

# Promised Hope!



joshmandapidgeon.com

12th March 2023

Vol. 69

## Please Pray...

» **Praise** the Lord for our renewed residency permits and the added blessing of now having the same expiry dates.

» **Praise** God for opportunities to meet with local families from Isla's Gradi, and **Pray** these relationships will grow.

» **Praise** God that the tech conference went well in Brussels, and **Pray** that we can continue to strengthen the RWN website's security and function to make it even more helpful to workers.

» **Pray** for those attending the upcoming Pioneers conference in Slovenia in April/May. **Pray** for safe travels for our family, and good connections as we meet many new people.

» **Pray** that we can find a suitable new location for our fourth RWN conference in May 2024. **Pray** that we can collaborate well with 'Roma Networks' to compliment their plans into our RWN conference.

## God holds us up!...

With all that is happening nearby and in Romania at the moment, including war and recent earthquakes, it can be too easy to let fear, worry and anxiety take hold.

With some of the earthquakes being only around 100kms from where we live, our local government has, this week, started monthly emergency practice drills to prepare both the forces and public for such events. Sirens of varying lengths and styles now ring out across the town with the premise that these are practice drills. As a family we have started discussing these scenarios to help us understand what our response needs to be.

Whilst I never imagined needing to discuss this, it's made me realise the needs and benefits of being proactive rather than reactive, while not letting fear get the better of us.

As I recently dug deeper into Isaiah 41, I was grateful for the reassurance of God's *command* to Israel to 'fear not'. But also, that with this command comes the promise that 'I am with you'. The God of all power and glory makes Him *able* to help us, but even more, His love *makes* Him say "I will help you". God has promised to hold our right hand, giving us the strength to overcome our fear, our doubt and our adversaries. And, when it is the Lord that is holding us up, regardless of the circumstances, we know that it is His work. We have a promised hope, not in ourselves or our works, but in the One who reinforces

His authority, in spite of every human weakness. At least fourteen times in this passage He promises "I will...!"

Of course, in addition to the promises in His Word, we covert your prayers for our safety, as well as peace in our hearts, and that we will continue to be a light to those around us, come what may.

## Daily life and catch up...

Though we have only received a small amount of snow this winter here in Vâlcea, we are certainly ready to welcome some warmer weather after experiencing three winters in a row (Rom-Aus-Rom).

The lead up to Christmas was busy, including Isla's Christmas preschool performance. While she still fears being in the spotlight, we were proud of her courage to dance with two other girls from her class, all the while keeping a close eye on her teacher.

Christmas Eve in Romania is often synonymous with carolling into the early hours of the morning. Josh carolled with a group from our church, though thankfully arrived home before midnight. We then enjoyed gathering with our church for a lovely service on Christmas Day, before heading to our friend's for a long afternoon lunch. We were blessed to enjoy some rest over the Christmas - New Year period, including travelling north to Iași where our pastor's extended family lives. Despite squeezing nine adults and six kids into a four bedroom house, it was a great few days, including perusing the Christmas markets, walking



through the botanical gardens and greenhouses, visiting the Palace with science museum and clock tower, and also the Opera House. Aside from our many trips to Bucharest for Tilly's birth and medical checks, this was the first trip we've managed to do within Romania since Tilly's birth. Hopefully we can also start visiting some of our RWN workers soon.

Over the two week school break we also enjoyed watching Isla go ice skating for her first time, including one lap by herself with a 'dolphin support'. Since school started back on 9th January, Isla's class has been looking at the themes of 'occupations' and 'transport', which

"For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you." Isaiah 41:13

saw them visit a vet, an ophthalmologist, a community hub, and a shoe factory, and take a bus trip to the local zoo. Josh has also been able to help drive some of the kids for these outings, and we are continuing to intentionally get to know some of the Gradi families. Over a

third of her class had birthday parties in February, and it has been encouraging to have opportunities to get to know some of the parents during these events.

