

SPRING 2020

ECM LIFE

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION IRELAND
NEWSLETTER

EUROPE

IS NOT JUST A HOLIDAY DESTINATION.
IT'S A MISSION FIELD.



ECM Ireland is a
registered charity
no: 102665

ECM IRELAND

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION IRELAND
IS AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL,
EVANGELICAL, MISSIONARY ORGANISATION
WORKING IN EUROPE.

WE WANT TO SEE EUROPE



FULL OF CHURCHES FULL OF PEOPLE FULL OF JESUS

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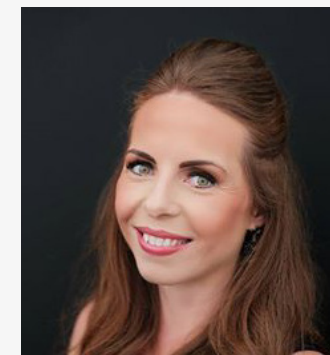
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DIRECTOR'S LETTER

LINDSAY MOORHEAD

As I write this letter, people all over the world are self-isolating and social distancing to prevent the spread of the Covid-19. Opportunities to travel are temporarily limited and the majority of flights have been cancelled or postponed. We don't know how long this is going to go on for so we thought, in this edition of ECM Life, we would bring you on a whistle stop tour of some of the most popular (and less popular) holiday destinations that our missionaries and national workers are ministering in, with the aim of fueling your prayers for the people of Europe, especially at this trying time.



Europe is the UK's favourite holiday destination and Spain tops the list of desirable destinations with nearly 16 million visitors last year*, followed by France and Italy. And no wonder it's so popular: travel to Europe from the UK is cheap and budget airlines make it relatively easy to get to as it's got its fair share of sunshine, long sandy beaches, trendy hotels, historic cities and lots of interesting places to visit.

Over the last 25 years we have seen an increase in holidaymakers travelling to destinations in Europe that, for a variety of reasons, we wouldn't have considered travelling to 25 years ago. For example, the Balkans war stopped many people visiting Croatia until its conclusion in 1995 but since then tourism rates have risen from 13,000 to almost 300,000 UK visitors each year*. Likewise, Slovenia has steadily emerged as a popular holiday destination with many

people ranking it as the most attractive destination in the world.

Now that we have moved into the 2020's, who knows where the next hot spot in Europe will be. What we do know is that ECM missionaries are very likely to be there, as we have been working in the most popular and the most unlikely holiday destinations since the inception of ECM in 1902. Our missionaries have gone to Europe, not because they wanted to see the world, or wanted to see the next fashionable destination, but because they felt called by God to reach Europe for Jesus. Please be praying for our missions' family, whether you have visited the country they work in or not. Pray for those who are blazing a trail into places where the Gospel still remains mostly unheard, and pray for yourself, that you will be salt and light to those around you at home and when you travel overseas in the future.

INTRODUCING SIMON MARSHALL

ECM'S NEW INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR



Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your family?

I am from Folkestone, England. My wife, Dorit is from the Faroe Islands. We have two children (Robert and Kristina) and five grandchildren - all of whom live in Exeter. We recently moved from Scotland to Taunton in the west of England. I enjoy reading and music. This won't make sense to most people - but I'm a great cricket fan.

How did you come to faith in Jesus?

I was raised in a Christian family and made a commitment when I was eight. Through my middle to late teens I went through a few difficult times with my faith. I really came to a better understanding of what following Jesus means when I was at the GLO training centre in Motherwell in 1980/81.

What are some specific things in your life that have shaped you into the leader you are today?

Firstly - the example of others, especially the Director at the school I worked in, in the Faroes for over nine years.

Secondly - mistakes I have made in the past, which I hope I have learned from.

Thirdly - the example of Paul as he sought to follow the example of Jesus. The recognition that to lead in Christian terms, is to commit to being ready to suffer - to live a crucified life.

Fourthly - an understanding that I do not have the answer to everything, but that God places us in groups of people who, together, he uses to bring about his purposes through the presence and power of his Spirit.

What prompted you to apply for the position of International Director?

That is a fairly long and complicated story, but in summary: Dorit and I had come to a moment when a few other things in our

lives and ministry were clearly drawing to a close. On one Saturday morning last Spring, we realised that we were in a position to make some changes, if we wanted to, and if the Lord desired it. So, I sat down at the computer and searched for jobs I might be able to do on the Global Connections website. The ECMI role was the first to appear. Having read it through, discussed it with a number of people and prayed about it, we decided that I should apply. It is a role which combines many things the Lord has laid on my heart over the years, not least the desire to see a growing number of Europeans becoming committed followers of Jesus.

