

Dear Friends,

As we write we are getting ready to return to Israel on Thursday evening. When we wrote almost a month ago, Jen had been in the UK with family and Kevin was preparing to leave Israel to join Jen in the UK before flying together to Texas to visit churches, talk about CMJ and life in Israel. We were also looking forward to hopefully getting some rest and space to discern the way forward. We thank the Lord for his protection over Kevin, enabling him to fly out of Israel safely just fifteen minutes before Ben Gurion airport was shut for some hours due to it being targeted by missiles fired from Yemen.

On Kevin's arrival in the UK, we had a few days together catching up on the recent tragic events in Jaffa and the current situation in Israel, and then had a wonderful time with one of the new grandchildren. We are thankful for the Lord's timing that enabled us to have quality time with family. We then flew to America and hired a pick-up truck to drive across Texas, which has given us enormous fun and memories. From driving three hours in a straight line without seeing more than about a dozen other cars, to sitting by lakes eating a picnic in the back of the truck, it was good just to get out and explore on the days we were not working. The wearing of cowboy hats and boots was, we were told by locals, a necessity!

Kevin has preached at a number of churches, including one that we also visited last year. He has also given presentations at the Diocese of Fort Worth annual conference, at churches' breakfast meetings and lunch meetings, and at a meeting of the local rotary club in Arlington. He has also made some videos for a mission newsletter produced by the Anglican Church in North America. We have been greatly encouraged by the support we have received and look forward to taking it back to Israel to encourage our congregation, CMJ, and our neighbours and community that they are loved and prayed for.

We have been well looked after by folks in the Diocese of Fort Worth. As well as being well fed and hosted by loving people who were incredibly generous, we were also able to meet up with Kevin's Spiritual Director, as well as friends we made last year. This was an opportunity to share in person with them our experiences of the last fifteen months since October the 7th, 2023.

Thank you for your prayers for peace, rest, healing, and direction. It has been good to have a break from the stresses and worries from Jaffa, and we know that for some of you it has given you a break from worrying about us! We have had some wonderful walks in country parks and times to pray together, as well as simply enjoying not living in anticipation of the next rocket strike. That said, in one country park our phones went off with a Texan Amber alert that is a siren sent to every phone when a child goes missing. It makes the same sound as our rocket alert apps in Israel, and it was followed immediately by a siren that was used for warnings of hurricanes. It took us a while to reorientate ourselves and quickly google what these alarms were, but you can imagine the immediate panic. Fortunately, the siren was just being tested!

Over the last few months, there have been many conversations and prayers as we have sought the Lord's will for our work in Jaffa, alongside guidance and counsel from CMJ, the Diocese of Fort Worth and the Anglican Church in North America. Part of these conversations included considering an offer of a Rector's position in Wisconsin. Kevin was approached by this parish at the behest of their Bishop about a month before he left Israel for our trip, and conversations and interviews have been taking place while in Israel and also whilst in the USA.

We are delighted to tell you that after much prayer and discernment that Kevin has accepted the position of Rector for the parish of St Mary of the Snows, Eagle River, Wisconsin. It was clear to us both that the Lord has clearly gone before us, putting people and things in place ready for our visit to the US that has been instrumental in guiding us in discerning the way forward.

Eagle River is a small rural town in the Northwoods of Wisconsin with a wonderful church building, an established congregation, and many missional opportunities. There are also wonderful teaching opportunities for Kevin at a nearby seminary college and many openings for Jen to be involved in parish life. Eagle River is a beautiful location, and although extremely cold in the winter months, Kevin's cardiologist is confident that with the right medication this should not be a problem and if anything, the clean country air will be beneficial.

So, what happens now? Firstly, we must return to Israel to begin the process of applying for visas to enter the USA, and to prepare to hand over the ministry in Jaffa. As Israel is our normal place of residency, we cannot apply for visas from the UK, and there is also much to do as we prepare to leave. We also of course need to ensure a smooth transition for the ministries we have started to whoever takes them on, and for the congregation to continue to have support in this period of transition. The process of finding a new priest to replace Kevin also needs to begin, and so there is much to do in the interim. The visa process may take around three months, and we will leave as soon as that process is complete.

It will not be easy to return to Israel in the current circumstances, and especially for Jen who has not been there since our neighbour Inbar died in the terror attack near our home. We are of course flying back into a war zone, but we trust that the Lord has protected us for a reason, and we pray that this new chapter gives us the opportunity to serve Him and speak of his faithfulness as we move parish.

We are so thankful for your prayers. We have felt the power of intercessory prayer in emergency situations, pastoral situations and personal situations. We know and believe that prayer changes things, and ask you continue to pray for us. In the meantime, the ministry in Jaffa will continue, and we are thankful for all of you who uphold us in prayer and also to those who support us financially. For those of you who wish to continue to support the continuing ministry in Jaffa after we have left, we will be happy to provide you with details of how you can do that nearer the time. For individuals and churches who are

making donations, we will provide you the details of the exact date we will leave as soon as we know that ourselves, though at this stage we cannot give an exact timescale as it depends of course on the visa process for entry to the United States.

As we prepare to return to Israel, please will you pray with us:

- Giving thanks for safe travels for us both while out of Israel.
- Giving thanks for time with family, and to rest, pray, and discern the way forward.
- Giving thanks for the Lord's provision of godly, wise people to help us as we journey onwards.

- For wisdom and safety as we return to Israel and as we finish our time of service there.
- For CMJ and the decisions to be made by the CEO for the ministry in Jaffa.
- For our congregation as they prepare to adapt to new leadership.
- For our visa application and all the practicalities of an international move.

And finally, please pray for the Priest that the Lord may already be calling to come to Jaffa and continue the mission there.

We will be in touch soon, once we have returned to Israel,

Thank you for your continued support,

Blessings,

Fr Kevin and Jen.