

Newsletter  
Thirty-five

23rd Dec 2015



# Crăciun Fericit!

Manda (& Josh) Pidgeon

I don't have to reiterate what a whirlwind of a year 2015 has been for Josh and I. I do, however, want to say a great BIG thank you once more, for the love and support you have all shown us. Whether through your friendships, prayers, financial support or just by being a part of our lives, we give thanks for you.

We pray that each of you will have the opportunity to spend time with family and friends this Christmas, and that you will be able to take the time to grasp the depth of God's love for you. It is a truly incredible fete to consider that God would give up His Son's life for all of us undeserving souls here on earth. But that's the beauty of grace (receiving what we don't deserve) and mercy (not receiving what we do deserve).

At the end of each year, I enjoy being able to look back at my calendar and previous newsletters, in order to reflect on what I thought were my plans, and yet, to see what God actually brought to fruition.

I have sincerely loved 2015, and not just because I was blessed to marry the one I love. For me, this past year has really challenged me to trust God with His plans and rely less on mine.

With all the changes to consider— such as having to temporarily give up my hearts desire to be back in Romania; being a year of 'little' and needing to carefully ensure we can pay each bill; working through the new dynamics between friendships and family as Josh and I create our own family unit; and trusting

God through the change in my role within International Teams— God has helped me to walk with Him and not to attempt everything in my own strength.

The second half of this year has seen Josh and I host our Bible Care Group, and it has been a privilege to be able to open our home each week. We have been working through a book that looks at the theme of Perseverance through various Psalms, and it has been refreshing to consider perseverance in the midst of repentance, help, joy, patience, hope and faith.

Before our wedding, we were told that the day would go fast and we wouldn't have much opportunity to chat with people. Josh and I certainly found this to be the truth, but we have enjoyed being able to spend more quality time with friends and family over the past few months, and actually have a conversation that goes beyond 'hi and thanks for coming.' We have also been able to celebrate a number of other events, from our niece Emily's 1st Birthday and Naming celebration; Jen & Adi's daughter Anna's 1st Birthday and Baptism, other family birthday celebrations, several engagement parties and now, of course, Christmas get-togethers.

November also provided the opportunity to enjoy a picnic lunch with some of the team who went to Cambodia back in 2012. It is amazing to consider the journey God has taken each of us on since then, especially with both Deb and Alex now actually serving in Cambodia. It

## Please Pray...

» **Praise** God for His provision of a location for May's RWN conference. **Pray** that He will provide the right connections and speakers and that we won't be overwhelmed by all that needs to be done.

» **Praise** God that Josh passed all four of his exams this semester at Uni, and pray for wisdom as we make plans for the year ahead. **Pray** that Josh and I will know how to balance work, uni, leisure and rest.

» **Pray** that the Lord will continue to raise up more financial partners for my ministry roles, to enable us to not only live but also cover ongoing ministry costs as they arise, such as May's conference.



Sharing the love of God in Romania & Australia

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was just another wonderful reminder that God has each of His children on a unique yet special journey, that He has already planned in advance for us.

At the ITeams office, we have welcomed Deb Cheng into the administration role and Irene (one of our StreetLight volunteers) who now volunteers one day per week. This has certainly helped ease the load somewhat, and allowed the rest of us to focus more on our roles...

Phil, who serves in Mexico with his family, was on Home Assignment over Oct/Nov, and it was great to work through the debrief process with him, as all our people do after each term. He also spoke at our Prayer Breakfast, and it was great to hear some of what God is doing through their discipleship café ministry to university students.

I prepared our ACCESS training for five of our ITeams workers in November and it was encouraging to receive the positive feedback as they each engulfed the information. We covered topics like the history of International Teams, church and mission, and Cross-cultural communication and worldview. It was also great to have John and Kathy, our workers in the Netherlands, run two of the training sessions via skype, on healthy living and healthy teams. On 31st October, rather than my previously planned attendance at the GLO conference, I took three of our ACCESS participants to Auburn, where we joined a Muslim Outreach training run by another organisation. It was a fantastic and timely opportunity, and I particularly found the life story of one new Christian brother inspiring.