What are you looking forward to about your new role?

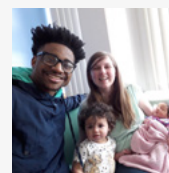
Meeting the people God is using to bring about his purposes on this continent. I get excited seeing how God uses us all, how he reaches others through us, and how the life of Jesus makes such a difference.

How can we be praying for you?

Please pray for wisdom as I settle into the role and discernment as to what needs to be done quickly, and what does not, and to remain dependent upon the Lord for his strength and guidance.

INTRODUCING EMILY JONES

ECM IRELAND'S NEW ADMINISTRATOR.



Emily Jones joined the ECM Ireland staff team at the beginning of December. She is currently on maternity leave with her second child - Jorji Jacinta Jones.

Emily, tell us a bit about yourself? My name is Emily Jones, I'm 28 and originally from Kilkeel but currently living in Richhill. I'm married to CJ and we have a one year old daughter called Lola and another daughter called Jorji who is only two months old. Jorji was born on the 28th February at 5.26pm weighing 6lb 6oz.

What did you do before this job?

I worked in Richhill Presbyterian Church for six years as their Youth and Children's

Worker. I was involved in all areas of church life and within the local community and schools. I also worked alongside Ambassadors Football, leading their girls football academy and I continue to do so.

What prompted you to apply for the position of ECM Ireland Administrator?

I have always had a passion for mission and, due to our expanding family, I wanted something that was a bit more flexible and allowed me quality time with family, whilst still being involved in ministry of some kind. CJ and I first got involved with ECM at the 2016 Biennial when we led the children's programme and we really enjoyed it as we got to learn more about the mission and got to know different missionary families too.

Please pray for Emily, CJ, Lola and Jorji.



WISH YOU WERE HERE

BY STUART ROWELL

I write a lot of postcards to supporters from Central and South East Europe but very few are from the tourist traps or qualify for the normal ‘Wish you were here’ status. However, I often wish people could see the people and places where God is working.

These are often small towns or villages that are off the beaten track and not visited by people on holiday. When I began visiting Sibiu in Romania in 1991, the only foreigners in the city were missionaries and aid workers. Now it is well and truly on the tourist brochures after being designated the European Cultural Capital in 2007.

Over the last few years, ECM Ireland has been involved in supporting an embryo church plant in Bugojno in Central Bosnia. This is where Radovan Trajkovski (an associate member with ECM Britain) is working. The town is predominantly Muslim

and was pulled apart during the war in the 1990's. On my first visit to meet Radovan, his wife Blazenka and their two sons Sasha and Vladimir in 1995, there was still plenty of evidence of the bitter fighting that had engulfed the country. There were houses riddled with bullet holes, ruined buildings everywhere and even a few burnt out tanks bedside the road. Twenty-five years later, very few people visit Bosnia as tourists, apart from the more adventurous, often on motor bikes. It is also one, if not the most, unevangelised country in Europe with a mere 300-400 believers. Humanly speaking, these are not only depressing

“In Albania, there are more born-again believing Christians than at any time in recent history.”

statistics but an exceptionally hard place to serve the Lord.

Apart from this doom and gloom, there are encouraging facts that have emerged in dark places like Bosnia. For instance, in Albania, there are more born-again believing Christians than at any time in recent history. In 1991 when communism collapsed, missionaries like Stephen Bell, who had been learning Albanian in Kosovo, waiting for that divine moment, crossed the border and began evangelising a totally unreached nation. The results of those initiatives, nearly thirty years later, are that there are evangelical churches in all the major towns and the same is also true to a lesser extent in Kosovo; our God is the God of Providence.

Further north, cities like Krakow in Poland are visited by thousands of tourists each year because of its architectural beauty and proximity to Auschwitz. Despite the spiritual darkness, church planters like Sasko and Ania Nezamutdinov are bright lights using many different opportunities to declare the grace of the Gospel.

Personally, I always like returning to Poland because it was here that God lit a flame in my heart for the eastern part of Europe when I had the privilege to smuggle Bibles in 1968 and 1969.




Slovenia too is well established now as a holiday destination and so many people from Ireland have been to Bled with its stunning lake, castle and island church.


