

AUGUST 2019



Dear friends

Time in England

Last time we wrote, we told you that we were having long service leave – 10 weeks away from ministry in Australia. This didn't work out at all as we had planned, but Proverbs 16:9 was powerfully in evidence!

We arrived in England the same day that David's father, John, became ill. He was in hospital for four weeks and died on 12 June. We held his funeral and thanksgiving service two days before we left England. Our sense that this has been God's timing is powerfully strong. It was such a privilege for David to be able to care for his Dad in hospital for 26 out of the 27 day admission. These were not easy days – John was on three different wards and initially it was very unclear what was wrong and whether he might get better. David was sitting on John's bed with him when he died. We are usually a long way away, so it was a joy to be in the right place at the right time. We might have had other plans for our long service leave, but God knows what is best for us, for John and Gill, and for our family. We are thankful beyond words for how this has unfolded. At the same time, we are sad, continue to grieve, and have arrived back in Australia weary and tired.

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David and John in hospital in the last days of John's life.

John's thanksgiving service was a wonderful testimony to God's work in his life. Haydn, my brother, and I spoke of John's kindness and compassion, both as a man and as a family doctor, and especially as a husband and father. Throughout John's illness we kept experiencing remarkable kindness from many people, both at the hospital and throughout the town; and over and over again we heard words like these: 'I'd do anything for your Dad after the way he cared for me and my family.' John was a naturally kind and caring man; but his kindness and love were the fruit of God's Spirit in his life. What a great legacy, and a

legacy that lasts to eternity as stitches woven in the wedding gown of the bride of Christ – Rev 19:8. We continue to support Gill, David and Haydn’s mother and are deeply thankful for the support she receives from her local church and her friends in Basingstoke.

We very much enjoyed catching up with some of you while we were in England. We are only sad that some of our plans were curtailed and we weren’t able to see everyone we had hoped to. It was wonderful to spend time with Jonathan and his girlfriend Lizzie and to visit Cambridge with Haydn and Ruth.

Back in Australia

We have arrived back in Australia to begin another semester at St Andrew’s Hall and to deal with a mountain of change. While we were away, CMS-Australia reached the financial targets required to move ahead with the next stage of the St Andrew’s Hall redevelopment. This means that we are now actively preparing for a building project in 2020. This has a number of implications for us. The first, and most pressing, is that Rachel and I are moving house. We live in a property owned by CMS and, very much with our encouragement, CMS is selling it in order to help fund the building project. So we are moving into a temporary flat and are looking to buy our own house at some point in the next six to nine months. It also means that we are expecting to move our training ministry off-site throughout 2020, which will require a huge relocation project.

Our colleague Isabel, who has had stage four lung cancer for the last three years, received the unwelcomed news that she now has secondary cancer in other organs with fewer treatment options. We only found this news out recently and are still working through the implications.

In all this, we urgently covet your prayers. Please pray for our resilience in the face of all that is happening, for grace to persevere, and for patience and kindness with each other and with the people we are serving.

With our love and best wishes,
David and Rachel

Thank God for:

- **The privilege of being in England throughout John’s last illness; for being with him when he died and to be able to help plan his thanksgiving service. We thank God for John’s life, for his witness to many people through his kindness and compassion and for his loyal and faithful service of Jesus Christ.**

Please pray:

- **For resilience and strength for us as we begin a new semester at St Andrew’s Hall.**
- **For wisdom as we look for a house, that God would provide us with somewhere that will be a good home for us and a great base for ministry.**
- **For our planning for the relocation of our training ministry, that we would be able to offer excellent training throughout 2020 despite being offsite.**