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## Please Pray...

» **Pray** for good health for us all over the coming months in the lead up to and during the RWN conference.

» **Praise** God for the opportunities to be part of the local soccer ministry.

» **Pray** for the remaining preparations for our fifth RWN conference 18-22 May 2026. **Pray** for speakers as they prepare their devotions and workshops. **Pray** for the right kid's helpers and gathering all the materials needed.

» **Pray** for the preparations for our Home Assignment (end June-end Aug), and ask God to provide our accommodation and vehicles in Sydney and Melbourne. **Pray** for our kids during the remainder of the school year, and during this busy season.

» **Pray** for safe travels as we travel to and from Croatia for our Pioneers conference at the end of April.

## Traditions and Beliefs!'

There's nothing that makes you evaluate what you believe and how your beliefs shape your day-to-day activity more than when a child tells you about their day, and asks why we do things a certain way.

This week at grădinița / preschool, Tilly's class is focusing on Easter, which we celebrate in Romania on 12th April. When I asked what sort of things were discussed she said they talked about lambs and chicks. While the Eastern Orthodox beliefs have some similarities to Evangelical Christianity, for many in Romania, the traditions of Easter supersede their actual beliefs. Sadly, this means the focus is more often on consumerism, the Easter meal, the importance of eating food that is 'de post' (without animal products) and other traditions that people might not even be able to explain themselves. Not that these things are wrong in and of themselves, but when asked, many are sadly unable to explain the importance of Christ's death and resurrection.

One thing I'm regularly challenged by is being able to explain our faith in simple language to our children, and recognising that this is probably the type of language needed by many around the world to grasp the grace and truth of why Jesus was qualified to take our sin, and how we can be adopted in God's family. As the Bible says: "Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have. Be ready to give the reason for it. But

do it gently and with respect." (1 Peter 3:15)

Of course when our kids ask the hard questions about the trinity and how God can be everywhere all at once etc, there is often a silent prayer of 'Lord, please give me wisdom', but it also opens up opportunities to look into the truth of the Bible together and not to pretend we know everything.

## Family summary & Local Ministry...

After the intensity of the last few years, it was nice to slow things down over the Christmas period and focus on growing our own family traditions here in Romania. For us, this includes eating a mix of Australian, Romanian and American foods with our local friends and church, carolling, school stage productions, online video calls with family, and exchanging gifts. We also developed a habit of reading a different children's Christmas story each night in the lead up to Christmas, and memorising verses each day for Advent.

Since we last wrote, we've also celebrated Zeke and Isla's birthdays, and this week is both Josh's and my birthdays, as well as our wedding anniversary.

After staying put for a while following our arrival back in Romania in July, we were grateful to enjoy a few days away at the snow with some friends in February, who have two boys. While the kids didn't enjoy the first day at the snowfield, as it was still actively snowing, and very wet, the following two days were much more pleasant for all of us.



Isla and Tilly both love school, and of course Zeke hates having to say goodbye to his sisters each morning. Isla is continuing with piano lessons and in the last month has started Robotics / Programming club and volleyball training one afternoon per week. They are long days (8:15-5 or 6pm) but Isla is coping well. Tilly still mainly goes to preschool everyday until lunch time, however, on Wednesdays she has multi-sports club in the afternoon. Last week Isla's class did a 7km hike through the forest, and this week both girls have a 'Spring Festival' and 'Crazy Spring Days'. They certainly have many good opportunities to learn. Tilly's class also has parent days for one parent at a time to attend during the morning and to do an activity with the kids. I enjoyed going last week and sharing about some Australian animals with the kids.

(Josh) Since our last newsletter, I've more regularly been playing soccer along with our pastor, as he runs a weekly outreach for the youth from our town and a nearby village. It is a good opportunity to support our pastor in this local ministry. I also appreciate building connections with some of the guys through the team-sport, though it often stretches my language on field and off. Just a few weeks back we held a dinner before playing, and had around 50 youth turn up. It's also been great to see some of the youth engaging with the message that's shared each week.

### Sponsorships and Final Conference Preparations...

Our fifth Roma-Workers Network Conference is quickly approaching (18-22 May). We want to say a HUGE thank you to all those who have given towards sponsorships for the workers to attend who otherwise can't afford to. And, we especially want to send a thank you to Castle Hill Baptist who raised a significant proportion of these through their Christmas appeal. We still welcome further sponsorships, so if you had intended to give, please don't hesitate to do. It is a wonderful feeling when we can say 'yes' to workers as they ask to come, knowing the blessing and investment the conference is in their lives, to help them be equipped in their ministry for the longterm. Thank you again for your partnership in making this happen.

We continue to ask for your prayers in this final stage of preparation. Pray for Josh and I with all the logistics, our communication with the conference centre, and organising the week's program and materials. Pray for our speakers as they prepare their devotions and workshops. Pray that God will provide sufficient translators, tech support, and helpers for the kids. Pray for workers as they continue to register (commitment isn't so straightforward), that God will bring the workers that HE wants to be there. And, pray for good health and balance for our family, between ministry, school and local life. We've had a number of rounds of antibiotics over the winter, and really need some good health over the coming few months.

Also, every second year, Pioneers has a smaller 'Area' gathering. We are excited to be able to see old and friends and meet new workers who have recently joined the org., as we meet together at the end of April, in a place a bit north of Zagreb, Croatia. With this being such a busy time in the lead up to conference, we pray we can be refreshed (it's a two day drive each way) and spiritually 'charged up', before we hit the ground running on our return. It will be a delicate balance, as we will still need to be handling some conference registrations and other preparations while we're away.

### Home Assignment Needs...

Though we were in Australia last year for family reasons, we are looking forward to visiting with a number of churches across NSW and VIC during our condensed Home Assignment (end June to end Aug). We will be needing to fit a lot in this time, but ask that you would pray with us for God to provide for all our preparations and needs while we are there. The main needs are our need for accommodation and a vehicle in Sydney (and a drive up the east coast as far as Ballina), and separately, a vehicle and three car seats while we are in Melbourne and Phillip Island. Please let us know if you can help us with any of these. Additionally, we'd love to gather the next size clothing for Isla while we're there- so if anyone has sizes 11-14 girls clothing that they're willing to pass on, we'd love to take them off your hands.

In His Hands,  
Josh, Manda, Isla, Tilly and Zeke

Photos: A few days break with friends, at the snow in Braşov- including Bran Castle and Valea cu Poveşti; Zeke's and Isla's Birthday celebrations; Zeke's first haircut in March; Events at school and grădiniţa: Int.Women's Day / Mother's Day, Christmas concerts, Lego club, Art Gallery (Isla's diorama);



**94%** 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](http://www.pioneers.org.au/give)

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