

Encourage & Equip

Adi & Jennifer Grocott serving in Timisoara, Romania

 adi.grocott@ecmi.org  jennifer.grocott@ecmi.org
 ecmaustralia.org/give  Str Oglinzilor, Nr 24, Ap 16, Timisoara, 300710



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Please pray...

Praise for:

- Jesus' death and resurrection that brings salvation and hope for all who believe.
- Being able to celebrate Easter physically with our church family.
- The joy of face-to-face Sunday school restarting.
- Children being able to return to school.
- Precious time spent with Adi's grandfather.
- Encouraging time 'zooming in' to prayer meetings.

Prayer for:

- That we would continue to fix our eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.
- Those who have lost people dear to them through this pandemic.
- Wisdom in planning for potential children's ministry opportunities over summer.
- Wisdom, discernment and creativity as we come alongside the new church plant Puls and their desire to start kid's ministry.
- That we would show grace, patience and love towards our family and neighbours.

Dear Friends and Family,

When you go from a birthday celebration to the emergency department in one day, it pretty much sums up life here at the moment. There have been some wonderful highs and crushing lows recently, but I found encouragement from Romans 12:21, "Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good." Rather than becoming overwhelmed by the evil in the world and in our own hearts, we need to focus on the goodness of God, his character, his trustworthy promises and perfect plans for us and to aim to do good to those whom God has placed us amongst. May God give us the strength to do that.

Eastern Easter

This year there was a significant difference in the timing of Western (Catholic) Easter and Eastern (Orthodox) Easter, with those of us in Romania celebrating Easter Sunday on the 2 May. After a virtual Easter last year, it was a great joy and celebration to be able to meet together physically. To enable more people to attend on Easter Sunday, the service was held outside. Whilst this sounds great, because it will still live streamed, it meant a considerable effort from Adi and Jeff to get all the various cables, cords, cameras, tripods, computers and the sound desk all outside. Consequently, this left the main room inside free to be able to hold the children's program. But after a break of over a year without face-to-face Sunday school, it was somewhat chaotic with some kids being zealously keen to meet and others deeply apprehensive to join in. But in the end, we had a great time doing an Easter Treasure Hunt to find all the things we needed to retell the story of the first Easter.



Covid Changes

It is with great joy, excitement (but I must admit some apprehension) that I can share that Covid numbers in Romania, including our city are dropping significantly. High levels of vaccination in our city and low case numbers mean that some restrictions have been lifted. Masks are no longer compulsory outside, kids returned to school, you can eat at restaurants inside again, cinemas are open at 50% capacity and Anna is over the moon that she has been able to return to her weekly Judo classes. All of this has been greatly welcomed and people are appreciating the blessing of being able to breathe in the beauty of Spring without a mask on their face! Whilst the number of people allowed to meet inside hasn't changed, generally people are feeling more comfortable with attending church as a family. We have been able to restart Sunday School, holding it outside with the two groups combined. Whilst it is a joy to be able to teach face-to-face again, this current set-up is not without its challenges, but we pray that the Lord is using the meager offering we are able to give to the children.

One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.

PSALM 145:4

Death in the time of Covid

Whilst the images over crowded crematoriums on TV may have been distressing for all, death in the time of Covid has brought unforeseen and additional grief for those who have lost someone during this pandemic. One of our church elders and a dear friend, Stuart Elford passed away in April. He was an exemplary 'tent maker', working as a teacher and translator, all whilst serving the local church preaching, running camps, encouraging and leading all with the heart of a gentle servant. Because his illness aggravated during the pandemic this meant the majority of us had not seen him face to face in over a year. It was surreal attending the funeral of a friend whom you had only seen via a screen for a year. He is greatly missed, but has left an immense legacy in the lives that he touched. Adi also lost his last remaining grandparent, his mother's father, Ironim Nedelea. He had been in ill health for a considerable time and thankfully we were able to visit him the week before he passed away. He was a believer and had been a pillar at his local church. It was a tearful joy to be able to sing hymns, read scripture and pray with him and to see the light that it brought to his eyes.

Hopes for Summer

Whilst summer maybe right on our door step, there is still a lot of uncertainty, hesitation and anxiety about plans and children's programs over summer. Different organisations have varying views about what is safe, practical and feasible to run. Parents have opposing opinions about what they feel comfortable in sending their children to. Even children have differing reactions to things returning to 'face-to-face'. It is taking great amounts of wisdom, discernment, patience and grace to know how to plan for this summer and what to organise or help others run. Please pray not only for us, but for children's ministry organisations, parents and children throughout the globe, that opportunities for evangelism and teaching are not missed, but they are run a way that is safe, considerate and wise. Adi and I have been asked to help partner, support and advise a new church plant in Timisoara, Puls (Pulse), in relation to their children's ministry. They are only small at the moment with only a few kids, but they recognise the importance of children's ministry and are keen to start something. Please pray with us that God would give us wisdom, discernment and creativity as we come alongside them.

Virtual Visitations

As we mentioned in our last prayer letter, we are delaying our furlough till June-September 2022. Whilst we would certainly rather see you all face to face, we thought we would take advantage of technology and we are planning to have an online supporter's event (date still to be confirmed). We have also produced a brief video that could be used in church or a bible study. If you would like a copy, please contact us. Also, we are more than happy to 'zoom in' on a prayer meeting or bible study. Just this past month it was a massive blessing to be able to hear the familiar voices and different accents of our dear friends at Burwood Presbyterian when they invited us to join one of their prayer meetings. Another huge encouragement came through the "Pray for Romania" event which ECM hosted, thank you to all those who were able to attend.

Thank you again for your partnership, prayers, support and encouragement. Our prayer is that each of us would continue to fix our eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith and encourage those alongside us to do the same.

God Bless, Adi, Jennifer, Anna and Luca

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