at

the previous camp last May, and a joy to meet some new families.

February brought with it an amount of fear and the worst pain I've ever experienced, as I endured three local anaesthetics in the space of three and a half weeks. With two separate procedures to remove [pterygiums](#) from both my eyes, and also having a mole removed off my back, I was (in hind sight) glad to be able to double up on the panadeine forte and get it all finished with quicker than originally expected. Now all but one of my 22 stitches have been removed, with my final eye check up scheduled for May 13th. I am certainly grateful for the care and support shown throughout this time!

I am also grateful, that somehow I managed to go to [Canowindra](#) to share at their church, just a week after my first surgery. It was a truly blessed time as I shared in their Harvest Festival service and at the auction and luncheon.

March saw the pain begin to settle down and it was lovely to have [Shez](#) stay for several weeks, even though we were both coming and going throughout and despite me not being completely sociable, whilst I was in recovery and sleeping up to 18 hours a day.

It was great to [get away](#) with my Bible Study gang, as we headed up to Caves Beach for a weekend. I am ever thankful for the many people who have shared in my life, and especially those

Please Pray...

» **Praise** God for His enduring love, guidance and provision over the past few months and **Pray** that I will continue to rest in His unchanging grace as He enables me to put one foot in front of the next.

» **Praise** God for the opportunities He has opened up for me to share at Bowral and the Gold Coast. **Pray** for mutual encouragement and the provision of God-honouring words to share.

» **Praise** God that both my eye operations went smoothly and **Pray** that they would continue to heal completely. (post-op photo below)

» **Praise** God with me for bringing Josh into my life and **Pray** for us as we navigate the journey ahead together.



Sharing the love of God through International Teams

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who I've know for many years.

With the plan not to be in Sydney for my 30th next year, Mum and I decided to take a whirlwind five day trip for both our April birthdays, to the [Northern Territory](#). It really was a quick snippet of the red centre as we flew into Alice Springs, drove to Uluru and Kata Tjuta and Kings Canon and back to Alice Springs, covering some 1400Kms. Well worth the effort though!

[My birthday 'week'](#) continued with a family dinner, Bible Study dinner, lunch with Shez and Mum, Movies with Kez and Shez, and, of course, my Almost 30th party. It really was a wonderful blessing to spend time with so many of my friends and family over that week!

AND, if all that's not enough for you to take in...

As you are probably aware, my journey has been anything but easy over the past few years and I have always said 'expect the unexpected!' I admit, however, that April has been anything but what I expected- though more than I could have hoped for!

After getting to know each other over the past fifteen or so months, mainly through church and Bible Study, [Josh Pidgeon](#) and I have decided to pursue a relationship. While neither of us have made this decision lightly, we are very aware that this complicates my plans to move to Romania long-term, though doesn't negate it.

These new and exciting circumstances beg many questions which Josh and I will need to navigate, and we are already very thankful for the love and support of our church family, my ITeams colleagues and other friends and family. We certainly appreciate your prayers for peace, wisdom and discernment for the journey forward.

With only three months until my planned departure, the pressure is evident, to make decisions perhaps sooner then we would like. After seeking much advice and with lots of prayer, the most plausible option at this stage is for me to continue pressing toward me leaving in July. Tentative plans follow for Josh to visit during his Uni holidays in September and for me to come home for Christmas. It is difficult to make changes to what seemed like a clear-cut 10 year plan but we can only pray that God will make the path ahead very clear as we seek Him first.

Accommodating the many factors involved, I have decided to put a hold on the apartment purchase for now, but will continue my networking with Roma workers and other ministry as planned. It has certainly been a time of God telling me to let Him hold the reigns and to give my plans over to him with open hands and heart. Please pray with Josh and I, that we will continue to look to Him to provide the appropriate answers in His timing and way and that we would have a peace amidst the challenges and pressures to make decisions before we are ready.

With the omission of the apartment costs, my [revised budget](#) simply means that I'm now much closer to reaching my required support for my scheduled departure. I am, therefore, now at [83%](#) of my set-up costs and roughly [68%](#) of my on-going costs.

I thank the Lord for everyone of you and do not take your support for granted. I look forward to seeing God do His thing, in His timing and for His Kingdom purposes. And dare I say again... watch this space!

In His hands, Manda.

Photos: (front page): Uluru at Sunset; at my Almost 30th Party (Above): Skydiving with my brother Adam and friend Katie; The Kings' Canyon creek walk; Mum & I at Uluru; Kata Tjuta (the Olgas); Family dinner; Shelley, Josh & I celebrating our birthdays with our Bible Study; Festivities at my Almost 30th party.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Bowral Baptist- presentation at 10:30am, 1st May

Last day of work in ITeams office 8th May

RIDE for Refugees, Sydney 10th May

Bowral Baptist- presentation 7pm, 14th May

Gold Coast / Sunshine Coast- 16th-21st May.

CrossLife—a Baptist Church, Helensvale. Presentations at 7:30am & 9:30am, 18th May (followed by lunch)

Aimed departure for Romania, around 22nd July