



Vâlcea here I come!

Manda Lewis

The more I reflect on the past three months, the more I wonder how I could have possibly fitted so many things in! The almost insurmountable amount of breakfasts, lunches and dinners with friends and family, have provided a great opportunity to share what's going on in my life and to know how I can be holding others up in prayer, even in my upcoming absence.

Since the end of April, I have had the privilege of sharing at Bowral Baptist, twice, and CrossLife Helensvale on the Gold Coast. Even though much preparation goes into each talk I give, I always seem to walk away just as encouraged by my Christian family, wherever I go. Knowing that people are grasping the depth and breadth of God's love for this fallen world and hearing of how we are serving each other and taking the Word of God to the ends of the earth together— now that's a glimpse of heaven!

May 8th saw the end of my role as the Executive Assistant in the ITeams Office, and it was a joy to once more be part of RIDE for Refugees just two days later. It is always great seeing these events come together and knowing the awareness it brings and support it provides to so many, is an amazing feat! So far, with the Brisbane RIDE still pending on 30th August, over \$40,000 has already been raised! <http://rideforrefugees.com.au/> has information about the various projects that the money is being raised for!

A few days after the RIDE, I had my final appointment with my optometrist. He was very happy with both my eyes and although it takes about six months for the grafts to become fully part of the eyes, I left with him saying 'Have a nice life and I hope I never see you again!' - A good sentiment I guess! So thank you for your many prayers!

It was a joy to celebrate my Nan's 94th birthday in June and also to find out that Adam and Fiona are expecting their first baby and that I will soon have a niece, due about a week before I arrive back in Australia in December. There never seems to be a dull moment!

So, between visiting lots of people, being part of various events like CHBC's Holiday Club; Food Fairs; driving around NSW, from Ulladulla to Bowral to Cumnock and Springwood, I am just thankful for God's grace and strength over the past few months.

This past week has brought with it the reality, that just 10 days from now, I will be in the air and on my way to Romania!

Monday was a special evening indeed, as many joined me at CHBC to hear more about the Roma people and what I hope to be doing during my time in Romania. Part of the evening was to raise my current situation and need for more finances, however, just before I was to begin talking, I was suddenly overwhelmed as I was told

Please Pray...

» **Praise** God for making the way possible for me to be able to leave for Romania in His perfect timing and **Pray** for safe travel and for a quick transition into my ministry role.

» **Praise** God for the opportunity to meet up with many friends and family and for the opportunity to share my journey. **Pray** for my loved ones that I leave behind.

» **Praise** God for the work already started among the Roma and **Pray** for many Roma communities to come to know the love of Christ.

» **Pray** for Josh and I as we continue to navigate the journey ahead together, and especially during this time of separation.



Sharing the love of God through International Teams

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that, through a combination of an anonymous gift, some other donations and with the funds raised from the silent auction, that before I had even opened my mouth, I was going! Once more, I was humbled and reminded that when God is for it, He will provide. Sure, we need to play our part, but when God moves, I certainly don't want to be the one to get in the way! I can't give enough praise and thanks for everyone of you who are with me in this journey and as I continually pray- God use me as you see fit!

So with 100% of my set-up costs raised and enough one-off gifts to make up the difference of the on-going support needed in order to get to get me through until December, I was given permission to book my tickets. Because I will be going straight into ministry when I get to Valcea, I will be stopping over in Dubai for a few days on the way to Romania, to help me transition well and to have a bit of a rest.

I am very much looking forward to beginning the ministry I have been preparing so long for, but I know that saying goodbye is never easy. I am so grateful to have been able to spend some real quality time with many family and friends over the past few months and, now that I am coming home at Christmas, leaving seems that little bit less stressful.

My plans to help Romanian's to work alongside the Rroma people and also to help Rroma workers to be better resourced and empowered to serve Rroma communities around Romania, will continue as planned. At this stage, I will be living in an apartment in Valcea and purchasing a car as originally planned, to enable me to travel safely to visit the various workers around the country.

Please be praying with me as I go to Romania, that God will be preparing the hearts of the Rroma communities I will visit. Pray for the workers and I to work efficiently together, that we might identify and work out what resources will be most appropriate in each region. Pray that God will reveal His plans as I strategise and for safety as I travel. And please pray that Romanians will become more open and learn to love their neighbours, the Rroma.

There is quite a lot of spiritual oppression in the Oltenia area of Romania, of which Valcea is a part. It is 0.05% protestant and predominantly Eastern-Orthodox, though many simply just go to church because it is the right thing to do. Pray that Romanians and Rroma alike will realise their need for a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ, and that they would realise that being a good person and checking off a list, is not what gets a person into heaven.

God has continued to give me a heart to love the people of Romania, and although I don't know exactly how 'my' ministry will look once I get there, I am very aware that He will shape it the way He wants it to be.

In His hands, Manda.

Photos: (front page): Marcoola Beach, Sunshine Coast with Kez; At Dan & Sam's Wedding; (Above): Mother's day with my Mum and Stephen; Spending time with Kez at the Ginger Factory in Buderim and when she was in NSW; A piece of Pallet Art made for the auction for my Coffee & Dessert Evening; Vivid with Josh; Visiting friends in Cumnock with Josh.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Re-Commissioning Service
6pm, Sunday 13th July
at Castle Hill Baptist

Departure from Sydney
Tuesday 22nd July
(Stopover in Dubai)

Arrival into Bucharest
Sunday 27th July



“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 4:10-11