

IN PARTNERSHIP

April 2022



Thanking God for Small Blessings

When circumstances are challenging, it's easy to become discouraged. Problems can seem so big that it feels like nothing we do makes a difference. But even a small blessing can be something to be thankful for!

Recently we talked with Paulino Malou, Director of Christian Mercy International. What he told us was a great reminder of the power of small blessings.

“Last year our five local congregations purchased five plastic sheets [tarps] with the support from International Church Partnerships (ICP),” Paulino said. “In our community, most of our local churches fellowship under the trees, and they would praise God with joy and happiness in the Lord Jesus. During the rainy season, they would be stopped by the heavy rains.”

One plastic tarp for each church. Something that seems small, and could seem so mundane and insignificant, becomes a source of thankfulness and praise to God.

“We are so happy to have ICP in Australia to support our local churches last year with plastic sheets so that they [can] attend Sunday services with the love of God and peace of mind,” Paulino said.

A thankful heart can help us face our challenges. When we appreciate the small blessings, we can work with them and make things better. In these past few years of experiencing restrictions, we've learned how meaningful being together at church can be. Now, these churches in South Sudan can meet each week, no matter the weather.

Paulino made an interesting point in our conversation, questioning is the church about the building or the believers. Paulino concluded, “The church are the believers in the world.”

Believers in the world like you. The blessing you can give during Walk for Hope, no matter how small, can make a big difference to the churches in South Sudan. Whether it is a plastic tarp, providing tuition for a young evangelist to study theology, or contributing in part towards the cost of these things. Your financial gift is another blessing to be thankful for.

“Our partnership has been a blessing in one way or the other throughout the local church,” Paulino said.

Walk for Hope Devotional Resources

We have encountered a world we never imagined since March 2020. In this context, in challenging circumstances, what does it mean to be genuinely thankful?

Download the Walk for Hope church resources or Daily Devotional to encourage you in your faith, through reflecting,

praying, and giving thanks in all things.

This Easter, share with us in thankfulness for the ministries that you make possible through your partnership with GMP.

Resources are available at walkforhope.com.au/resources



News & Events

Walk for Hope

This Easter support evangelism, church planting and ministry training across the nations. When you give to Walk for Hope, you are helping people, like Elder Zingmuan, face their challenges with hope. You assist his ministry in sharing the good news in Bangladesh. Your gift this Easter will also help other evangelists, leaders and ministries continue to share the hope of the Gospel around the world. Please visit www.WalkforHope.com.au to make your donation or FreeCall 1800 467 222.

