

One year in!

Chelashaw news, Advent 2021

Dear Friends,

A big thank you to the many of you who have connected with us on-line over the last few months. It has been a joy to share what the LORD is doing here in Nairobi, to hear your news and to know there are people praying for the church here. Thank you to those who support us financially. We thank the Lord for you.

A year on...

A year ago, we began meeting for services in our home and garden. We began with 3-4 families, a few young people and 10 -15 children. By June, we were overwhelmed with about 80 children coming from the local Kibagare slum for both the church service and Sunday school afterwards (for an aerial video of this slum, recorded by others working in the area see this: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?extid=SEO----&v=1924747287832000>). This led us to begin an early morning Sunday school, after which the younger children go home, allowing more room in the house for adults and families. The children have been inviting their mothers, and the young people have invited their friends and so our house is now full again. Praise God for this wonderful opportunity to minister to the young, and please pray that God would provide a bigger venue for us.

Venue hunting...

The most promising venue so far is an empty piece of land between Kibagare slum, where an estimated 15 – 20,000 people live, and a leafy middle-class housing estate. The location is exciting because we could continue to reach people from both areas, including mid-week outreach of various kinds. The owner is keen to lease the land to us for at least 5 years, but unfortunately the neighbourhood residents' association has not agreed. Churches in Kenya are well known for being noisy and so many landlords and residents' associations are opposed to having a church in their neighbourhood. Please pray that God would open the hearts of those on this association, that they would see the



The road that the passes by the possible venue site. So much potential...

value of having a local church that can shine the light of Christ and his Word into a broken world. Pray for God's leading and also his provision as we will need to put up a simple structure and basic facilities.

The team...

With 60-80 children coming each week for Sunday school, we are very grateful for the team God has given us.



The current team from left to Right: Isabella, Peter, Kip' and Eric

Through *iServe Africa*, where Kip' continues to teach, we have had a couple of ministry trainees working with us. Ephraim was with us until August, when he went to the UK for further Bible training with Cornhill. Peter is still with us and has been a great blessing. He has a real heart for people as well as a wonderful focus on the gospel. He leads a Bible study and children's outreach in the slum, does a lot of pastoral visits and helps to lead Sunday school, as well as the church services. We are in discussion with *iServe* about how long Peter can remain with us, and we hope he can stay until next August, when

he may also be heading to the UK for Cornhill training.

Eric is a first-year apprentice with *iServe* and began with us in September. He is keen to learn and is already a great help in teaching Sunday school. He runs a Bible study for young people in the slum and has begun hosting the young people from church regularly for Sunday lunch, a book discussion and games.

Isabella was a student on one of the courses Kip' taught at *iServe*. She is serving at the church part-time, with a particular focus on the mothers of the children who come for Sunday school. Many of these children have challenging home situations and Isabella is seeking to get alongside the mothers, to support them and point them to the hope we have in Christ. Pray for wisdom and discernment as she visits, prays and shares the Scriptures with these families.

Give thanks for these co-workers in the gospel, for their love for Christ, their regular evangelistic visits in the slum and for their love for people.

Sunday school.....

Please pray for Rachel as she prepares the Sunday school lessons most weeks and seeks to train some of our church members as Sunday school teachers. Pray that we would teach clearly, that we would communicate God's love in everything we do and that the children would be drawn to accept Christ as Saviour and King.

We are preparing an outreach event on Christmas Eve, to which we plan to invite the parents of the Sunday school children. Please pray that we would manage this well, particularly the giving out of food and Christmas gifts for those from the slum. Pray that Dads as well as Mums would come and be drawn to Christ.



Preparing for the Christmas Eve event. What do you think the children are making?

We have a few church families who come from middle class homes and are socially quite different from those who come from the slum. A couple of these families are still joining the service on-line. Pray for the children from these families – that God would be meeting their particular needs. Pray that God would bind us together in love for His glory as we worship together from different language groups, tribes and social backgrounds.

Opportunities to share the Word...



Enjoying a few days out of Nairobi earlier in the year

A couple of months back, we were both invited to speak at a ladies' conference at Gracepoint Church on the edge of Nairobi. Isabella did a wonderful job of inviting ladies linked to our own church and 11 came, all of whom live in the slum. The feedback was very positive, and the ladies were particularly encouraged by meeting other ladies who are seeking to follow Christ. We hope we can organise more such events to help the ladies in their Christian discipleship as well as in practical areas such as health.

At the end of November, Kip' had the privilege of being the speaker at a missionary conference. He taught through the book of Philippians, encouraging us to grow in joy as we keep our eyes fixed on Christ. Our whole family was invited and the children were also blessed with good teaching and fellowship.

Kip' has been invited to speak on-line at another missionary conferences in the New Year. Pray that God would use him to encourage those attending.

Kip' continues to lead a weekly Bible study with some of his friends. We began this group when we first came to Kenya, and since COVID it has been on-line. Pray that this group would grow, both in number and in depth of understanding as they dig deep into the Bible.

Family News...

Elijah and Ezra are delighted to have made it through a whole term without any school closures due to COVID. Please pray that God continues to provide the funds we need to send them to school. Susanna and Bethany are home-schooling for now, and Susanna especially has some lovely friends in the neighbourhood.

We are hoping to come to England next summer, especially to see Rachel's parents but also to visit family, friends and supporting churches. May God prepare the way despite the uncertainties we all face in the world. Please pray that God would provide someone who can oversee the church while we are away.



Bonfire night with some of the church families. Just don't ask too much about health & safety!

Thanks again for your encouragement and support. May you have a hope-filled (and not too frenetic) Advent and a joyous Christmas rejoicing in Him who is the Light of the world.

Advent blessings in Christ

Kip', Rachel, Elijah, Ezra, Susanna and Bethany

For more about our work see <http://www.ufm.org.uk/member/kip-and-rachel-chelashaw/>

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