



Katia Rocks

Link Letter no. 34 | October 2026

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Location: Florianópolis, Brazil



What I do: Through a church I helped start, I encourage people, particularly women, to connect with Christ



Discovering creative ways to share the hope of Jesus with people unconnected to church

Dear friends,

I am writing this letter on a cold morning here in Florianópolis.

I spent several weeks in England during June and August, and I had the privilege of visiting 16 churches. Unfortunately, only a few of these visits were during Sunday services, but I am very grateful to everyone who was willing to rearrange things during the week so that I could participate and share about what God has been doing here in Florianópolis.

It was wonderful to see people I have met before and to meet others whom I had not yet met personally, but who have faithfully been part of God's work here in Florianópolis.

I truly experienced God's love and care during my time in the UK. Hearing from people I had never met personally that they have been praying for me – both for the ministry and for me personally – was incredibly encouraging.

I arrived back in Brazil on Saturday, and on Sunday I was leading the Vineyard Floripa service. While I was in England, the leadership team here managed to keep our Sunday services and small groups going, but I think they were very happy to have me back and to have another person helping with the regular life of the church. Everyone here is a volunteer and works hard during the week in their own jobs, so there is a lot to carry.

Something I also reflected on during many of my visits to churches in the UK was the great need for more people to serve in churches. This is also our reality here. There are relatively few people who are willing to serve consistently, and often it is the same people who end up carrying most of the responsibility. We need to be sensitive to this and make sure we are not overburdening those who are already serving faithfully.

Since I returned, we have had some very cold and rainy days. Unfortunately, there was also a very severe hailstorm here, which caused significant damage for many people. Some had their cars and roofs badly damaged by the large hailstones.

As a church, we have been trying to respond and support some of those who have been affected. We are a small church with limited resources, but we want to live out the kingdom of God through whatever we are able to offer.

One request for help came through someone we know – a former prisoner whom we baptised last year. Jessica, a young woman who works with him, had her entire roof destroyed and, as a result, all her furniture



Joanna and me during our time in Bristol – we were able to see the balloons from the Balloon Fiesta flying over the Downs

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



was ruined by the water that came into her home. She is an immigrant from Cuba who lives here alone with her six-year-old daughter.

The owner of the house where she lives has repaired the roof and is painting the house for her, but she still needs help with furniture, clothing and food, as she lost almost everything. As a church, we responded by collecting clothes, food and some furniture.

We do not have a large social action ministry as a church, but we try to respond in practical ways whenever requests for help come to us.

During this time, we have also been in contact with Venezuelan pastors who are welcoming families arriving as refugees from Venezuela. Just this past week, nine new families arrived, including several parents with young children. With everything we have been able to collect – especially blankets and warm clothing – we were able to help these new families.

Regarding our Sunday services, we are currently seeing fewer people attending. Some are travelling, others have been unwell, and some have become less involved for various reasons. At the same time, we have had some new families joining us.

One of our challenges at the moment, therefore, is to strengthen these new families and help them become part of the life of the church, while also encouraging those who have become less involved to reconnect and recommit themselves to the body of Christ.

Although our Sunday numbers are currently lower, we are continuing with our weekly prayer and intercession meetings, small groups and our monthly men's and women's groups.

As a family, we are all doing well and are back into our normal routines of ministry and work. The children arrived back in Brazil with lots of exams to catch up on, but the school and teachers have been very generous and supportive, helping them with everything they needed in order to complete their exams and schoolwork.

Prayer requests

Please pray for:

- ▶ our family: that God would always remain at the centre of everything we do, and for good health,
- ▶ our church: that those who have become less involved would return and become more committed to the life of the church,
- ▶ the new families: that they would feel welcomed, loved and truly become part of our church family,
- ▶ new people to find Christ: that people would encounter Jesus through the life and witness of Vineyard Floripa,
- ▶ our community: that God would continue to enable us to be a source of practical support and hope for people in need.

Thank you so much for your prayers, encouragement and partnership. It means more to us than you know, and we are grateful to be part of this mission together.

With love and gratitude,

Katia



Photos from top to bottom: Praying for Jessica, the young woman from Cuba, when we delivered some of the things we were able to collect as a church; with the Venezuelan pastors; a Sunday service at Vineyard Floripa



Discovering creative ways to share the hope of Jesus

I love to hear from other CMS partners sharing the hope of Jesus with people not yet connected to church. Read Andy Roberts's reflection on his time with the charity ReVive in Brazil and hear his thoughts on how mission needs to keep creatively changing. And be challenged by a thought-provoking piece on the role of migration in mission. Read and learn more about creative mission at churchmissionsociety.org/bringhope

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