Ukraine Appeal

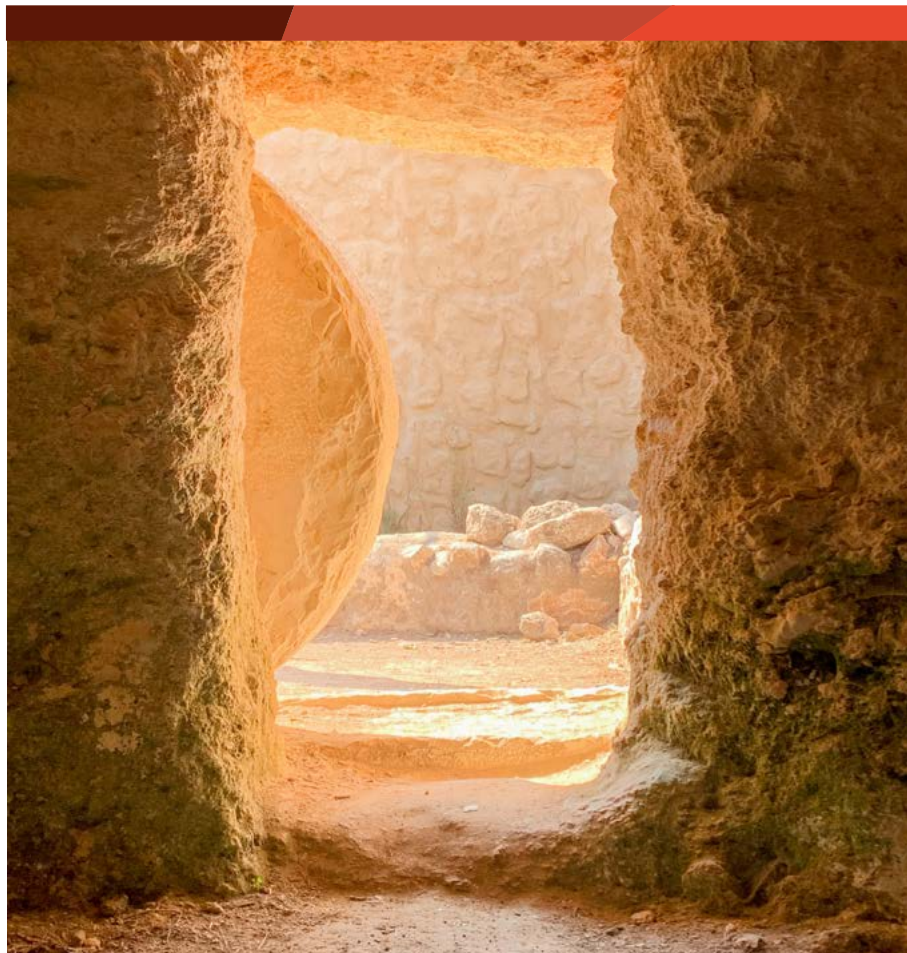
GMP launched an emergency appeal through Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance. Funds will be distributed through the Hungarian Interchurch Aid (HIA) who are well placed to offer humanitarian support. Total giving to date is \$46,883. Visit the GMP website or FreeCall 1800 467 222 to support the appeal further.

Pray for Ukraine

You can download a **Prayer for Ukraine** resource from the GMP website. We trust that this resource may help you express what is going on in the Ukraine and how our communities are processing that.

Farewell Tony and Francine Riches

A farewell service and celebration were held at the Footscray Church of Christ on February 27 for Tony and Francine Riches who have concluded their time in Melbourne and are returning 'home' to Perth to continue ministry with the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship and be a little closer to family. Pastor Tony and Francine have been in leadership of, and pivotal to, the Melbourne Indigenous Church and its continuing mission to the Indigenous communities in Victoria.



Live the Easter Story

Easter is a time to tell and retell stories. The story of Jesus and his betrayal, trial, sentencing, crucifixion, and resurrection, connects us to God and each other.

The stories we tell and share are important. Stories that are deeply personal, when shared and heard, enable us to feel more connected with the story and its teller. Communities have stories also. Such stories serve to remind the community of the highs and lows of their shared experience and how they are still connected or bound to each other.

As we embrace the forgiveness found in Jesus' death, so we live the Easter story.

As we tell the story we do so not because it is a good story to tell, rather we tell it because it is personal to us and shapes us. The Easter season engages us again in what makes being Christian so distinctive. Through Jesus' death, our sin is forgiven and through his resurrection, we have new life and strength to live as a Christian person.

Our identity as being part of a Christian community is centred in our personal response to the Easter story and our life together as the people of Jesus. Our personal response to Jesus is a point of connection or belonging in a faith community or church.

In such communities, we affirm our faith in, and our experience of, Jesus and his living presence with us. The Easter celebrations invite us to affirm our faith and our connection with each other in our common commitment to Jesus.

Beyond language, culture, and location we together follow Jesus. It does not matter what location we are in, the language we speak, or the cultural assumptions that are real to us. What matters is our knowing Jesus as Saviour and Lord of life, and our commitment to living our lives in the presence of Jesus.

