

A note from Allen Edwards

"As Jean was feeling unwell she went to the GP at the end of July and was subsequently diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She has had an appointment with the consultant surgeon at Southampton. Fortunately the cancer is contained and so is operable but he has decided to defer surgery until the New Year. In the meantime Jean has just started a three month course of chemotherapy to shrink the tumour before they operate to minimise the risk of complications during surgery. We would value prayer over the coming weeks that Jean stays well, copes with the chemo and that it shrinks the tumour sufficiently to enable surgery. Also for the whole family as they deal with the situation."



Please uphold Allen and Jean and their family in prayer through this challenging time.

Ian and Sue Walton

Ian Walton is our treasurer. Ian's wife, Sue, was diagnosed with an exceptionally rare form of cancer in the middle of the year. She is under the care of excellent specialists who have treated this form of cancer before. Sue has another consultation on 9th November to evaluate what treatment might be most appropriate. Please uphold them in prayer.

A note from Odel Rugema now settled back in Rwanda

Dear EWM Friends,

I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for your prayers and support during this significant chapter of my life. It brings me immense joy to inform you that I have been attached to Remera parish (in Kigali Diocese) in preparation for my upcoming ordination. At Remera Parish, as I learn and from the senior pastors I am also involved in different ministry roles especially the Bible study with different groups in the church.

Your prayers have been a source of strength and encouragement during this journey. Knowing that I have such a caring and supportive group of friends like you has provided me with an incredible sense of peace and reassurance. Please know that your prayers and support will continue to be cherished as I navigate the blessings, challenges and responsibilities that come with serving in the ministry. Your continued prayers for guidance, wisdom, and strength would be greatly appreciated.

It was great to see how Odel has grown in confidence. He was unexpectedly asked to be an interpreter in the Convention in Musanze when one of the interpreters struggled. As well as interpreting for Mike he also shared in the teaching. Please pray for him. With moving back to Rwanda, it proved impossible to complete his dissertation for his Masters during September. He has been given an extension until July, but pray that he is able to do some work on this each week to complete it well ahead of time. There is a lot happening in his life.

News from Manasseh and Catrin in Germany is attached as a separate letter.

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"those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
***They will soar on wings like eagles."* Isaiah 40:31**

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Dear Praying Friends,

It is impossible for most of us to imagine the horror of the recent brutal and bloody terrorist attack on southern Israel. It is equally difficult to comprehend the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza as they experience the consequences of Hamas's actions.

In the midst of all the carnage and chaos, it's important to remember the Church in both Israel and Gaza, brothers and sisters in Christ – our brothers and sisters in Christ also. Christians on both sides suffering now, some of whom have also suffered for their faith in Jesus.

My mind goes to some of the Christians I have met who have shared their testimonies about what they have suffered. Pastor Lok in Nepal under permanent death threat from militant Hindus for becoming, not just a Christian, but a leader in both church and village life. Rachel, who after going to church for the first time in Uganda, returned home to discover that her home had been burnt to the ground by Islamists. Madam Bahati in the Democratic Republic of Congo who risks rape and mutilation from vicious militia groups every day as she visits women in churches across the lawless South Kivu province.

So it's difficult reading a beautiful passage of Scripture such as the set epistle in the Anglican churches for the Sunday after the conflict started, in which Paul bids the church in Philippi, and us too, ***"Rejoice in the Lord always.... do not be anxious about anything The peace of God will garrison (literally) your heart and mind."*** Are you serious Paul, one might exclaim! Yet, here was Paul who had suffered much (***see 2 Corinthians 11***) writing as a suffering writer in prison to a suffering church that had experienced suffering from the start. The Philippians had witnessed Paul's unjust, brutal suffering when he was there, and recognised credibility in what he wrote.

The amazing thing about the people I have mentioned and countless others I have met who faced the brutalities of Idi Amin in Uganda and the bloody genocide in Rwanda is their testimony that though they may have cried out, ***"God where are you?"*** they came to experience the presence and ultimate peace of God in the midst of their intense suffering.

