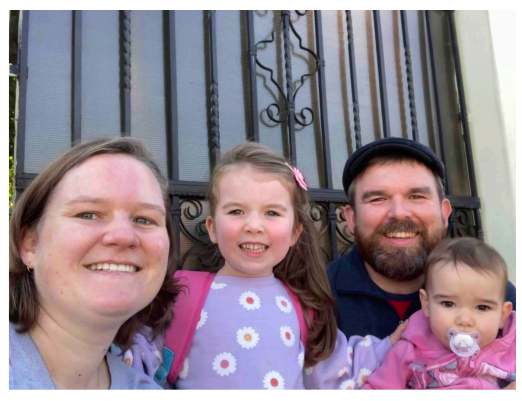


Christ's Presence!



joshnmandapidgeon.com

11th Dec 2022

Vol. 68



Please Pray...

» **Praise** the Lord that the remaining month of our HA went smoothly. **Pray** for our family's health during these winter months, and that we can find a healthy balance between life and ministry.

» **Pray** that God will provide for our unbudgeted HA costs and will continue to provide for all our needs.

» **Pray** for Isla as she continues to settle back into Gradi, and for her to learn Romanian quickly & well.

» **Pray** for a smooth process as we renew our residency permits, especially during the current busyness with many Ukrainians also obtaining paperwork.

» **Pray** for our respective levels of Romanian language, especially as Josh's official lessons have now finished.

» **Pray** that we can build good local relationships with non-church families, including those from Isla's Gradi.

Scent of holiness!

After a somewhat rough re-entry into Romania, with sickness and bit of what felt like a 'fog', we are now finding some rhythm to our days. And, whilst every day is still unique, we are feeling more at home again.

We've enjoyed taking part in the local festivities as the Christmas lights were turned on in town on 30th November (St. Andrew's Day also being a National Holiday), followed by Romania's 'Great Union Day' on 1st December, which recognises the current formation of Romania in 1918, through the union of Transylvania, Bessarabia and Bukovina.

With Eastern Orthodoxy still the most practiced religion in Romania (app.81%) many still try to tick the boxes of the set traditions, in an effort to earn their way into heaven. During the unification day ceremony, we watched as an Orthodox priest took part, swinging his thurible while he pronounced blessings over the town. This, alongside chanting, was then followed by dignitaries, officials, military and service personnel and representatives from Vâlcea, laying wreaths before parading down the street.

This image reminded me of 2 Cor 2:14-17, that as believers we have the fragrance of Christ in us as a scent of holiness and righteousness. It is a beauty that radiates from within, and that draws people into his presence. C.S.Lewis wrote, 'How little people know who think that holiness is dull. When one meets the real thing... it is

irresistible'. This is my prayer this Christmas, that through us, God will diffuse the aroma of Christ in every place, so that all will know His love through Christ.

Home Assignment...

The last time we wrote we still had four weeks of our HA remaining in Australia, before making our way back to Romania. Although it seemed to fly by, it was full of blessings as we continued to share with churches in Melbourne, Phillip Island, Blacktown and Canowindra, as well as several more Bible Study groups and get-togethers with friends and family. We also received mutual encouragement as we shared with students and lecturers at Sydney Missionary & Bible College, as well as sharing with our church family at CHBC for our recommissioning on 25th Sept. It was certainly a full schedule, and a fairly rushed time of packing and sorting before we flew out on 4th October, but we are grateful to have had the opportunity to see so many of you, as we travelled around the eastern states.

For those we unfortunately didn't get to catch with, we would love to still keep in touch. We did leave our updated prayer cards at all the churches we visited, and gave them out as we remembered to, however, if you didn't receive one, please send us your updated address, and we will happily get one to you. We're sure, after seeing so many people during our HA, that there are details and things we may have forgotten, so please forgive us if we didn't send something as promised.



Travel, Rest & Sickness...

