

Dear Prayer Intercessors,

We hope you all are doing well and enjoying your spring! As I'm sure you saw in the news, we celebrated the **Queen's Jubilee** this past weekend. There were street parties and parades and many other festivities to celebrate her 70 years on the throne. It was moving and humbling to think that we have had a chance to live and work in a nation with an operating monarch who has a personal relationship with the Lord!

In our last update we asked for prayer on a number of fronts and we wanted to thank you for your faithful intercession which has borne fruit! **A few quick updates:** we had a lively conversation at our last Socratic Happy Hour (photo attached), David completed his two talks on his research (they went fine, but not as well as David had hoped; see below for a fuller update), we've had some great Monday evening meetings for the Graduate Christian Forum (GCF) with wonderful interviews of professors like Tom Simpson (Philosophy and Public Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government), Anthony Reddie (Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture), and Cathy Ross (leader of the Pioneer Mission Leadership Training Centre for Church Mission Society), etc. We've also continued to have lots of opportunities for pastoral care among graduate students as they prepare for summer transitions or graduation.

A few more specific prayer requests from us:

**Welcome Week Planning Meeting:** We would greatly appreciate your prayers for a planning meeting we have coming up on the **21st of June** when David and I will be gathering our 10+ church and ministry partners to plan for this coming autumn's welcome week for incoming graduate students. Please pray that we would have **good attendance, strong buy-in, and that there would be enough volunteers and resources post-COVID** to support a robust line-up of events to welcome new students well.

**Graduate Christian Forum (GCF) Planning Retreat:** We would love your prayers as David and I lead our latest GCF leadership committee through an all-day planning retreat on the **22nd of June**. Please pray for the Lord to bless our time in fellowship, for us to use our time efficiently and effectively, and also that the team would have the capacity this summer to work ahead on the things that would benefit from long-range planning. We're also going to be encouraging each member to choose an area for personal leadership or spiritual growth for the coming year, so please pray for **open, humble hearts and for good accountability**.

**An Upcoming Event: Loving Attention, How can we live well in a distracted world?:** We're helping host a roundtable event coming up on **19th of June**. Inspired by Stella Aldwinkle, a former Oxford Pastorate Chaplain and the founder of the Socratic Club that C.S. Lewis presided over, we want to create a space for socratic conversation to draw those of different faiths or no faith into conversation. As we become increasingly aware of the problems of an attention economy and our own distractibility, what does it mean to pay attention? What is the value of attention? Professor Anil Gomes (Philosophy) will be giving a short talk followed by brief comments from Kate Kirkpatrick (Philosophy and Christian Ethics). Please pray for **good attendance and for thoughtful conversation that would lead to relationships and ultimately, opportunities for Christian witness**.

**Faculty, Dads, and Mental Health:** David has had opportunities to connect with other dads at drop off at nursery, several of whom are faculty members. Please do pray for some follow up coffee meetings he's had. There's one particularly heartbreaking situation of a father, a former researcher in archaeology

who has a dire degenerative medical condition. His wife, also a researcher at the university, overwhelmed by his condition and motherhood and the strains of early-career academic life, recently left him and their two small children. He's walked away from his faith and resents God, but he likes David and they have started meeting up in the mornings. Obviously, we're praying for his healing on multiple levels, for his children, and for the mending of his marriage. Also, please pray for Alissa as she continues to meet with a number of students with mental health needs. We're grateful for all the many services and support systems the university and our church provides, but we long to see ultimate healing and breakthrough that we know the Lord can provide.

**David's Research & Writing:** We humbly ask for continued prayers for David's writing and research! These past few weeks David had the opportunity to give two talks on his research. The first one was well received and got good feedback. The second presentation was polished and the presentation itself went smoothly. But David felt like the Q&A went off the rails and was discouraged because he didn't have the answers that this audience wanted at his fingertips, even though some of his other research has started to delve into the areas they were asking about. All this to say, it's been hard to continue to press into the writing while feeling a bit dispirited and very, very tired (...a dissertation is a marathon, not a sprint!). **So please pray for stamina, for time, and for encouragement in writing.**

Thank you so much for your love and prayers! This may be the last update before we head back to the states in early July, but we'll be in touch about some sort of Zoom ministry update over the summer months if you'd like to hear more. We hope to see you in-person when we're back state-side if schedules align!

All our love,  
Alissa, David, Charlie