

Serving as missionaries in Panama City, Panama

Psa 121:2-5 NLT My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth! He will not let you stumble; the one who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, he who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps. The LORD himself watches over you!

2022 is a year of transition for us, as you will read. We are exploring with God and accountable leaders/friends where we will end up in the future. Do be in prayer for us and share anything the Lord gives you!



¡Hola de los Venings!

Yes, it's your missionary friends again—calling from Panama City! We hope this finds you as well as can be amidst a falling pound, rising fuel bills and the joys of a new Prime Minister! There is much going on, but if you have time, grab 5 and catch up!

It has been 9 months since we arrived (gasp!) and we thought we would bring you up to date with the latest happenings here in Panama.



Comic-Con came to Panama City

As we mentioned last time, a huge amount of our time has been taken up with Spanish learning, which is definitely moving along. We have reached the stage now, however, that we are able to see just how much we **don't** know, if that makes sense. We are working hard, but do pray for our confidence and the ability to cope with the incredibly fast pace that Spanish people talk at. It is always a challenge to try and interpret what is being said!

Family

After the miracle of provision of a wonderful house that we shared about last time, we have settled into the area and have made the acquaintance of some of our neighbours. Initially most thought we were American (gringo) but when they found out we are actually English (inglés) our novelty value seemed to increase.

We have been given the odd gift of food (very nice) and everyone seems to like their 'pet' white friends from Britain! We enjoy being the foreigners and it is very illuminating to learn how a foreigner in the UK might feel who is unfamiliar with language, customs, food and traditions. With our growing Spanish we are slowly deepening the level of conversation we can have with people and are glad we can get to know them better now.

The girls are getting more into their GCSE homeschooling with Maths and Biology now firmly started. We will see if they are able to sit those exams around June next year or not. It is amazing to see our 'little ones' now become young women—with Bea now 13 and Emily about to turn 15 in November. Teens in the house again!

Ministry

Last time we explained that we felt clearly that God was telling us to take

Finances

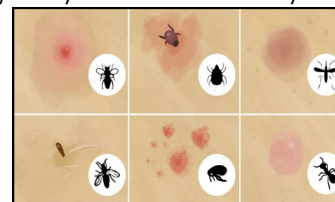
We have had a few of you contact us about finances as a result of the sharp decline of the £ against the \$ in the last few months. We very much appreciate that—thank you. As we face 2023, we know that our financial situation is likely to change again with some indicating that our support will need be reviewed in light of circumstances in the UK and other longer term plans. We also know that we need to face up to the realities of living outside of the NHS (need to start medical insurance payments) and the rising cost of articles like food and toiletries (bread can be £4 a loaf!). Also, exams for the girls cost £'00s per exam and we know there will be other expenses to pay. Please pray for us as we continue our faith journey with the Lord. He always provides and we wonder how He will support us as we face a slightly uncertain future!



Things we now know...

Since moving to Panama we have learned some new things about ourselves as well as where we now live. We share a few of them below!

- There are various sizes of ants from tiny to ridiculous. They can smell a grain of sugar at 100 paces and will then bring **all** their mates to visit.
- Leather shoes bad (they rot). Plastic/synthetic shoes good!
- You can tell what insect has bitten you by the mark left on your skin



What bit me? A Handy Chart ☺

- The Panamanians know how to party! (13 hours non stop one night)
- Some "airtight" kitchen containers are more airtight than others
- Driving in Panama City is not for the faint hearted (Mark loves it)
- 26C now feels chilly in the house
- People look at you funny if you swim when it is less than 30C
- Mark looks older than Sue, although she is older than him. He now gets offered the "pensioner discount" in shops, Sue doesn't ☺

2022 and use it to adjust to life outside the UK. Further, He would make it clear to us what we should focus on in 2023 as this year progressed. Well, we do have several options in front of us including blending our work with YWAM with other Christian ministries here in Panama. This reminds us of Wales, as there YWAM regularly works with many different churches and movements—and it seems the same is true of Panama.

To give you some examples, we have met with a few organisations, including a church

(Continued overleaf)



We went to visit the Panama Canal—Woo!

(Continued from overleaf)

who is interested in partnering with us as well as a fascinating youth ministry a little way out of the city who might want us to work with them in some way. We have also visited YWAM Panama in the far West of the country, who we love, and we are exploring what might be possible with them. Mark will be spending another week there in October to teach on a DTS.

The challenge for us is to ensure we balance all these opportunities for 2023 with the clear word from God to 'wait' for His leading. We are the kinds of people who like to 'go-get' and so waiting is not the easiest thing for us. Still, it is exciting to see these opportunities rising before us and we will keep you all up to date as things progress. Do be in prayer for us as we weigh them all up and that we will be sensitive to Holy Spirit's leading.

The Next Few Months

Later in November we will be travelling to visit Zaak and Danika in the US before returning to Britain in December for

Christmas to visit friends and family. We are looking forward to it very much, although we are also eager to continue our life and mission work here in Panama and so will be returning during the first week or two in January to Panama City.

Though living in Panama is not without its challenges, we are giving thanks for the things God is giving us. Friendships, opportunities to minister and tangible blessings are just a few. For example, with the collapse of the pound against the dollar we, at one point, saw our income down by nearly a third! But then some friends unexpectedly had to move



Panama has some very dramatic coastline

to Colombia and gave us the contents of their food cupboards plus some desks, chairs, computer monitor and even a Hoover! All things that we could not afford, but now possess...what a kind and generous God we serve. Hallelujah!

Social Unrest...?

During the summer, there was a lot of unrest in Panama with a large number of protests occurring.



Protesters Out in Force

Typically, these took the form of people blocking the main road that runs along the spine of the country from East to West.

After a few weeks, the country started to suffer badly with widespread fuel shortages and the shops beginning to run out of food. In addition, people were unable to travel and we ourselves had to cancel several meetings and travel plans as people had become stuck in huge traffic jams—some for up to 4 days!

Though things are calmer now, negotiations between the protesters and the government are still fractious and the clouds are gathering once again. Pray for this nation and see [this link](#) for more background about it.

Hope you enjoyed our update from Panama.

We pray every blessing on you and your families as we enjoy autumn!

*Love from
Mark, Sue,
Emily & Bea xxx*

Want to know what to PRAY? Thank you for praying for us - it means a great deal

- Although we are not exactly certain about 2023, options are appearing. Pray for us about which longer term opportunity the Lord wants to emphasise and that we will see it when it arises.
- Spanish is a great language to learn with clear rules and many things that make it 'easy' to learn. That being said, we are both past 50 and what might be 'easy' to some is not necessarily so to us...haha! Please pray that this next year consolidates what we have learned into a form of fluency.
- We are planning a visit to the UK from around the 9 Dec—9 Jan and are looking to borrow a car for that period. Please pray that we can find someone who might lend us a vehicle—or please come forward if you sense God is leading you to help. We will pay for insurance as needed.
- Lift us up before the Lord in the area of support. We have always been amazed at the creative ways that God uses to bless us—financially, materially, physically and spiritually. We know 2023 will be very different for us and welcome your prayers for us in this area.



Want to get in touch with us?

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**May God bless you richly in this Autumn Season.
We appreciate you all!**

