



Good afternoon from a damp and rainy Sheffield!

Thank you for bearing with us and our lack of communication over the last few months. And thank you to those of you who have emailed to see how we're doing.

We've now been back in the UK for three months. It's felt pretty chaotic at times but we are heading towards being settled here in Sheffield.

Thank you for your prayers regarding the boys' school places. We came straight up to Sheffield when we first arrived back in the UK and after visiting the different areas of the city, we felt that God was guiding us to be based in a particular area in the Northwest of Sheffield. We visited the 5 local schools with the boys, applied to the council and left the rest in God's hands.

We had to wait until the middle of August to hear, as the majority of the local schools are oversubscribed. The boys were all given places in a school which turns out to be just around the corner from the house we're hoping to move into in a few weeks. We put the offer in on the house before we found out about school places and it feels that God had both of these specific places prepared for us in advance.

It's been a fairly turbulent time, as we've been processing our return to the UK whilst living out of suitcases, staying in different people's houses over the last few months. We're incredibly thankful for the different places we've been able

to stay in – it's not easy fitting in 7 extra people and the children have generally coped well with the various moves.



A Bunch of Emotions

We've all felt different emotions at different times. For some of us the main emotion has been relief to be back, to spend time with family and appreciate being back in a familiar culture where we are not 'outsiders'. Others of us have felt mainly deep grief and sadness for the people and culture we've left behind and have found things about being back in our home culture overwhelming at times. For all of us there has been a mixture of emotions and we've all felt the absence of local friends as we process these feelings in a new city.

The boys have generally settled into school very well. After keenly anticipating returning to school over the summer months, Ezra has felt a little disappointed by the reality and he and Eli have both been reminiscing on the relative freedoms of home school in Arua (I have also reminded them of the daily battles to do the work, that they have of course forgotten).

The school staff have been wonderful in welcoming the boys and we're very thankful for where God has placed them. Ezra has been struggling to find peers in his class though and so we're praying he'd be able to make strong friendships elsewhere in the community, as he has always really valued having a few deeper friendships.

Tom has been working part-time as a GP for a month now. He's enjoying the

challenge of returning to GP work in this country and has been getting to know the staff and systems in his local practice. Pray for him as he returns to the complexities of the job after a significant amount of time out of the system.

Verity and Amara are slowly working out how to do life at a very different pace, without the boys around. It felt like a big loss when they all went off to school at the same time and we're profoundly grateful for the chance to have spent so much time with them over the last few years. Having 5 children around 24/7 was, of course, hard work and it wasn't always easy to appreciate this privilege. We are, however, very thankful to have been on this journey with God as a family and to get to know and understand their individual characters so well.

Trust in the Lord with all your Heart

We think we may have decided on a local church to join and look forward to settling in, once we properly move in to the area. In the meantime, we are booking in church visits to our supporting churches. Unfortunately, as we've moved three hours north of where we were previously based, some of our churches are a lot further away than they used to be. We'd love to still send a video or join a service online if we can't visit in person, so please get in touch if you are from one of our supporting churches and we haven't yet contacted you.

Thank you once again for your continued prayers and support in this time of transition. We feel like we are heading towards getting settled as we hope to move into our house this month. We have a lot of processing to do in terms of thinking over our time in Uganda and our return this summer. We haven't felt like we've had capacity to do this yet, mainly focussing on finding accommodation, starting school and work and trying to occupy and support the children through the various changes. We're hoping that as things settle down, we can find time to do this properly.

*⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;*

*⁶ in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.*

Proverbs 3:5-6

Throughout this time of transition, we have very strongly felt God's guiding, comforting and sustaining presence. It's been a good opportunity to explore, as a family, how we trust God for his guidance and provision, making sure He is at the centre of our various decisions about where to live, work, study and worship. The relative instability of our life over the last few years has deepened our reliance on God and our need to surrender all parts of our life to him. We're incredibly grateful for all that we've learned in doing this and we're praying that this awareness would not be lost, as we become more settled and busy with life here.



We officially finish with CMS at the end of the year and we're very grateful for their continued support over this time. We'll be in touch again before then but for now we wanted to reiterate our thanks to you all for journeying with us on this adventure with God.

Blessings,

Verity, Tom, Ezra, Eli, Simeon, Joel and Amara

