



Ben and Katy Ray

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Location: Tanzania



What we do: Showing God's love and changing attitudes in the community through providing training and employment for disabled people

Dear friends,

Bwana Yesu Asifiwe! Praise the Lord Jesus! You may remember us saying this at your church this summer. And we do praise him for blessing our time back in the UK and for returning us safely to Iringa. We will miss our furlough home in Malvern, where we were able to welcome guests and connect more with our wonderful link church St Andrews. We'd like to thank Mick and Cheri Down for their generosity in sharing their house with us for our time back.

The church visits we made around the UK were a great encouragement to us as we shared and discussed the highs and lows of the last three years. Thank you to all of you who made our visit so special!

If we didn't manage to come to your church this time, the good news is that we hope to be back in the UK in Summer 2023. So it won't be too long before we have a chance to see you.

Travelling mercies

"Sorry, but you don't have permission to fly." These are dreaded words for any mission partner who has spent time, money and effort getting themselves and their family to the point of airport check-in. The issue in our case was that Zachary and Alessia (our eight- and six-year olds) hadn't got PCR tests for entering Tanzania. Having previously read advice on the Tanzanian website, we'd been reassured that tests could be taken once in Tanzania, but our particular airline thought differently. After about 10 minutes of nail-biting prayer, we were given another option. We could enter Tanzania if we paid a \$100 fine per child. Of course, when we did arrive into Dar es Salaam, we just needed to buy a single \$10 test!

PCRs hadn't been our major concern as we hurtled to Gatwick in our rented minibus, but rather whether Tanzanian immigration would allow us to enter the country at all – our residence permits are only partially approved. We also had to pass through customs with nine suitcases heavily laden with assorted supplies for Neema Crafts. As it happened, we couldn't have asked for more helpful immigration and customs officials. This is a cultural aspect of Tanzanian administration that we most missed while in England; rather than a dead-end "computer says no" response, in Tanzania we spoke with actual people who could respond in a human way to our situation.

Praise God for volunteers

Chloe and Joe Chettleburgh have now returned to the UK after two years of service at Neema Crafts. They



The Ray family on furlough in Malvern.

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



gave so much of themselves to the community at Neema Crafts and in Iringa and they will be greatly missed. They leave behind concrete improvements to the work of the project: Chloe two new websites, a thriving shop in Dar and a more skilled cafe staff. Joe a new range of furniture, two excellently fitted outlets, but most importantly, 15 deaf and physically disabled men who now have a wider range of carpentry skills and an ongoing means of income.

We returned to our home in Iringa to find Malcolm Crawford, our ever-willing treasurer for Neema Crafts, still hard at work improving our accounting systems and supporting our finance team. Having come to Neema Crafts almost

directly from Uganda, he is as we write returning via Kisiizi Hospital in Uganda, where he will be overseeing a financial audit. Malcolm (70) and his wife Irene are incredible examples of living distinctively as Christians in their generosity and unassuming service to others.

Praise God for answered prayers

Thank you for praying with us for Diana Nzagi, who has taken over the orders management role from Katy at Neema Crafts and is doing an incredible job. She is a young professional from Dar es Salaam, whom we found via the network of the very hip Oceans Church there. I asked Diana what things have brought her joy in her work so far:

"I think the sense of community and the willingness of everyone to help one another out. It's also been amazing to see people like our deaf carpenters trained in new techniques to produce beautiful new designs."

What has been one big challenge for you?

"Ensuring consistency and the quality of products is probably my major challenge. I think this is because, firstly, each artisan has very different abilities, but also because people have different awareness of the standards of quality in the wider marketplace."

Our plans/God's plans

As we shared with many of you, the new NGO SAFI Tanzania has given us the opportunity to move to Arusha to work with a range of projects like Neema Crafts and send our children to a larger international school there.

We've decided, however, to stay put for one more year as we help to find and train new directors of the Neema Centre. Schooling for our children will be a challenge, but we're entrusting their Year 2 and Year 4 schooling to the new, Christian, Legacy International school set up by our good friend Kennely. Please do pray for Ken and his team of Ugandan teachers as they get to grips with the Cambridge curriculum and starting a school from scratch!

Continue to pray too that we would be able to train new managers at the centre and for wisdom in our future decisions.

Ben and Katy



Photos from top to bottom: Arrived!; Saying farewell to Malcolm Crawford at Neema; Diana, the Neema orders manager, in her office.



Going further with Church Mission Society

Africa Conference Friday 7–Sunday 9 October: A weekend residential with opportunity to connect online. This year's theme is Out of Africa: Learning together about mission. Book your place now at churchmissionsociety.org/ac2022

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