



## Christmas news from Helen

At the start of every year I try to spend some time listening to God to see what he has to say about the year ahead – for 2020 it was ‘the little things.’ Which is interesting, because 2020 has been a year of big things – global things.

The first few months started off as busy and as crazy as ever, and it was particularly frantic for us as we decided to move house. We had everything planned out beautifully – childcare sorted for Michael with my parents and the removal firm booked to pack us on the Thursday and then move us on the Friday. But then on the Monday evening Boris announced a complete lockdown. The following morning we expected the move to be off, but instead found that our solicitors were insisting it go ahead while the removal firm had pulled out. Thankfully we were only moving around the corner and were able to hire a small van ourselves. My parents came to help and care for Michael, and we are so grateful to wonderful friends – Chris, Amy and Martin – who also lent a hand.

God is so good, and we have been incredibly grateful for the increased space in our new house, which has meant so much when the restrictions have been tough. We hope to actually manage some renovations over the coming year!



Initially, working from home with a three-year-old around was an immense challenge, and after a couple of weeks I decided to cut my CMM working hours by 50%. I would get up early in order to do a couple of hours’ work at the start of the day, and then fit in other bits and pieces as Michael allowed. Amy’s fatigue became challenging too, so we prayerfully decided to form



a support bubble. This meant that so many of those oddly quiet sunny days in April and May were spent playing with Leah and Michael in the woods at Lickey or discovering places where the floor was carpeted with bluebells. The little things became really important, and any moments in the day I could find peace and quiet became such a blessing. I needed God’s refreshing more than ever, and have had to learn how to depend on Him and not on my own strength.

My work dramatically changed this year from organising and preparing for events, design work and social media posts to at times almost exclusively video editing. My video editing journey began with the CMM Supporters’ Evening in May. Then over the summer we premiered

another video featuring Roger's teaching on Psalms, Hymns and Songs, culminating in a large virtual choir and orchestra rendition of 'O Worship the King'. The rest of the summer included editing Dave Gidney's wonderful Bible Study notes to accompany Torn Curtain, and taking part in the recording of Three Wise Camels. It was such a privilege to



be one of the four singers in the studio recording the backing vocals. When we sang in four-part harmony together for the first time I realised quite how blessed I was to experience this oasis of music-making at a time when for many, singing in a group was off the agenda. This autumn's video projects have included Dave's Bible Study teaching evenings and then finally the Three Wise Camels premiere. I really have learned a lot of new skills this year!



On a more personal note, it was lovely to have a few days away in Kendal in September, staying in a friend's holiday home. While it was frustrating being so near the mountains and unable to climb them because of Michael, again the little things became important – slowing down, throwing rocks into the lake, enjoying ice creams and rejoicing that once again play areas were open.

The other delight of my year has been the support bubble with Amy. I think it became a lifeline for both of us. We have been able to lead worship together for the Birmingham Methodist District, and we have also taken part in the Resound Worship 12 song challenge, co-writing quite a few songs together. Just one more to write to complete the challenge! We have also been working on a blog at [www.reflectedlight.org](http://www.reflectedlight.org) so do check that out. God has also led us through some amazing times of learning and praying, and we have been particularly blessed by the ministry of the Glasgow Prophetic Centre. Their Biblical teaching and the power of the words God is speaking through them have completely floored me at times, and God has been at work in a really powerful way.



Time and again I keep hearing people say that they long to get out of 2020. And this is not surprising as it has been such a difficult year in so many ways. But I don't want to leave this year without making sure that I have learned all I can of God's heart for me in it, and how he wants me to be transformed further into his likeness. I am sure 2021 will also have challenges, so we need to stay closer to Him than ever, and to find all our hope and strength in Him.