



Tom and Verity Clare

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Contact details:

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Location: Uganda



What we do: Tom works to improve the health of locals and refugees. Verity looks after our children and hopes to work in peacebuilding or teaching English.

Dear friends,

Since our return to Arua in November last year, I (Tom) have been getting to grips with the reality of working as the diocesan health coordinator. It has been a challenging time, with the increased need for administration and management temporarily preventing the regular work in clinical medicine and training, where my experience and gifting lies. Having initially (and prayerfully!) accepted to step into the role, it soon became clear that there was too much administration to allow for regular clinical practice alongside. So in February we recruited an assistant coordinator, Esther, to help with the work in the health office. She is now trained to the point where she will be taking over the majority of administrative work to enable me to spend most of my time in the health centres and the hospital owned by the diocese.



Training on the integration of faith and health work, run in partnership with Global Link Afrika, for staff in our health facilities.

God's prompting for me to refocus on improving the quality of healthcare provision here came in the form of a health scare for some close friends of ours. As I supported them at the hospital, the importance of vital routine observations that we take for granted in the UK was underlined. For me, this reiterated the great need for medical training and the scale of the task.

This period of serving in a mostly administrative role has been difficult at times and at one stage made me question our purpose here. Bringing these questions and challenges to God in prayer over the last few months has led us to a place of renewed confirmation of our call and having met with the diocesan secretary, the plan is now in place for me to return to a more medical role.

I'm excited to get back to doing more medicine in the community and I will be rotating around the six health centres and the hospital, sharing life with the staff, doing clinical work as part of the team and delivering teaching and training. I'm also hoping to be able to do some discipleship during my time at the health centres, as well as encouraging the staff to integrate their faith with their professional service in health work.

For Verity, the return to Uganda this time had a different focus as she was four months pregnant and anticipating giving birth overseas for the first time. Living 10 hours' drive from the capital, Kampala, we had to keep adjusting our plans with each week that passed, in terms of what to do if the baby came early. We were so thankful that she held on and we got to Kampala safely in time for baby Amara Angela to join us at the end of April.

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



It was a huge blessing to be joined by Tom's parents for nearly eight weeks over the period of Amara's birth. We were so thankful for their help with home school and childcare, enabling Tom to get back to work as soon as we made it back up to Arua. It was special for them to meet and spend time with Amara and to see something of how our life plays out here.

Any anticipated sadness at them leaving has been tempered by the fact that we're heading back to the UK shortly for a few weeks for Verity's sister's wedding. We're all looking forward to the opportunity to catch up with family on both sides and for them all to meet Amara.

In terms of the boys' transition on our return here, we praise God that they've settled remarkably well and were particularly excited to play with a lot of their expat friends again. The daily rhythms of life have been a bit different, though. With the long-awaited return to school for the local students, the boys have lost some of their regular afternoon companions and with the pregnancy Verity lacked the energy to go for as many of her usual walks in the local neighbourhood. Combining all of this with the daily reality of processing our grief after losing Verity's mum last August, it has been a particularly inward-looking time for us as a family.

We are so thankful for God's provision, protection and comfort over the last few months and we are incredibly grateful for Amara's safe and straightforward arrival. In Lugbarati (the main local tribal language), she's been given the name Awaniya, meaning "thank you". We feel it is very fitting and all the local shopkeepers and market sellers are particularly excited that we "finally" have a daughter!

We're very grateful that we can get back to the UK for the wedding. We're also really looking forward to returning to Arua in late July – with Tom strengthened by a renewed purpose and vision for his work and Verity looking forward to re-establishing her own rhythms in the local community.

Life continues to be hard for many of our neighbours, with challenging seasonal weather making crops unreliable, increased food and commodity prices and the return to the termly scramble for school fees. We're inspired by their faith and perseverance and we are keen to come alongside them in sharing God's Word and in prayer. God has been putting on both of our hearts the need for ongoing discipleship and there seems to be a real desire among people here to study the Bible and pray together. We're praying for opportunities to do this when we return to Arua.

Thank you for your ongoing support and prayers as we continue to serve God in this corner of Uganda. We are truly grateful.

Blessings,

Tom, Verity, Ezra, Eli, Simeon, Joel and Amara



Photos from top to bottom: One last photo with Tom's parents, Alison and Chris (Granny and Pops), before they left for Kampala; We're so thankful for the precious gift of Amara; Schools finally fully reopened in January, after nearly 2 years at home for some pupils; We felt very honoured to be part of a diocesan staff celebration for eight families recently blessed with new babies.



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