We chose to have a smaller party for Isla's 5th birthday, with two families from Isla's class joining us, as well as some of our friends from church. In addition, she also celebrated on her actual birthday with a unicorn cake at Gradi, which she loved. Of course, Tilly, being our social butterfly and extrovert, reminds us that she wants to be part of the fun too and certainly keeps us on our toes, some days helping Daddy take Isla to school, and not just because she's desperate to get out of the house. ;)

**Residency Permits and Brussels...**

We were incredibly grateful and somewhat relieved for an added blessing with this year's residency renewals. Even though all four of our permits had expired while we waited for our new ones, not only were they renewed but Tilly's expiry date was graciously changed to now be the same as ours. This is no small feat, but will make the process considerably easier for the future. We also received our new permits less than two days before Josh was to fly out to Brussels, just in time to participate in a tech conference...

Josh: "In mid-February, I had the great opportunity to go to a conference in Belgium in the context of technology in missions. Having attended an online version for the last two years, it was great to finally meet some of the people in-person, and to build other valuable connections with like-minded computer people.

The relationships and lessons from conference are already proving invaluable as we continue to develop the networking website, and as we continue to live in a place known for its hackers. While cyber security risks never completely disappear, it's comforting to know that it's not as simple to get access to sensitive data as perhaps it was before.

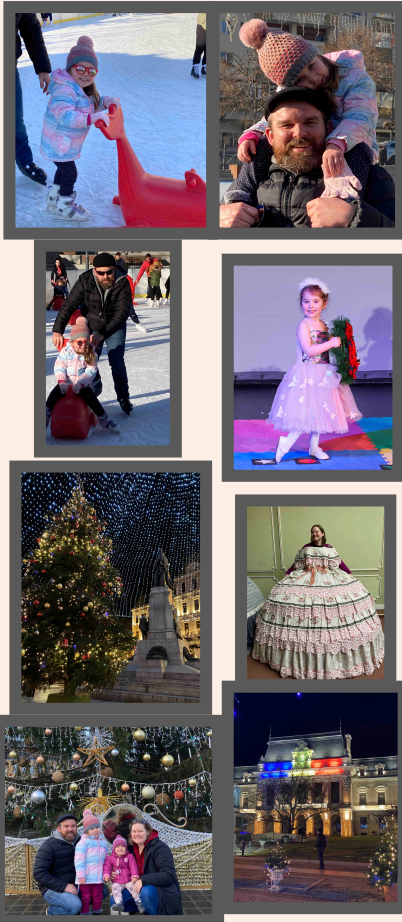
In the coming months we will also be meeting with some people to discuss an offer of a foundation to take over and revamp for the RWN. We are told that a foundation would give us a bit more flexibility with activities than an association, and it would be very impractical for us to start a foundation from scratch. We will continue to consult knowledgeable locals and professionals as we proceed."

Thank you again for partnering with us as we journey together through this year. Preparations are already underway for our next conference in approx. May 2024. We appreciate your prayers that we can find a suitable location, preferably this time in the east of Romania. Please pray as we also collaborate with 'Roma Networks' (a gathering of up to 400 global representatives) who are planning their next conference for April 2024. Pray that we can complement their plans into our conference, as we grow together.

In His Hands, Josh, Manda, Isla and Tilly

**Upcoming Events**

*Pioneers Europe Conference  
end of April, Slovenia*



**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)

**Our Contacts**

**Our Work Email:**  
[jnm.pidgeon@gmail.com](mailto:jnm.pidgeon@gmail.com)

---  
**Pioneers:**  
PO Box 151  
Forest Hill, VIC 3131  
[www.pioneers.org.au](http://www.pioneers.org.au)  
[info@pioneers.org.au](mailto:info@pioneers.org.au)  
**(03) 8814 4444**  
**1800 78 78 89 (free call)**



Photos: Residency permits; Tech Conference; Isla @ Gradi & Concert; Catch up with Jen & Adi; Ice Skating; Trip to Iasi via Braşov; Mărţişor (Celebration of Spring); Isla's 5th Bday.