Just down the road in Radovljica, Sebastian and Gloria Forjan are planting a new church after a long hard slog and I always enjoy visiting them and hearing their stories, most of which are about growing pains. Many tourists have walked the small streets of the capital Ljubljana, visited the castle and eaten in quaint restaurants, but less than 10 miles away is Domzale with an industrial past and well off the tourist's routes. Although it is so close to Ljubljana with a population of approximately 13,000, the town does not have a single evangelical church. Recently Goran Macura, who is mentioned in the next article, joined forces with American missionaries John and Katie Grasty in a new venture to plant a church there that will require faith, patience and perseverance.

These are a few of the places that I visit that qualify for my version of “Wish you were here” postcards. Most are church plants with small beginnings, but we have a combined confidence in what the Apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesian church plant in the 1st Century, as we pray to “...the God who can do exceedingly more than we can ask or imagine.” (Eph 3:20,21)


ECM IRELAND MISSIONS' FAMILY



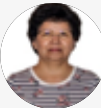
Stuart
(N. Ireland)




Lindsay
(N. Ireland)




Emily
(N. Ireland)

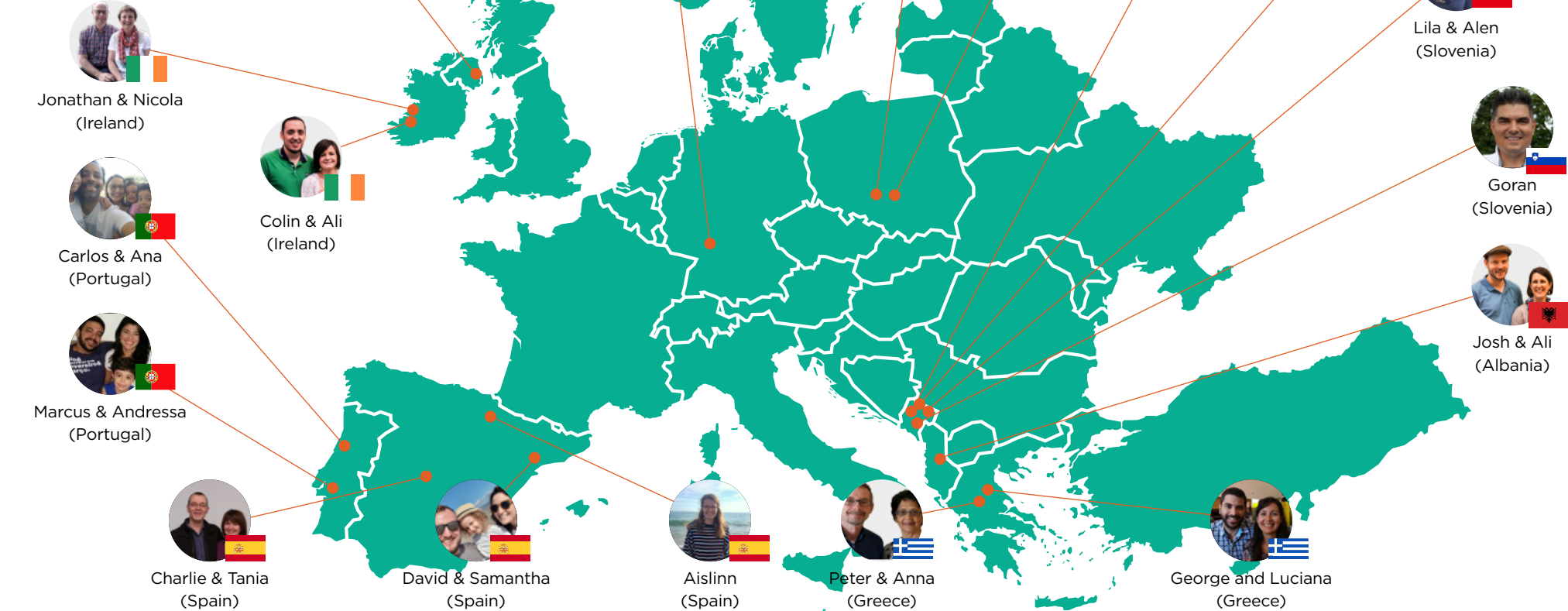


Lourdes
(N. Ireland)



Charlie & Miriam
(N. Ireland)







INTRODUCING GORAN MACURA

Goran became a member of ECM Ireland a few months ago. He is a national worker in his home country of Slovenia.



