

Local Connections!



joshmandapidgeon.com

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Please Pray...

» **Praise** the Lord for progress made towards both making the RWN website bilingual, and in preparation for October's RWN conference.

» **Praise** God for new connections made with RWN workers in Romania and **Pray** that we can continue to grow the network as God leads.

» **Pray** that God will open up more relationship opportunities with those we meet locally in Vâlcea.

» **Pray** for continued growth in all our respective levels of Romanian language.

» **Pray** for protection and health for Manda and 'Squab' during this pregnancy, and especially with the continuing pandemic and restrictions.

» **Pray** that the Lord will continue to provide for our spiritual, mental and physical needs as we trust Him over the coming year.

In spite of ourselves...

In my (Manda's) fortnightly women's Bible study, which is held in hybrid style with local Romanian women from several churches, we have been looking into the lives of women in the Bible. It is amazing how the everyday reality of people's lives can be such an encouragement, even when they lived so long ago.

A few weeks ago we looked into the life of Tamar and how, even though she may have been unaware of God's hand and power to bring positive things from the negative and even sinful events in her life, we can see in hindsight that "we can trust the God we love to do what he loves: bring blessing to us in spite of ourselves."

"The fact that God allowed Jesus to be intimately linked with fallen human beings from whom he was descended" just goes to show that he accepts us as we are, no matter what our history and current lives involve. It is humbling for sure, and especially as we here in Romania prepare to celebrate Easter on the first weekend of May (2nd).

We are grateful for the forgiveness and promises we have in Christ, and pray that this will shape our lives and our witness for Him, to those we serve and live alongside.

Friendships and celebrations...

We continue to be thankful for the local church and community we have been welcomed into here in Vâlcea. It is

certainly one key aspect that has enabled our family to settle in well and feel more and more at home. We are especially thankful that we are currently able to meet together for church, as well as being able to enjoy several celebrations over the past few months.

Since we last wrote, we've celebrated Isla's 3rd birthday, International Women's Day/ Mother's Day, Josh's and my birthdays, as well as our 6th wedding anniversary. It was a joy to be able to go on our first child-free date since leaving Australia, and Isla loved her first playdate at our friend's house. It can sometimes be tough to achieve these simple pleasures without any family around, but God has provided just what we need to sustain and refuel us along the way.

As part of our Pidgeon celebrations, we took Isla to the local zoo for the first time, and she loved playing 'peek-a-boo' with a baby baboon, and trying to find all the animals from 'Peter Rabbit'.

The day before Josh's birthday, Josh and Isla met a Romanian family at the park. Their daughter, just a month older than Isla, and Isla played together despite speaking different languages, and just two days later both our family and theirs went to the zoo together. Whilst their family were from out of town and just visiting relatives, we hope we can continue to keep in contact with them. We also pray for more local friendships to continue to be made, however they come about.



Ministry Happenings...

We are grateful that, although we're still mainly based at and working from home, that God continues to open up doors to grow the Roma-Workers Network further.

Over the last few months we've been able to participate in both the "Central & Eastern European Association of Mission Studies (CEEAMS)" Annual conference; and the "Global Roma Symposium Webinar", organised by ReachGlobal and the Chinese American and Chinese Canadian missions group. Some of the speakers of these events were already known to us, however we were able to connect with some new Romanian workers who were similarly participating.

We were also thankful for the opportunity to share our mission and vision with a new church plant which is starting up in Timișoara, where I lived from 2008-10. It was great to see some familiar faces, and meet some new ones, as we encouraged them about the mission field on their own doorstep to the Roma people here in Romania.

"Not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed" Joshua 23:14

We are excited that we are getting closer to completing the bilingual functionality of the Roma-Workers Network website, and are hopeful of having this and the revised conference registrations ready for release in May. Please continue to pray with us through the final push to finish this well, so that it is accessible in both English and Romanian.

Last week we were able to gather a number of our RWN conference speakers via Zoom, to help bring cohesion regarding our conference workshops. With the theme of 'Restoring Dignity Together', there are many considerations that need to be handled with care. We were encouraged by the conversations and hope to have another follow up meeting in May. Please pray that all the speakers will be able to join so that we can be united in this effort. We are continuing to press on towards a hybrid style conference, to gather those in Romania in person, and to still be able to have our International speakers share even if they can't come due to Covid restrictions. Please pray that we can work through the extra complexities involved, especially as Josh works out the technological aspects of recording, translation and having a live audience simultaneously. We pray that we can have the majority of these preparations completed before our little 'Squab' is due to join our family in the first half of August.

Squab update...

Now past the 24 week mark of my pregnancy, our visits to Bucharest are becoming more frequent. The doctors involved in overseeing Squab's development are happy with HER progress, and SHE is meeting all HER developmental milestones, including bringing HER due date forward twice. From the day we first told Isla that she was going to be a big sister, she has told us "I want it to be a girl baby." Needless to say Isla was happy when we told her 'Bubby' is indeed a girl, and she has already started organising which toys and clothes she will give to her, and is happy to let her share her room. Now we just face the regular question of "is she ready to come out yet?!", and statements like "I'm going to be a good big sister."

We appreciate your prayers for continued guidance as we discuss further care, vaccines, expectations and all other necessary steps with our doctors, especially for the things that are different compared with pregnancy 'norms' in Australia. Please pray also for energy and the general pain and symptoms that come with pregnancy, that I'll be able to still get everything done as needed in the coming three and a bit months.

In His Hands, Josh, Manda and Isla (and Squab)

Upcoming Events

Our little 'Squab' is due to join us in the first half of August

RWN Conference
18th-22nd October, 2021



93% 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

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Photos: Birthday, Wedding Anniversary & Mother's Day celebrations; International Women's Day brunch; Marțisor kid's craft event; Zoo outing with new friends; Church music; Zoom conference.