

Cutting Christmas Letter 2013

Dear friends,

So much has happened during this past year that the task of putting it into a Christmas letter seems impossible. Last year we were so unexpectedly and sufficiently overwhelmed as to not write a letter at all. However, we would like to keep in touch and so even a brief letter seems worth a try!



Alastair's installation, with Archdeacon Jane Steen and Bishop of Southwark, Christopher Chessun

Just before Christmas 2012, **Alastair** was approached by the Bishop of Southwark and asked to take on the role of *Archdeacon of Lewisham & Greenwich* in South-East London. After much cautious consideration, we felt called to accept this gracious invitation. Leaving the parish in Henfield, the Diocese of Chichester, and Sussex after 17 years, was great wrench. Alastair started the new job in April; however housing was complicated, and we eventually moved at the end of May 2013 (address below.) It has been a difficult period of adjustment for each of us, for many unforeseen reasons, but we are grateful for so many blessings in the midst of it all.



Laura, Kay & Alastair in St Malo in August

Hannah and Laura are blessed to have all 4 grandparents still in reasonable health – and we try to see them as often as we can, although we are discovering that travelling anywhere through London traffic takes at least 3 times longer than one might expect. **Kay's** commute to her new job this term, whilst only being 8.8 miles, has taken significantly over an hour each way and is impossible by public transport. The job also has not worked out as hoped and so Kay resigned after only 7 weeks and finishes at Christmas – starting a new teaching job closer to home in January. It has been a stressful term and the Christmas break will be very welcome - even if only to try and continue with some work on her Masters degree.

Alastair works even more hours than before, which some of you will find hard to believe! He does get a little sleep, and we do try to take things more slowly on Fridays, our day off. It has been great to find the church growing in so many places, and he enjoys working closely with the Bishop of Woolwich, Michael Ipgrave and Archdeacon Jane Steen; but being 'venerable' still feels strange, as does being in an office most of the week, and at different churches each weekend, with differing responsibilities.

Kay has also visited several local churches and is gradually settling into a routine. She discovered one local church with both a member of clergy who works full time in an SLD school and also a contact to a project with deaf people in Tanzania...



Eric, Laura, Jean & Hannah



Alastair (with Dorcas Uduku), William & Margot



Hannah, Laura, Kay & Alastair

Laura finished her degree in Deaf Studies (BSc) this year and graduated in July. In her final year her studies were focused on sign language interpreting - the profession she wishes to enter. She really loved the course and the last three years in Bristol have been beneficial both educationally and personally.

Hannah left her job at Lloyds in Haywards Heath after we moved, but found that though London undoubtedly holds more opportunity for graduates, the competition is equally increased! After a quiet summer that included a much needed jaunt to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, she had a brilliant time working as an unpaid intern for a TV production company discovering what 'cable bashing' means and that camera operation is rather fun. She has recently started a paid job as office manager for *Twig World Ltd*, a company making educational short films and learning resources for schools. We love the fact that she currently lives at home and she loves living eight minutes from a train station, even if she misses the river at Henfield.

Laura's most recent adventure has found her traveling through Africa and South-East Asia meeting and working with Deaf communities. She is currently in Tanzania (after Ghana, Namibia, Zambia & Zimbabwe) and working in a deaf-staffed kitchen at *Neema Crafts*. Her remaining travels will take her to Malawi, Kenya, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. You can follow her journey at www.lauracutting.wordpress.com.



Hannah, Laura & Kay at Heathrow, with a single rucksack for the year!

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Laura, with Lisa, at the DEAAF project



At Victoria Falls