As you may remember from our last prayer letter and Facebook posts, by God’s grace and your prayers, we were able to raise the financial shortfall still required to enable us to return to Romania fully funded as planned. It really was a case of ‘just in time’, but again reassured us that with God nothing is impossible, and that we really do take one step of faith at a time.

After our first leg of around 26 hours of travel, in which the girls did remarkably well, we were relieved to finally make it to Cyprus for a week of rest... and unfortunately sickness.

“But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ’s triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere.” 2 Cor 2:14

Being in the same timezone as Romania, we started the week overcoming the jet lag, and soaking up what sun we could in the 25-30C weather, recognising that this year for us contains three winters in a row with little break. However, by the halfway mark of our holiday, we all started coming down with some form of

travel bug, which ate up the remainder of our trip, and resulted in a rough final 18 hour travel day home to Romania, getting us home around 1:00am. Thank you to those who prayed with us through these travels, and as we’ve continued to readjust to Romanian life.

Re-entry and Future Steps...

Since returning, however, we have become aware of just how much the living costs in Romania have risen during our absence, and we are carefully watching and trying to figure out just how this will affect our budget. We appreciate your prayers with us, that God will continue to supply all our needs, despite the incredible increases we are seeing. We are also aware that we still have some unbudgeted HA costs that we’d ask you to pray with us about. Having changed organisations etc during our first term, some HA costs were unaccounted for, and though we’re grateful for a number of one-off gifts that helped us cover some of these, we appreciate your prayers for God to raise the remaining \$3900.

Just a few days after our re-entry, Isla started back at gradi/preschool five mornings a week, having moved up to the middle class for the new school year. Whilst still tired, she loved being able to reconnect with mostly the same friends, and her new teacher. We were also encouraged to hear that she is trying to use Romanian and is slowly improving. After having each other’s company for months, Tilly is certainly missing Isla during these mornings and is learning how to play by herself. Please pray for both of them as they adjust to their new rhythms. Indeed, we’d love you to pray for all of us as we adjust and try and fight the winter sicknesses going around. We’ve already had three rounds of sickness since we’ve been back.

Soon after our arrival, we began discussions with someone about ‘adopting’ her existing association to turn in to the Roma-Workers Network. We were lead to believe this would be easier than starting a new association from scratch. After discussions with lawyers and other helpful contacts, we decided that the time and other pressures involved were too great and that in the new year will we will begin the process from scratch. One positive, is that at least we now have a local lawyer to work alongside. It is a process that will likely take months and which requires the right contacts and much wisdom, so please pray with us through this. This will hopefully also aid us when it comes to obtaining our residency permits, however, not for this year as we are already in the process of renewing them again.

We trust you will have a joyful Christmas with your loved ones, and pray that the New Year will bring many wonderful opportunities to share His love around.

In His Hands, Josh, Manda, Isla and Tilly



97% Current Support

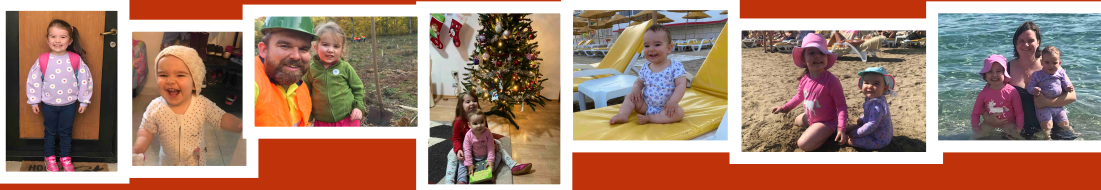
We are forever grateful to all who partner with us through your prayers, financial support and encouragement. Please continue to pray that God will provide for our spiritual, mental, physical and ministry needs, and let us know if you’d like to join our partnership team.

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: Home Assignment: Melbourne; Phillip Island; Canowindra; ‘Visiting Pop’ with cousins; Recommissioning; Cyprus; Isla restarting Gradi; Tree Planting day; Christmas; & friends.