

Normanton - Moore News

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Dear friends,

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An early Christmas letter, to let you know that we are finishing our ministry in Normanton on 7th December. After back surgery last year, despite being very careful, it seems there is more damage with nerve compression again (ie.back pain and numbness down his leg). The CT scan report was not sure whether this is from scar tissue following the surgery or further prolapse of the disc and recommends a MRI. John will see a specialist back in Toowoomba. Anyway, whatever the cause, he needs to slow down or as a friend bluntly put it "be carried out in a box"?! So we have chosen the first option!!!

We will head back to Toowoomba to start with for a time of rest for us all. I will then go back to work mid-January (if they will have me) and re-skill...I am feeling very out of touch after 5 years away. Mind you I was called to the hospital with only 5 minutes notice for a 5 week premmie delivery about 8 weeks ago. The only other midwife in town was away! A bit scary but thank God all was OK - I had to look after the baby for 3 hours until the flying doctor arrived. "Funny" that this happened only a couple of days after John and I had seriously talked out it being time to go. I have always been "on call" when the other midwife was away but had never been needed before. It was as if God was saying to me "Wendy, you'll be OK back at work".

At this stage we won't be putting our roots down too deeply while we wait and see what and where God wants us in the future. After talking various options we have decided to squeeze back into our little two bedroom house..how spoilt we have been with this huge 4 bedroom house. And to make the move even harder, our Toowoomba church has just blessed us with a brand new kitchen here. Materialistic Wendy, I had also put up new curtains in a few rooms and friends painted the girls' room with a hot pink feature wall to make the house "mine"...

The girls are thrilled to be going back to Toowoomba - to be closer to their cousins and grandparents as well as some friends they have kept in touch with. John and I are still in mixed emotions - sad to be leaving our beautiful church family as well as the wider community who we love. I won't miss the summer heat though! We know it is time to leave, but are having trouble "letting go". We have seen so much spiritual growth and maturity in some of the members this year and praise God for them. The ladies' ministry and outreach has really taken off. And we have rejoiced as a couple who had been away from fellowship for some time have come back and seem to be going well. At the same time though, it has been a super tough year for us with our hearts aching over some of our church folk being caught up in the ways of the world again. One couple in particular, who we thought had great leadership potential. An even worse pain for us also was that we unintentionally hurt one of our church elders and he has left the church despite our apology.

Blessings come in all sorts of packages and from the most unexpected places though! For the last couple of weeks we have had someone come and do the garden for us "off the street" and just for a few cups of coffee a day in return (Of course I seem to be able to find a meal or two as well)! Kevin has been around Normanton a couple of years, lives in the bushland just out of town and no-one knows his background really. He is obviously a smart fellow but has had some sort of mental illness or damage. He doesn't say much (though is starting to talk a bit to John), but boy he is working hard and the grounds are looking loved again - so the whole church is thanking God for him. He even sat in church to listen for a little while last week!

At this stage there is no-one to automatically replace us. Lyle and Hazel will do some relief work, but the people really need someone here full time to continue in the teaching and discipling begun. Please pray with us for the right family to fill this house and this ministry - for God's glory.

Considering we only signed a 3 year contract, 5 years is not bad though and we have certainly grown (in more ways than one?) from our time here. I have always said to anyone visiting that I feel so privileged to have come to Normanton. The Aboriginal people have accepted us in a way that I don't see happen to other newcomers. We are privileged to have been able to share and learn something of a culture we knew nothing of. We are privileged to have served God's people in Normanton. And we are privileged because you support - thankyou for journeying with us.

In Christ's service,

John, Wendy, Cassandra, Isabelle and Jasmine