John Gilmore
Executive Officer



SPOTLIGHT

Food provided by local churches in Vietnam, with your support through the COVID-19 Ministry Appeal

Going Deeper and Partner News

Each month our partners share their prayer and praise reports with us. We compile these into a public resource called Going Deeper. They also send through newsletters with more detailed information. Reading these updates is a good reminder of the many things to be thankful for globally. Prayer is also a great way to encourage and support our partners, projects, and those in their communities. Our partners have many things to be thankful for and praise God for. Here are three highlights from the Zimbabwe, Vietnam, and Vanuatu newsletters:

Khayelihle Children’s Village (KCV) in Zimbabwe thank God for their garden. It has flourished with potatoes, cabbages, tomatoes, cucumber, and carrots. The produce was sold to the market and the community around KCV. Vimbai Vuma, KCV Director, also says, “We thank God for His protection and blessings that none of our children have been infected by COVID-19.”

In Vietnam, the churches provided food for people in difficulty during the pandemic. A local leader says, “We give thanks to God for our brothers and sisters in Churches of

Christ in Australia who have always prayed, supported, and encouraged us to keep going. Because of that, we can get through the tough times.”

Londua School in Vanuatu has undergone, and is still completing, building repairs since returning to Ambae. The principal of the school, Philip Neyava, said, “Over these past 12 months there have been a lot of challenges, blessings, good times, strivings, and almost unbearable work.” Despite these challenges, they ended the year (2021) successfully. Mr Neyava said there was a mixture of “just everything good and bad.” He continues to thank God for the many teachers and administrative staff, trainers, and local pastors. As well as the various churches and individuals who have supported the ministry and specifically the rebuilding projects.

You can pray for GMP partners and read their Going Deeper praise reports under Get Involved and Further Resources on the GMP website. A link to download Partner Newsletters and Going Deeper can also be found at the bottom of the monthly In Partnership news email.



Above: Carrots and Tomatoes from the KCV Gardens, Zimbabwe.

Below: Electrical repairs at Londua School, Vanuatu





Join an embody Mission Community

An embody Mission Community is a year-long leadership development opportunity where a group of young leaders, who are committed to their local ministry contexts, regularly meet to talk mission, support one another, receive intentional one-on-one coaching, and grow as a disciple of Jesus.

Maddy Brown, from our 2021 Mission Community cohort says, “It was helpful to spend dedicated time each month to consider and think about what leadership is, and what comes with it.” Maddy was encouraged by the group sessions. “The connections you make throughout the year are so enriching.” The group sessions are

an important time to connect with people around the country. “Just listening to people share what they are doing was just so joyful to be a part of,” Maddy said. The one-to-one sessions helped Maddy keep track and focus on her individual project.

embody Mission Community is one way to involve young people in mission and justice work. It will help lay the groundwork for you and your young people to flourish.

Maddy says, “For me, leadership is something that I’ve witnessed and then grown into. To spend time thinking about it intentionally, and what it means to lead and be

a leader, was extremely helpful in moving forward in my own leadership development.”

“Connecting with people who are passionate about the same things as you is validating, affirming, and is a great way to stay motivated in the times where it is hard to stay motivated,” Maddy said.

Find out how to apply for our 2022 Mission Community online at www.embody.org.au/mc/application

If you have any questions, email Mitch at mitch@embody.org.au to start or continue a conversation.

NSW and QLD Flood Appeal Update

Global Mission Partners Extend, our entity for emergency responses in Australia, launched an appeal to assist, support, and meet the needs of those impacted by the severe weather and flooding in New South Wales and Queensland. As of April, over \$155,000 has been donated to the appeal.

Ian Phillips, Disaster Chaplain in Lismore, noted he was deeply moved by the camaraderie while witnessing emergency services, churches, and the general community rally together.

Ian says, “Churches exist in communities. We are partners in these communities. Irrespective of whether people have faith. As partners this is what we do. This is where the love of Christ shines.”

Thank you for your compassion and care for those in need. We greatly appreciate your partnership in these challenging times. GMP will also look to help support longer-term recovery efforts.

Find out more or give to the appeal at www.extend.org.au/floodsappeal



Lismore Flooded. Image by Ian Phillips