



The Bauer Family

Serving in Australia's Outback

August 2020

I hope this update finds you well in spite of all of the strangeness that 2020 has brought us. As we stated in a previous update, we discovered earlier this year that just because we live remote does not mean we get a free pass when the world goes crazy. Like many of you, our church was shut down for three months, indigenous communities went on full lock down and our local grocer nearly ran out of toilet paper. Things were tense. We eventually did find that living remote had some advantages. Even though we cover an area of more than 500,000 square miles there are only three proper roads into the Northern Territory so closing our borders was fairly simple and mostly effective. Within a few short weeks we were declared "virus free", communities reopened by mid-June and we all just settled back in with business as usual. These days the only trouble you'll see is on the news. If you turn it off you would be none the wiser and heaps happier. What has affected our family is the travel ban. No one enters and no one leaves (at least not without a fully self funded quarantine). How this affects us is Autumn planned to start college in the states this September. We anticipated a four-week trip to the US. We missed a wedding, a family reunion and the opportunity to connect personally with some of our supporting churches. I'm reluctant to complain as so many people have had real hardships through these times. Our troubles are really only inconveniences. Autumn is able to do her first semester on-line and we are praying that things will be different in January and we can make the trip then. All in God's timing.

As far as life in the Outback goes, once we were able to reconnect with our church we simply picked up where we left off. We talked about the state of the world, our responsibilities as Christians and tried to make sense of all this year had brought us. We shared scriptures and testimonies and realized that all the worrying was once again just wasted energy. When we had just started to settle back in we were given another surprise that would disrupt our services. Years ago funding was made available for construction upgrades on indigenous communities. Someone asked me to write a letter to explain what our church means to the community and what it offers. So I did ...and I forgot about it. In July we were contacted by the same agency and told that our 40+-year-old building would be getting a complete overhaul. This included electricity that you can't feel, smell or hear buzzing, toilets that flush and water that comes out of the tap not orange. A small crew of workers have completely renovated the building over the course of a month at no cost to us. It is beautifully done and we couldn't be more pleased with the results. A significant part of my schedule for the last two years has been to "band aid" repairs hopefully at a rate faster than things were breaking. This was not a race I was winning. It is a huge relief to show up to church and just be the pastor not the repairman.

Presently, we still have not gone back to a full schedule. With the ever changing rules and the renovations we have been careful to not start anything we might need to stop. We have been holding regular services and Bible studies but look forward to restarting our kid's program and teen group. The renovations are to be completed by the end of September and it is our prayer that God will use this freshly painted, well lit, leak free building for His glory. We will be having a big "open house" to celebrate the first Sunday in October and are hoping for only good things from there on out. In an attempt to hurry this year along we've even started to plan our Christmas service already. Like most people, I have been following the news from the States and around the world. Clearly these are troubled and uncertain times. I'm hoping that maybe hearing some good news from Australia is a refreshing change for you and I'm praying for some good news from America in the upcoming months. Thank you for your thoughts, prayers, words of encouragement and support.



The kids will miss their favorite Sunday school teacher



After three months away all that was needed was a quick dusting and some spiders removed



Fresh paint throughout the entire building



New handicapped accessible entrance way

Australian Mailing Address: 13 Third Street, Katherine, NT 0850 Australia Contact Number: +61 417 217 829
American Mailing Address: P.O. Box 310, Marion, PA 17235 Email Address: thebauerfamily@hotmail.com