Slovenia has just started to establish its name as a popular holiday destination with its beautiful scenery, friendly people, rich history and culture. Whilst the percentage of tourists to Slovenia is increasing, the percentage of evangelical Christians in Slovenia is extremely low with only 0.1% of the population in Slovenia describing themselves as evangelical Christians and its main religion, like many other European countries, is Catholic, with a total of 73% Catholics living in Slovenia.

Goran would describe his life before meeting Jesus as a mess. He came from an unstable home, with lots of freedom at a young age. In his late teens, he became a drug addict

and he was in and out of prison for the next 10 years of his life. At 29, he finished his sentence at prison and then went into rehab in Croatia. It was when he was in rehab, that he heard about the Gospel of Jesus as he was encouraged to read John's gospel and by doing that, he came to know Jesus as his Lord and Saviour. After that, everything changed.

When he finished rehab, Goran felt called by God to go back to Slovenia, to share the Good News with his own community. When he returned home he started going to a nearby church in the city of Ljubljana, and this is where he met his wife Metka.

Goran and Metka both started working with CEF in Slovenia. They both loved working with children and sharing the Bible with them. Through this, families began to ask questions and were intrigued to know more. Out of this, God put a neighbouring town on their hearts to reach out to - the town of Domzale. Domzale has a population of 13,000 but it has no evangelical church and they only know of three other Christians who live there.

When witnessing in countries that are predominantly Catholic, like Slovenia, the main challenge is that you are sharing the Gospel with people who think they have already heard it. So how do you overcome this? Let us share with you how Goran is doing it.

As Goran walked the streets of Domzale, God spoke to him through 2 Chronicles 7:14 *'...if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.'*

"We want people to get to know the real, true, living and loving God."

The people of Domzale need to hear about Jesus and God has given Goran the vision and desire to share this Good News by planting a church there.

Goran says 'We want people to get to know the real, true, living and loving God. We want to see people have a relationship with Him and we believe God has the power to transform this town for His glory. Currently Metka is doing a Good News Club and we are holding a Bible study group with the long term vision of planting a church here.' Planting a church in Slovenia can take time, but whilst Goran is waiting on the funding and the people to start this church, he is working in a restaurant across the road from where the church is going to be established. There he builds relationships and lets people know that he is a Christian and follower of Jesus. People are already asking questions and wondering what is different about Goran. Goran hopes and prays that the church will be populated with the people he meets through the restaurant.

Please pray for Goran, and his family. Pray that God would bring in the funds and the people needed to establish this church in Domzale, and that Goran would build really good relationships with those he works with and serves in the restaurant.



NOT JUST A HOLIDAY DESTINATION

Spain is one of the UK's top holiday destinations, but did you know that it has only 2% evangelical Christians living there? Next time you go on holiday to Spain, consider visiting a local church, connect up with a missionary who is working there and pray for those who live there.

Despite the low amount of evangelical Christians in Spain, God is at work in and through His people. Aislinn Duffy, works for GBU (Grupos Biblicos Unidos) in Spain and her main role is to disciple students, so that they disciple those around them.



REVIVE OUR HEARTS, REVIVE OUR UNIVERSITIES, REVIVE EUROPE

BY AISLINN DUFFY

Over the New Year, I accompanied 230 students from Spain to an IFES Europe Conference called REVIVE. In total there were 3,000 students representing 68 different countries. We came together to celebrate the New Year and to ask God to revive our hearts, revive our universities and revive Europe.

In preparation for the conference, different European countries were featured each week. As we prayed for them, it was very humbling to see the low number of Evangelical Christians in many countries. For the people living in the UK, Spain is often just seen as a holiday destination, but it is also a mission field and it is where God has led me. From a young age, He placed in me a burden for Spain and a passion to see this beautiful country transformed by the Gospel.

Although Spain is considered a Catholic country, the reality is that it is becoming increasingly more secular, especially in cities like Madrid or Barcelona. Students are indifferent about God, faith or religion in general, and this brings challenges of how to spark curiosity and interest about Christianity. However, amid this indifference among the university population, one of the

standout moments for me at REVIVE was on the last day when the 230 participants from Spain gathered to pray that the Gospel would make an impact in their country. It brought tears to my eyes as I thought about the potential of what God could do through these young people as they lifted up their individual contexts, university campuses, friendship groups, families and cities to God.

It is through His grace that God chooses to use us in His mission. It is my prayer that we remember this and go where He leads us, whether that's to our friends at university, the neighbours in our street, or further afield to a European country. May we make the most of the opportunities God gives us every day and boldly step out in faith to share what He has done in our lives. May God revive Europe.



