



## Following the road set out for us...

*"So now Israel, what do you think God expects from you? Just this: Live in His presence in holy reverence, follow the road He sets out for you, love Him, serve God, your God with everything you have in you, obey the commandments and regulations of God that I'm commanding you today – live a good life." Deuteronomy 10v12-13 (MSG)*

As another academic year draws to a close we look back over a year that has been anything but ordinary. God has been taking us on a journey which at times has been very, very hard and yet He has also been bringing His blessing to our lives. Even though the road He has "set out for us" has been anything but easy it is clear to see God's hand on what has been going on in us and around us. We are delighted to announce the birth of our fourth child, Jacob Luke who was born 6<sup>th</sup> May weighing 8lb 8oz. He arrived the day after Samuel had another overnight stay in hospital with bronchiolitis and if that were not enough Jacob was born with pneumonia and needed treatment in the Neonatal Unit at the Princess Anne Hospital for a week after he was born. We are pleased to say that we are all now home and enjoying time together as a family of six.

We have also been learning a lot about our capacity and about ourselves. Steve in particular has struggled with the adjustments brought about by our growing family and this time last year was feeling quite exhausted. The events of the summer and in particular the loss of our dear friend James Witham in Norway brought this to a head and we are pleased to say that this year has been much more manageable and we have been able to set a much more healthy and sustainable pace of life and ministry. There are of course frustrations associated with such adjustments (i.e. reduced capacity and therefore having to operate differently) but it is clear to see that God has still blessed the ministry around us and enabled us to labour more for the longer term.

For Debs this has been a particularly difficult year and you will remember that she took a step back from student ministry last autumn in order to recover from and work through some issues created by the events of last summer. She is now on maternity leave and enjoying time with each of our four lovely children. They continue to grow up fast! Benjamin (our red Power-Ranger) is still really enjoying and thriving in his Reception year at school. Naomi (who seems to have become a teenager-with-attitude already) is enjoying pre-school and ballet lessons. Samuel (our blonde Norwegian-like boy) is also doing well and potters around the house all day long with his toy vacuum cleaner. All of them seem to be really enjoying Jacob and are really sweet in how that they interact with him.

*"To encourage students to know, love and share Jesus Christ through purposeful, intentional and reproducible disciple-making as we share our lives together in community." SOTON NAVS Vision statement, Sept 2011*

*"To advance the gospel of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom into the nations through spiritual generations of labourers living and discipling among the lost" Worldwide Navigator Calling Statement*



## Plans for the summer...

Despite the best efforts of the British weather it cannot have escaped your notice that we are approaching summer time which for us means two things:

Firstly and more imminently it means finishing with the students and saying goodbyes to those moving on from the student ministry. This year we are saying goodbye to a handful of students (Lizzie, Mark, Kat & Johanna) and there are some key changes to our student ministry team. In particular we are saying goodbye in the student ministry to Dave Callaghan & Tim Peters. Both have been working with us as trainee Reps for the past 3-4 years and have been a huge blessing to many in the ministry. We trust that God will continue to use them in their new assignments and all of the opportunities that lie ahead of them. We also say goodbye to Márcio & Alessandra from Brazil who have been serving with us over the past year. They are moving to Portugal next month to start working with students there. Finally our good friend Ana Francisco-Garcia is finishing her PhD and moving to Warwick to start an accelerated degree in Medicine. We will miss having these great people and dear friends involved with us in the student ministry but we are excited about what God will do through them in their new contexts of ministry and spheres of influence. In their place God has provided some new student leaders to work with us (Naomi, Hugo, Tim and Abi) and Tom Feather (who graduates this summer) will be serving on the Connect programme.

Secondly the arrival of the summer means that we will once again be heading to Norway although this year it will be quite a bit later because we are now restricted to the school holidays. The trip will also head to France rather than Latvia and Dave Callaghan will be leading the team for that part of the trip. We give thanks for Beth, Stephen, Alasdair and Cat who have signed up for the trip and trust that God will use the trip deeply in their lives as we have seen with so many others in previous years. We are not planning on going to France and so will travel to Norway and meet the team there at the end of July. Full details of the trip are in the attached letter which also talks about how you can best pray and support us over the course of the trip. We have been working hard on the behind-the-scenes organisation of the trip and will be heavily involved in the second phase of the trip. Please do pray for us as a family as we set off on another adventure to Norway and seek to make the most of the opportunities God gives us with the team, with those coming to Discipleship week and with those in the local community of Skjolden. We realise it may not be easy going back after what happened last summer but we dearly love this place which has always been a place of deep refreshment and experiencing the LORD. Please pray that it would be so again for each of us and all who join us during this time.

### Please pray for us over the coming months:

Thank you so much for your prayers and/or financial gifts this past year, they really do make a big difference and we are so grateful for your partnership.

- Please do pray for us as we seek to finish well here in Southampton over the coming month and then gear up for our time in Norway (26 Jul to 27 Aug).
- Please pray too for our time as a family here in Southampton before we go to Norway; pray that we would continue to find a good rhythm of life as a family of six and enjoy a bit of downtime after a busy year of ministry together.
- Pray also for Steve as he works on plans for the autumn term with our ongoing student team over the next couple of months.
- We will be sending out regular e-mail updates during the summer programme; if you don't already receive them and would like to please let us know.

*To God be the Glory, All our love Steve, Debs, Benjamin, Naomi, Samuel & Jacob*

### Key dates:

**Sat 31 May**

Student BBQ – Final student event to mark end of the year

**Tues 3 Jun**

Graduate Leavers BBQ & “Life after Uni” Session

**Sun 8 Jun**

Student Team BBQ – Celebration, thank you & farewell

**Fri 20 Jun**

James Witham Memorial BBQ (exactly one year on)

**Tues 26 Jul - Wed 27 Aug**

McClure's in Norway

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