

From: Rebecca Baldock

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Hello and a very happy New Year to you all.

Christmas was quite different for me this year. I was homesick this year which I hadn't expected, this was due in part to tiredness, and partly as I'd had a friend visiting last year which had made me feel closer to home. Celebrations began very late as usual. The week leading up to Christmas saw Joanne and myself making mince pies from scratch! Something I was greatly excited by, especially as they worked. We had a lovely carol service – although there's something wrong about it being in the afternoon when it's warm and sunny! It was great to listen to nursing students practicing Christmas carols in the Chapel, whilst we were working on the wards. Christmas Eve was celebrated by a traditional English Christmas dinner with Joanne, and then Christmas day began. I went to Church in the morning followed by lunch as a bible study group – consisting of pancakes and mincemeat balls – a nice treat. In the afternoon we went to each ward to sing Christmas carols and give a little talk, and some soap to each patient. We hadn't done this last year and it was really lovely.

Sad news, the lady who I'd trained to help with play therapy and to teach pelvic floor exercises to the VVF (incontinent) ladies has now been transferred to out patients. The nurses in the hospital have been very short staffed for a while. This includes the paediatric ward, so I've been unable to train or use any of their nurses to help with the play therapy as originally planned. I get the feeling that the play therapy is just going to continue whilst I am here. Still at least they'll have had three years of it before I leave. On the exciting side, I included a bible story at the end of play therapy today which went down really well. So hopefully we'll be able to continue doing that once a week and get the chapel involved. I've already spoken to the vicar and he seemed quite keen on the idea. He's got a real heart for children's ministry.

Another exciting thing is that the church recognises the need to disciple people. They are planning to start doing the Alpha course here as a form of discipleship as well as evangelism. It's quite exciting as people get preached to a lot but aren't always followed up, or given the opportunity to really think things through and question. Our vicar (Rev Gideon) has been on a training course in Kampala (Uganda's capital) and we as leaders will be given training this weekend. Please can you pray for this. It's exciting the passion people have here and the reasons for doing Alpha, but the course is completely westernised and not contextualised at all yet. They are hoping to redo each of the talks to make the relevant to Uganda, but that will take a lot of time.

Rev Gideon, our hospital director (Canon Benson) and another Canon in the diocese are planning to put together some Lukonzo daily bible studies for the local people. This is very exciting. We have bibles in the local language Lukonzo, and there are a few English bible study notes which people donate. These are great for people who can read English, but not everyone can, so it's an exciting project.

Recently we've had some longer stay patients on the ward who speak good English. They've asked if we could give them some books to read during their stay. We've been able to lend them Christian novels, which they were very happy about. I loaned one guy "The Heavenly Man" – and he told me after how he'd been really touched and

challenged by it as he was a prison officer – I'd had no idea. I've discussed with Rev Gideon whether we could set up a chapel library where these type of patients could benefit from having something to read and also be linked up to the chapel, as another way of ministering to people. The majority of patients would not benefit from this due to lack of English ability, but I've been asked a significant number of times for it to be worth while. The chapel staff are therefore going to meet together to see whether this is a possibility and how they would be able to ensure they get the books back. So we'll see what happens. At Christmas I gave some of the longer stay children colouring books and pencils that had been donated. Rev Gideon thinks this is a great idea and is now going to try and purchase some colouring books, which are also bible stories to give to the long stay children – which I was really excited about.

I'll be going on our yearly mission conference on Tuesday. It's a great opportunity to meet with the other people in Uganda working with AIM and a time for good bible teaching, rest and spiritual input. So I'm looking forward to this.

Once again I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and a great start to the New Year

Love Becca

Prayer points

- There are lots of potential new and exciting things happening in the chapel. Please praise God for this and pray into each of these (Alpha, Children's bible stories, Lukonzo bible study notes, Library), for Gods guidance and blessing on them.
- Please continue to pray for the community outreaches as we plan to begin the pilot study next month.
- Please continue to pray for safe travel