In ***Revelation 1:12-20***, John recounts the vision he had of our risen and reigning Lord. Where was Jesus in this vision? Walking in the midst of His suffering Church. Our suffering yet triumphant, ever living Lord will never stop being present in his suffering Church until he returns in glory to judge both the living and the dead.

With our love in Jesus,
Mike and Angie

News and Views of Mike's August visit to Rwanda

The visit got off to a busy start with 7am departures for the first three days, and days two and three not ending until 10pm! It was a privilege to preach at **Nyamata** church to the south east of Kigali. It had recently started an English service attended by 30 people. There was a good response at the Kinyarwanda service attended by well over 200, with 30-40 people standing for prayer for a fresh filling with the Holy Spirit.



Part of the offering auctioned after the service at Nyamata

Two one-day conferences for lay church leaders followed in the same locality, the second day being especially encouraging attended by 60-70, with a real hunger to study and learn. The area is going through an interesting and challenging transition from a predominantly rural economy to a suburban economy as Kigali expands. There has been a significant increase in the number of people commuting along a new dual carriageway to work in the city. This has implications on the nature of church life as well as community life in general.



Group discussion at Musanze church leaders' conference



Afternoon session at church leaders' conference

Odel joined me midweek in the beautiful drive to **Musanze** in the north west, a city with a halo of dormant volcanoes (may they stay that way!). The Shiya diocesan five-yearly convention, which lasted three and half days, was amazing with over 5,000 people attending. A number of different speakers, numerous choirs, a lot of lively and **VERY LOUD** worship, much dancing and above all over 760 people who went forward to commit their lives to Christ for the first time. Half were under 25 and most of the others were under 45! Please pray for churches as they continue to disciple these young Christians.

The volume of the worship went a bit too far and the Convention was closed for an afternoon by the police, which meant I didn't get to speak. The Saturday morning saw some smaller meetings of 500-600 and I spoke as scheduled at one of these. The closing service was a celebration which lasted about five hours, ending with a really encouraging speech from the provincial governor.



One of the choirs on the convention main stage

Week two, Odel and I led a conference Monday to Friday for 300 lay leaders. Their engagement in discussion questions following our talks and their delving into Scripture was so encouraging, as was feedback given from some of the discussion groups. Afternoon sessions were held outside as it was too hot in the hall – it felt like a mini Sermon on the Mount setting!



Group discussion in the shade

We focused on church growth. I'm not sure why we were asked to do that as testimonies about growth in some of the churches was amazing, with believers' baptisms and confirmations in individual churches being counted in many dozens over the past year! We also focused on Practical Holiness in Paul's letters to Timothy.

We had a wonderful insight into the universal power of Scripture when they were discussing 1 Timothy 5 and Paul's practical teaching on the church's responsibility, the limits of that responsibility and for feeding widows. This turned out to be a very live issue in a number of churches, which led to some very animated discussions and some great ways forward to a problematic scenario we presented to them.

We say *Thank You, Lord* for all that he is doing in the Church there by his Spirit.

A note from Sylvance Okumu in Kenya

Sylvance is ministering in the Kisumu region of NW Kenya. He was a student at Alatheia Bible College in South Africa when Mike was a visiting tutor. Mike also led a conference for Sylvance and he shared the teaching with Mike at a conference in Eldoret, Kenya some years ago.

"The ministry is going well, except for a few challenges here and there. Due to the prolonged drought in Kenya, most of the members of our congregations in Masaai keep moving from one place to another. This reduces the number of members attending church services. The number of youths in our churches across Kenya keeps on reducing due to various factors. Some of the youths relocated due to a change of residence. Others have decided not to attend church anymore, complaining that the church is boring. The number of adults has also decreased due to the economic hardship that we are going through as a country now. Nonetheless, those committed keep coming to the church, and we have the opportunity to share God's Word with them.

If there is a prayer need that I have always asked God about for a long time, it is building a house for my family in Kisumu. I am yet to realize the answer to that prayer, and I am not giving up. My children are now grown-up and my son cannot share one bedroom with the sisters."

Please pray for this dear brother and his wife Florence and their family and give thanks for their faithful ministry.