

Living Stones Newsletter

18-01-2021

“Enlarge the site of your tent, and let your tent curtains be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your ropes, and drive your pegs deep” Isaiah 54:2



Dear Friends, Greetings in Jesus' mighty name. As we look back at 2020 it was the year of setback and uncertainty for the whole world due to pandemic. Life in normal days is uncertain in Pakistan but we thank God that He kept us alive and has given us more time to serve here. As my whole family had symptoms of Covid19 we looked around there was no hope for us physically: no hospitals, no medical care and no vaccine so there was hopelessness surrounding us. Those who were diagnosed with Covid19 were untouchables and treated like lepers. So during symptoms we prepared ourselves as family that if our time has come we would prefer to die at home instead of exposing ourselves to the hospitals or doctors who had already given up so being alive is not less than a miracle for us.

As the New Year starts once again we are raising our hopes and praying that God will richly bless us during this year. We are praying that this will be a year of God's favor. Isaiah 61



Schools Re-opening: The schools are reopening in phases from 18th of January. We have so many questions to answer and hurdles to overcome. The school was closed almost for the whole year. Our new academic year starts from 12th of March so how can we promote students when they have not studied. Students of commercial private schools get a lot of help in their studies from their parents or they have private tuitions and have laptops to take online classes but our students are deprived of all these facilities and over and above they are the first ones in their generations to get to get education, live below the poverty line so cannot imagine to have tuitions so practically one whole year is wasted.

Radical steps for School: We have decided to **work on war basis** and the school hours are extended (**7:45AM to 4:00PM**) and we are asking students to **bring lunch with them** as they come. The **final exams are shifted from February to April** and new **session starts in the end of April instead of March** which means that first term will be extended and our school will not be closed for summer vacations in the beginning of June. The school board has decided to reduce the syllabus to 50% and the **topics which are extremely important will be covered**. Since it is too cold and children do not have proper uniform (we used to provide shoes and jumpers as Christmas gift which we were not able to do so for the last two years as we are barely surviving) so for these days we are advising students to **cover themselves and wear warm clothes** and lifted uniform restrictions. **I request you all please especially pray for this as the whole team has to do extra efforts and work very hard to meet this challenge.**



Christmas celebrations in the Church: Christmas (where we are) feels more real and close to the first Christmas.

People are very poor and do not have enough to meet their needs or do the shopping, armed guards reminds us of Herod trying to kill baby Jesus, people who are poor, homeless, hungry and deprived of even warm clothes remind of Jesus who became homeless, born in the manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes. Real Christmas was never a commercial festival but reminds us of God's greatest gift for this world so in spite of all the crises we have done our level best to give away whatever we could. Women of our church collected clothes from the families and went in different villages to do the distribution among the poor.

Update on the court cases: I am so grateful for continues prayers and support for all the legal matters. Our judicial system is so slow and embarrassing that often people die or become bankrupt waiting for justice. I did not want to keep pushing and highlighting our legal battles as I felt that it could be very tiring and frustrating for you. The cases are still going on but now we have passed the speedy rough waters and entered in calm and smooth waters. God is good and He will vindicate us at the right time and these battles will be over one day. We lifting our eyes from this world and looking to God for justice.



Living Stones Amrat Nagar Branch: We are overjoyed to share how God is enabling us to build another branch of Living Stones School in village 133 Amrat Nagar (water of life). We started with Okara branch in 2008 and I heard God speaking into my heart in 2019 from Isaiah 54:2, "Enlarge the site of your tent, and let your tent curtains be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your ropes, and drive your pegs deep. So God fulfilled His word and enabled us to acquire land in this village. To this day we do not have any regular support how to run this school but to start building it was an act of obedience. Friends, we have not wasted any resource at all but one step a time and in phases we have almost completed 7 class rooms and 3 admin rooms (total 10). Now only three jobs (building the toilets, grinding and polishing the floors and making the roof water tight) is the work pending for which we need 10K USD or 7300 Pounds after which we will be able to start the school. After completing ground floor we aim to build principals accommodation on top of admin block. We want to appoint and shift the principal from here which will be helpful in keeping the standard of education and building will also be looked after properly. We still do not know how to run it but this is faith journey and looking at previous years of how God provided I believe He will do a miracle once again in our lives. These poor persecuted Christian do not have any hope in life except to work as laborers in the fields of Muslims or as bond servants at bricks kiln. I am sending links of two stories about the fate of these bond servants and how they are treated.

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2014/11/pakistani-christian-couple-brutally-killed-by-mob-for-alleged-blasphemy/>

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/764544-couple-killed-at-brick-kiln-in-di-khan>

God has given us a dream to transform the lives of Christians by providing education and I want to establish network of schools in all villages where Christians are living in majority. Land is very expensive in Pakistan and prices are rocketing since there is no control over population (family planning is illegal in Islam) so if God gives us resources we want to acquire properties in other villages so we can build schools and churches at God's timing.

To Support Living Stones please Contact our friends: Teresa and Mike Martin: tmmartin@live.co.uk

Pastor Waqas Moazzam. wmlivingstones159@gmail.com

On-line donations via Stewardship: www.give.net/20191655