

## We were born to worship

From the moment God ordained our conception he was there forming us in our mother's womb, knitting us together and putting inside our hearts a desire for Him and His love. He gave us a longing for oneness with Him. We have one purpose in life and that is to give Him all the glory. We were not created to enjoy the creation. He did not give us life so that we could busy ourselves on earth for a few short years trying to find pleasure and leisure and entertainment. We had life breathed into us so that we could enjoy the one who created all this, so that we could find the only relationship that will ever satisfy. Without Him and intimacy with Him this life is an empty ache. We never feel satisfied, we never feel complete we always have this nagging feeling like we have not quite found what we are looking for. Jesus promised us life and life to the full, not just in eternity but right here. When we realize that life without Jesus is pointless then it is a great delight to give up everything in the pursuit of His loving presence. I would not want to be anywhere else. If you encounter Him who gives life then you know that nothing else feels like this because nothing else is what we were created for.

Our third daughter, Joy, was born at the end of 2016 and Jesus has taken her conception, growth and birth to reveal his glory. He is great and worthy to be exalted!

The fact that any human has children is an act of God. It is not a right but a decision made by Him. I fully believe that His will is good and perfect. The moment that we were told we could not have children was not one of great sadness but of faith that he knew best. For us, despite Laura's severe PCOS, we were pregnant with Phoebe in a month!!! It is easy to forget the miraculous nature of Jesus and not be continually grateful for who he is and what he has done. He reminded us after Joy was born. Laura went for her Gynecological check up and the consultant said, as she was scanning Laura's ovaries, "Oh, you should not be able to have children!"

Joy's conception was a miracle. Then at about 28 weeks the doctor detected that the baby's growth was stunted. She was not growing as she should. We had two weeks during which time, if she had not grown well the doctor would insist on getting the baby out! We asked our friends from all over the world to pray. When we went back the doctor did a scan again and said, "well this is a big baby!" Joy was born at home very quickly and it was a wonderful moment. That day at the hospital the paediatrician visited and said that Joy had an unusually high Thyroid Stimulating Hormone reading of 48 and it should be below 8. So he just casually asked us to go for another blood test in 4 days time. We prayed that everything would become normal.



After 4 days the level had come down significantly but was still above normal so he asked us to do another blood test in a weeks time. When we went for the third blood test Laura started to Google what all this was about and discovered that it was likely to be a fairly devastating genetic disorder. We had been in blissful ignorance up until then. Fear came rushing in the door and we had a battle for the next 24 hours to force that door shut. "Jesus, we will trust in you whatever the outcome." You know best. Eventually the doctor phoned to say that the TSH level was normal! Hallelujah. So this baby has already had three miracles and she is healthy and delightful!

It's a funny thing being pregnant! You know something is happening inside of you but you can't see it, you cant check part way through how things really are. If you have a sore arm you can feel the pain, you know if it is healing or getting worse, you know what movements harm it or help it, but pregnancy is blind! Jesus used it to speak to us about faith...

*1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the people of old received their commendation. 3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible  
(Hebrews 11:1-3 ESV)*

Many of you will remember that we have been fostering two young men, Mohau and Mzwakke. Mohau came to be with us off the streets and he has been with us eight months. He ran away just before Christmas and we have had very little contact since. It is quite difficult for all of us, especially the girls who miss him greatly and we have to fight fear and trust that Jesus holds him and loves him and will bring him to restoration. In loving Mohau and taking him into our hearts and home we have had to walk in the faith of believing that Jesus is at work even when we cannot always see it. He is the most wonderful young man and Jesus has such beautiful plans for Him and he is being transformed by love. But just like pregnancy these things can't be checked on! The work of the heart is not like the healing of a limb where it progresses along a path that can be checked or not. It is much more like ball room dancing a few steps forward and then some backwards and then quite a lot sideways with a spin thrown in! The healing of a heart requires a whole lot of love, a lot of time and most of all Faith!! Thankfully Jesus cares much more about people's hearts than us and he is so much better at healing them. And so we continue to hold Mohau out to Jesus and fight for faith for his heart's healing even when we cannot see!

#### *Chapter 12*

*1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God  
(Hebrews 12:1-2 ESV)*

Jesus is busy with us here in Bethlehem daily drawing us to his heart and showing us our constant need to lean on him and seek him with all our hearts. Monai has become a people who are used to His presence and He likes to turn up unannounced and do His beautiful thing amongst us. We are becoming increasingly expectant for what he is bringing us into. We just want to spend our lives worshipping!

We continue to serve the young people on the street and are trying to give them a stable, trustworthy and loving family in the midst of their chaotic lives.



In January we started a pre-school in the church building with the vision of providing a higher standard of foundational education so that the children get a substantial head start in schooling. It has been a lot of fun and already



the parents are noticing the difference. Please pray for supernatural learning and provision. We have felt Jesus tell us to trust him for the money so that we can serve the poorest families.

As the first newsletter of 2017, we want to thank you so much for your amazing support in praying for us, believing Jesus in us and encouraging us! We are really blessed by your love and passion for this wild adventure Jesus has put us on here in Africa!