

News from us

Dema, Michelle, James and Ariella Kapurzhanov

Hi there

A very 'Happy New Year' to you. We hope you enjoyed a great Christmas and managed to have a break and some well-needed R-n-R to prepare for the year ahead. Despite almost NOT going up until 36 hours before we left (due to the new tumour in Mum's liver and the grim prognosis of "weeks"), we went in faith had an awesome time away in Kazakhstan last month.

We were able to visit our church in Kapchagai, share with the leadership, congregation, etc. It was wonderful to have the opportunity, especially for Michelle, to reconnect with everyone. We were so warmly embraced it was very moving—quite overwhelming. The best thing was to see how healthy the church is. So different from the church we had to rebuild now about eight years ago. The team work together so well, everything is well-organised, a good spirit, and there is a lot of love. There were certain individuals where we could also see they have definitely grown in their faith and outlook—very encouraging. There are new people and the church is reaching out to the community. They have started a new initiative of giving our bread to the poor twice weekly, in addition to the mercy-ministry that already feeds the hungry. They are giving out 40-50 loaves of bread weekly, with people who don't even attend the church (yet!) providing money to buy bread! ...We couldn't really ask for more. It did our hearts a lot of good. Please keep Vasia and Julia, the senior pastors, and Valentina, assistant-pastor, in your prayers. **One urgent financial need is to raise \$3,000 AUD to repair and insulate the church roof to keep the heat in.** Please let us know if you can help.

Of course we also visited our old home: the Teen Challenge House of Mercy women and children's rehab and refuge centre. We shared in the chapel session and chatted with the ladies who are the mighty women who help the women through the rehab/adaptation process. Earlier this year the director, Tamara, was invited to visit the capital, Astana, where she was presented with an award of 'gratitude' (above, right) by the equivalent of the Attorney-General for her service to the nation's needy women. Michelle was the first women's program director from 1995-1998, and remembers when Tamara (far right) came into the program, abused and needing refuge. So it is now very satisfying to see how she and these other women are continuing to grow and what they are managing to accomplish.

There were also precious times of catching up with others in Teen Challenge, the national AOG team, good friends we had the pleasure of serving with, neighbours and some of Dema's family. One girl we were also very impressed with is someone I will call "Zhanna". Zhanna (with daughter, right) is a recovered heroin addict from TC who established and runs a half-way house for girls who come out of prison. She regularly goes to and is well-received by the prison, staff and inmates. Zhanna has also run the SHINE women's self-esteem program on several occasions, both in the half-way house and in the prison, to some of the hardest of criminals! As a result the behaviour in the prison has been improving, at least one girl has already given her heart to the Lord and a prison guard is going to one of our TC graduate counsellors! Amazing. God is so good.



I should add, the children also had the opportunity to visit their old school and to see some of their friends. They also particularly revelled in any opportunity they had to play in the snow (it was -8 when we arrived)!

It was a very full and busy time, all-in-all, but very necessary for us, and all those dear to us in Kazakhstan to bring some kind of proper closure and effective transition.

Please pray for the churches, wisdom and passion for those serving faithfully in TC and the myriad of ministries that have resulted. In particular, pray urgently for a court case that is currently going on with the government trying to resume land at the TC men's city rehab centre (farm land close to city). They need a miracle to keep at least a portion!

If you are able to continue to support the work in Kazakhstan (not us, but the work), you still can. There is a project open for support through ACCI Missions. It is called, "**M152 Teen Challenge Partners Kazakhstan**" (support for school, women's and children's, juvenile, programs, etc.). If you have any questions concerning this please contact the ACCI finance team at finance@accim.org.au (or 03 8516 9600). To assist with sponsoring needy pastors to study or to give towards the Kapchagai church, please contact us directly.

On the home-front, Dema is working, but the current situation is not ideal in a number of ways. Please pray for wisdom and breakthrough. Michelle will be studying this year to prepare for the next season (Graduate Diploma of Secondary Education). James has been offered a part-scholarship and will start high school at Citipointe College. Ariella will go into year four at Groves Christian College.

Mum is still going. It is such a roller-coaster from week to week. Last week she urgently needed a blood transfusion, but this week her levels were stable enough for medics to administer chemo. The chemo is having a cumulative effect, affecting her memory and ability to cope with stress, as well as the making her increasingly tired. She is also not driving anymore and becoming more dependent, more so now Dad is gone. BUT, she made it through Christmas—we are thankful, as we didn't know if she would make it or not. So we are mindful and thankful for ALL God's mercy and take each day at a time.

Well, there is probably more to say, but that's it for now. Please do stay in contact and pray for God's will to be done in Kazakhstan in every aspect of every ministry, as well as in our lives for this next season.

We thank you for investing into our lives and to countless numbers in Kazakhstan. May God bless you for your love and generosity.

Love and blessings,

Dema, Michelle, James and Ariella.

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Prayer points

- TC Court case
- \$3,000 AUD to repair and insulate the needy Kapchagai church roof
- Strong, spiritually-sensitive, faith-filled leadership for the national church
- Growth and strategy for national youth ministry
- Salvation and lives changed in Teen Challenge rehab centres and school; encouragement for leaders and workers
- Support for the many projects at Teen challenge women's centre and the juvenile boys' program.
- Continued healing and strength for Mum
- Work, study and settling into Australian life and future ministry