In my member care role, I've also found joy in skyping and meeting with several church pastors, as they consider their role as sending churches. One church is currently preparing for their mission family to re-enter into Australia after 9 years in the UK, and another for the Home Assignment of their missionary. It is so important to ensure that each church sees their missionaries as an extension of their church family, and that they are playing their role to make sure they are spiritually and practically cared for. I was so pleased to come away from two recent meetings, knowing that those churches are eager to play such a part, and that we as the sending agency can help facilitate and equip them in their role.

The Roma-Workers Network is now into its second year and I continue to receive emails each week with requests to join. The exciting news that we now have a place to host the conference was a huge relief for me, with much relying on that piece of the puzzle. I am continuing to work towards having registration forms available by 18th January and praying that this will all come together smoothly, including having all the forms translated into Romanian. Whilst I was hoping that the conference location would be closer to the middle of Romania, God has made a way for us to hold the conference near Lacul Surduc, about an hour's drive north-east of Timișoara. An even bigger blessing is that the cost to hire the centre includes accommodation, all food, shuttle from the closest train station (Lugoj) and conference facilities. Of course we have some additional costs such as translation equipment, music and printing etc, but we are off to a wonderful start.

At this stage, the plan is to be in Romania for about a week to ten days before the conference to get everything prepared, and then, after the conference, to stay on to visit several more workers in other parts of the country, who are unable to attend the conference themselves. I really appreciate your prayers for all God's plans to come together, and that I will be obedient in doing what He wants for this conference. I would also appreciate your prayers for all my skype conversations to go smoothly, and that He will provide be the right people to run each of the training workshops.

Thank you for continuing to walk with us, even though our journey has taken a different route to what we expected. I know it's often easier to support those who are physically ministering overseas, but will you please pray and consider financially supporting us whilst we are based in Australia. My ministry support remains at around 50% of my budget and whilst God continues to sustain us, it is important that we raise the necessary support, to ensure that I can continue to minister full time in my two roles.

May you and your family have a very blessed Christmas, and we pray that 2016 will provide many opportunities to trust and praise God as you see Him at work in your lives.

In His Hands,  
Manda and Josh



Emily's 1st Bday and naming celebration

Emily in a Romanian dress we bought her before she was born



Loving sharing life with friends



Carols in the Domain

Our 1st Christmas tree

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*ITeams Annual Dinner  
(all welcome) 12th March*

*Cost: \$45. Book your seat at:*

*[www.trybooking.com/JZAD](http://www.trybooking.com/JZAD)*

*RWN Conference at  
Lacul Surduc, Romania.  
9-13th May  
(I will be in Romania for  
most of May)*





ROMA-WORKERS NETWORK  
ROMANIA

SAVE THE DATE | 2016  
.....  
MAY 9-13

BUILDING GOD'S KINGDOM TOGETHER



First Biannual Roma-Workers Conference...

for Christian workers ministering to Roma around Romania

**WHERE: SURDUC, ROMÂNIA**

**COST: 400 RON per worker**

Further information & Registration forms  
will be available from 18th January



The conference will be run in Romanian & English  
(with the potential for other languages to be translated, pending sufficient numbers)

[rromaworkers.ro@gmail.com](mailto:rromaworkers.ro@gmail.com) | [www.facebook.com/groups/rromaworkers.ro/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/rromaworkers.ro/)



A project account has been set up for people to give financially towards the RWN conference in May-2016.

Will you consider sponsoring one Roma worker to attend the conference for just €100? (including administration costs = AUD\$150)

Click [www.iteams.org.au/give/give-once/](http://www.iteams.org.au/give/give-once/) and select 'Roma-Workers Network' under projects, to give a once-off contribution.

For those who sign up to be a sponsor, you will receive prayer points for that worker, so that you can be praying for them over the week of the conference.

We are looking for 30-40 financial sponsor buddies, and a prayer buddy for all 100 workers, so even if you're not in a position to financially sponsor a worker, you can still be a prayer buddy.

Please email [rromaworkers.ro@gmail.com](mailto:rromaworkers.ro@gmail.com) to sign up. (include your full name, email, church and a small paragraph about you, which will be given to the roma worker)

