

"The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge" (Ruth 2 v12)



Supermacs pizza is the best

This is our first prayer letter since April, and it has been an action-packed 3 months. During the month of June, we ran another Bible study series in Gort Community Centre. The study this time was concentrated on the book of Ruth and this turned out to be very much used of the Lord over the course of the month. Some folks from Calvary Church Loughrea have continued to support us on these evenings which is such an encouragement. An 'unofficial' steering group if you like.

With Elise's childcare studies concluding for the academic year, our whole family was able to be present for 2 out of 4 sessions. This allowed us to dream and prayerfully envisage what a future gathering in Gort could look like with both children and adults present. A wonderful thought indeed.

On the first night, a lovely lady from the local community joined us. As we got to know her in consecutive weeks, it became clear she was very hungry for God's Word and faithfully attended the full 4 weeks. We also had 2 other ladies from the local traveller community join us on the first evening. This meant we had a fantastic 'congregation' of 12. Praise the Lord. The two traveller ladies requested bibles at the end of the evening which we were able to provide. Please pray that God would use His Word to bring heartfelt change. The first lady who came meanwhile confided in us that the book of Ruth – having no idea this is what we'd be studying – spoke very personally to her and her circumstances.

It's wonderful to be able to offer God's Word to a community which, like all others, is greatly in need of it. We have found – particularly with other commitments – it is hard work and requires much prayer which we often feel we are simply not able for. But the Lord is able for all things. Please pray we would rely on Him fully. **Please pray also that over the summer months we would have further opportunities to meet people in the community who might join us in September. It is our desire – having dipped our toe now in both March and June – to run a Bible study on a weekly basis. Some who attended specifically asked that the study would continue. Please pray also for a couple of community prayer evenings we plan to host in July and August and for people to come.**

We have almost been in Galway a year. It seems like so much has happened in that time and that the Lord has taught us and blessed us so much. Before we had finalised our preparations to come down to Galway, we needed to enrol our children into their new school. This was without knowing where we would be living or knowing anything about the local schools. Josiah was just finishing his third year at school in Fermanagh – a school which had nurtured him from P1. We were concerned that leaving such an environment would be very difficult for him. We didn't think Edith – just starting P1 – would be as

affected. Anyway, roll on a year and both our children have just finished their first year in a lovely little school halfway between Loughrea and Gort. They have both been so accepted by principal, teachers, support staff, and their fellow students. With us living quite far away until recently, the school trip has involved longish commutes morning and afternoon. Thankfully with us now having moved to our new apartment that will no longer be the case from September. **Please give thanks to the Lord for bringing our children to a school they have thrived in.** The summer holidays have also freed up a little more time to spend with our children indulging in important pursuits such as eating pizza.



40th Birthday Celebration



Cousins



Elise at Blenheim Palace

In the middle of June, Elise celebrated a 'big' birthday and both of us were greatly blessed by some friends who offered us a property in the Cotswolds for a weekend. It was such a beautiful place, and the weather was wonderful too.

We had long drives in the countryside, some leisurely meals out as well as a visit to Blenheim Palace birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill. Elise had a wonderful time but keeps reminding me she'll never be as old as me haha. Meanwhile Josiah and Edith spent time with their grandparents and cousins.

As a family, we have been so incredibly heartened and touched by the many visitors, friends and supporters who have come down and encouraged us in Galway. Some of these have stayed a night or a couple of nights with us and in May we were able to welcome Rev Peter Bourke (St Jude's Belfast) to the area. We had a lovely time together and Peter was able to come to the second evening of our Bible study series. Thank you so much Peter for devoting a section of your precious sabbatical time to our family and ministry.



The kids and Peter Bourke

Finally, as we write, we are enjoying a 3-week visit from Elise's mother Brenda, sister-in law Stephanie and niece Lydia and we have been able to move into our new apartment at just the right time. It certainly has a bit more room for the visit but we're just so thankful to all of you reading (and many others) for praying this move over the line. It just makes everything so much easier as we are now very close to Gort and ministry going forward. As Boaz reminded Ruth, the Lord is faithful and shelters each one of His children underneath his wings and in His everlasting care and grace.

Amen!

Alastair and Elise Donaldson Loughrea, County Galway, Ireland

Crosslinks 116-118 Walworth Road, London, SE17 1JL | pletters@crosslinks.org | 32 Montgomery Road, Belfast BT6 9HL | +44 (0)20 8691