INTRODUCING LUCIANA OLIVEIRA & GEORGE CHRISTOFORIDES



Luciana and George Christoforides are working in Greece and are ECM Ireland's newest members.

Greece has 0.4% evangelical Christians, in fact, religion in Greece is dominated by the Greek Orthodox Church, which represents 90% of the total population.

George and Luciana, tell us about your background and the work you are currently involved in?

George: I was born and raised in Cyprus. I have been living in Greece for a total of twelve years, where I also did my computer network studies for five of those years. Shortly after, it was clear to me that God was calling me to stay in Greece instead of returning home and to make myself available to what He had in store for me here. I decided to take the one-year program of Theology at the Greek Bible College, which led me to be involved in the mission field in Athens.

During that time, I started attending a local church plant, Syntrofia (meaning 'Fellowship'), serving as a youth leader and for the past four years I have been directing our four annual church camps. I am currently working as an IT Administrator for a global ministry named Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel (or AMG International). I cover the technical needs of our headquarters (Cosmovision Center), our two community centers, our accounting office and our Logos Bookstore in Athens. I often help other ministries with the design and implementation of their network and give consultation on future deployments.

Luciana: I was born in Brazil and raised in Portugal. I studied Social Education and during my university years, I was active with the local Christian student union GBU (IFES in Portugal) which led me to go on a mission trip to Hungary, where I served with the Hungarian Christian student union and where I first met George. Soon after that, I returned to Brazil to continue my studies



in Social Anthropology. After obtaining my degree, I got a work placement in Northern Ireland and attended Crescent Church in Belfast. During my time in Northern Ireland I served in various outreaches.

Four years ago, I started feeling a burden to quit my job and serve God in full-time ministry. He called me to Greece and opened the doors to serve the Roma people by using my experience and the knowledge acquired from my studies in the mission field. Currently, I coordinate one of the projects of Hellenic Ministries (Greece) called "Petalouda Educational Center". This centre serves the needs of the Roma people (the largest ethnic minority group in Greece) through a Christ-centered educational program.

How did you get involved with ECM?

Our connection with ECM started at the European Leadership Forum in Poland after meeting Peter and Anna Crawford who are ECM Ireland missionaries serving in Portugal. Since then, we have been receiving member care and mentoring from them and have been greatly encouraged. We are both so grateful that the opportunity of becoming ECM Ireland Associate Members came up, as we can be part of a global prayer network and ministry family, through which we can serve and witness to people here in Greece.

ADAPTING TO LIFE DOWN UNDER



Bostjan and Lidija Cifer are working with ECM Ireland in Slovenia, but are currently doing a one year apprenticeship with AFES in Australia.



We moved to Australia in November to be involved with the student organisation AFES (Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students).

A week after we arrived, we attended the NTE (National Training Event) Student Conference. We had the opportunity to share about Slovenia and our student ministry. It was a joy and privilege to meet new people and enjoy fellowship with more than 1800 students (which is the approximate number of Evangelical Christians in Slovenia).

After the conference we had a month to adapt to life 'Down Under'. At times we were worried about the bushfires raging around Sydney but despite this, we enjoyed the opportunity to rest on nearby beaches and enjoy the beauties of the surrounding countryside. This helped us to adapt to a new culture and way of living. We haven't started working full time yet because of the summer holidays here. We have spent

the last few months observing different churches and student movements and already can see how well they are organised and developing. This is encouraging because ultimately it helps with evangelism, which is the main purpose of ministry.

Both of us have been amazed by the maturity of believers and their zeal to preach the Gospel. When we meet with other believers, their focus is on sharing the Gospel. We hear many stories of how God has changed individual lives through the preaching of His Word. In Slovenia, we don't have the same opportunity to be involved with many encouraging things like good training and fellowship with others. We can easily lose our focus and just try to survive as Christians. We hope and pray that we can bring back some of this enthusiasm to Slovenia.

Our prayer for this year is that God will shape and mould us, so that we will be an encouragement to believers in Slovenia, just like Australian believers are to us.

THERE ARE NO IMPOSSIBILITIES



'Our prayers go where we cannot (although they are not a substitute for our going when we can). There are no borders, no prison walls, no doors that are closed when we pray. The political, economic, military and spiritual leaders of the world may not know our names, but we can have more influence on their plans than all of the closest advisers put together. While many things may seem impossible, from a human standpoint, in the realm of prayer there are no impossibilities.'

'Prayer: The Real Battle' by Brother Andrew and Al Janssen

Prayer is a huge part of our lives as Christians. Ephesians 6:18 tells us to "Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."

