

June 2021



Dear friends,

Shalom! Greetings from Southern California! I hope and pray that God richly blesses you this summer and that you see Him at work beyond what you expect.

Summer 2021 is finally here! It's going to be a transitional period for us here in Southern California. Six months ago, we were in the worst part of the Covid crisis. In January of this year we were seeing over 200 deaths every day in Los Angeles County. Thankfully, we are now seeing close to zero. For those of us living in the area, this is a welcome change from those grim days. It's been a difficult season, yet God has seen us through...as He always does.

On the ministry front, we are getting back to normal. Our Upside Down café is resuming its coffee service. We're back to serving people inside and in person, and many of our customers are students at UCLA. They have been particularly thankful for our coffee shop. We also have been resuming our normal ministry activities of meeting with interested people, speaking in churches, and hosting various events. We will continue to function this way in the summer, holding our four-week kids camp and our six-week summer missions project in Israel.

An exciting development in our café has been a survey that we conducted in April. For two weeks we collected submissions of this 10-question survey and had just under 300 responses! These responses will help inform our messaging and programming this summer and into the fall. We're excited about some new possibilities for ministry. Not surprisingly, students reported that their greatest struggles have to do with anxiety about school and choices they will be making in the next few years. A sizeable number of students identified themselves as being Jewish, so we were able to learn about their particular concerns and interests. It's a great challenge to try and develop strategies for relating the gospel, scripture and faith. Please pray for us as we work on this over the summer.

The last several months have been quite busy for me (Josh). This last seminary semester was quite difficult. I took my last semester of Hebrew and a theological seminar called "Anthropology and Sin". These two subjects (anthropology and sin) might seem to be a strange combination, but most theologies put them together. It was a great time to be studying this, addressing issues such as identity, sexuality and race. We also completed the first semester of training a new group of missionaries, using a new online platform. At the end of May, we will graduate our first group of eight people. It's been quite exciting to see them grow and embrace ministry!

Throughout this last year with Covid restrictions, ministry opportunities for me (Annette) have actually increased. Ministry-wide we've seen much heavier traffic on our website and the social media platforms we use. Being one of the few female missionaries with Jews for Jesus here in the western U.S., many of the women who visit our online sites are funneled to me. Using video chat and the phone, I've been answering questions from women in Washington, Idaho, Texas and California, and I'm also helping lead a Zoom Bible study for women who are new Jewish believers in Jesus, which includes a woman Zooming in from New York City!



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One of the most satisfying ministry relationships lately has been with Karen, a Jewish woman who lives in Rancho Cucamonga, about one hour's drive east of LA. We've been meeting weekly via Zoom studying the book of John. Karen grew up traditionally Jewish and finds it hard to say the name of Jesus sincerely, since His name was only used as a curse word in her household when she was growing up. Karen recently married a Christian man whose love and gentleness towards her has motivated her to sincerely seek to understand who Jesus is. This week we looked at John 4 and the story of the woman at the well, which helped Karen understand the concept that Jesus loved all people, not just His own Jewish people, and that He respected women enough to have this pivotal conversation with one. I believe it is only a matter of time before Karen acknowledges Jesus as her Messiah, as so many of the Samaritans in that story did!



Our family is doing well. Eliana is beginning her nursing training to be an RN. It's a great time for her to go into this program. It should take about 2 1/2 years. Taliah will be doing a missions trip this summer in Israel for a month. She has one more semester at community college and then will be transferring to a four-year school to complete a degree in design. It's been an encouraging season for our girls, full of challenges but also opportunities for growth.

We finished out May with Annette having a surgery that we have been planning for for some time. She had an ablation, which will hopefully fix her arrhythmia issues. Because of that, we're planning on a quiet summer, focusing on her health and enjoying time together.

This summer we'd love your prayers for salvation and spiritual growth for some of the women Annette's been meeting with, including Karen, Ruth, Rebekah, Gina and Marta. Also, please pray for Josh as he travels in August to work with his co-missionary trainer, Sam, as they prepare to train the next batch of new missionaries arriving this fall.

May you have a joyful and restful summer with opportunities to spend time with family and friends! Thank you so much for supporting our work with Jews for Jesus!

In Yeshua,

Josh Annette

Josh and Annette

PS: Please let us know if you'd rather receive an e-mail copy of these updates. We're trying to communicate through e-mail as much as possible. If you'd be willing to "go digital", e-mail Josh at josh.sofaer@jewsforjesus.org and he'll help you out.