Continued....



As we think about the work God is doing in our world and the workers He has called to serve Him, prayer must be the foundation of all that we do. Here in Northern Ireland, we have a number of prayer groups that meet every month to pray for the work and workers of ECM. The groups are located in Bangor, Broughshane, East Belfast and Sixmilecross

Just recently we received a number of old records from our Dundonald Prayer Group (currently East Belfast) which dates back to 1967. The group celebrated its 52nd anniversary in December 2019. We cannot highlight enough the importance of these prayer groups – for the many prayers that have been prayed over the years and the generous contributions they have made towards the work of ECM.

Your prayers are pivotal in helping missionaries and ministries to be established, to flourish and to develop.

Audrey McIvor, one of ECM Ireland's Council Members recently started an ECM Prayer Group in Bangor and here she explains what happens at a typical evening together.

The Bangor ECM Prayer group started meeting together in September 2019 and it meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7.45pm. For the first 15 minutes, we spend time chatting and catching up over a cup of tea. We then have the privilege of listening to various members of our mission family share about their work and points for prayer. We like to give them 30-40 minutes to share with us about their situations and then we spend time in prayer for them. We then share any information we have about other members of our ECM family and spend another time of prayer for them. We aim to finish around 9.30pm.

We find it an enormous privilege to stand with our brothers and sisters serving Christ in the work in Europe and to be a part of what the Lord is doing in these days.

LEAVING A LEGACY



If you are willing to leave a gift to ECM in your will, there are three main ways to do so:

1. Residuary gift:

a share (or all) of what remains of the value of your estate once your family and friends have been dealt with. This has the advantage of staying the same over time and therefore your will won't need to change to keep up with inflation.

2. Pecuniary gift:

a specific amount of money.

3. Specific gift:

a named item such as a piece of art or jewellery.

If you want to leave a gift to ECM, or want to know more about doing so, please tick the appropriate box on the response form.

Thank you for investing in ongoing ministry in Europe!

GIVING TO ECM IRELAND

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Please send me:

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ECM Life regularly | <input type="checkbox"/> post | <input type="checkbox"/> email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ECM's monthly prayer diary | <input type="checkbox"/> post | <input type="checkbox"/> email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eurolink (ECM Ireland monthly prayer resource) | <input type="checkbox"/> post | <input type="checkbox"/> email |

SINGLE GIFT PAYMENT

- ☐ £15 ☐ £30 ☐ £50 ☐ Other £ _____
- ☐ For use where most needed: _____
- ☐ Towards the work of: _____

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to ECM Ireland

Alternatively, I authorise you to debit my (please tick)

☐ Visa ☐ Maestro ☐ Mastercard for the above amount.

Card no:

Issue date: / Expiry date: /

Issue no: Security code:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

You can also donate on line www.ecmireland.org/give

☐ I do not require an acknowledgment.

GIFT AID DECLARATION

☐ I wish ECM to reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give, or have given in the last four years, until further notice. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.

Full name: _____

Date: _____

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REGULAR GIVING

- ☐ For use where most needed:
☐ Towards the work of:

STANDING ORDER DETAILS

Bank name:

Bank address:

Postcode:

Account holder:

Account no:

Sort code: - -

Please deduct (amount in words) _____ pounds
from my account on / / **and then each**

☐ **Month** ☐ **Quarter** ☐ **Year (tick one)** until further notice.

This standing order (tick as appropriate)...

- ☐ Replaces
☐ Does not replace an existing standing order to ECM

Pay this sum to: European Christian Mission Ireland

A/C: 40615008 Sort Code: 98 09 60

Ballymacoss Avenue, Lisburn BT28 2GX

You can also donate on line www.ecmireland.org/give

For bank use only: Paying bank please ensure all backdated payments are made and the following reference number is quoted with all payments.

LEGACY GIVING

- ☐ I have included ECM in my will.
☐ I would like to consider including ECM in my will.

GIFT AID DECLARATION

☐ I wish ECM to reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give, or have given in the last four years, until further notice. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.

Full name:

Date:

PRAYER



Thank God for:

- Emily Jones, Goran Macura, Luciana Oliveira and George Christoforides joining the ECM Ireland Missions' Family.
- Many opportunities open-ing for prayer, even though Europe is in 'shut down' with Covid-19.

Pray for:

- Simon Marshall as he begins his new role as International Director.
- Summer teams—many may have to be cancelled.
- Creative and practical ways to reach into our communities during this difficult time.



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