



90th Birthday Thanksgiving Service

Probably the highlight of the last quarter of 2019 was the St. Luke's Hospital 90th Birthday Thanksgiving Service which was held in the Hospital Chapel. Sadly, neither Bishop Philip Marandih nor St Luke's Church Pastor Rev. Abraham Murmu were able to attend. But Rev Chitrakar the District Superintendent of Pakur District Methodist Church circuit stepped into the breach at the 11th hour - we are very grateful to him, for his message and his prayers. The choir of St. Luke's Church sang a special song and led the hymns during worship. And special thanks go to Captain Anil Victor Massey from Salvation Army Kolkata. Captain Anil led the service and preached, engaging both children and adults alike, encouraging everyone.



The music group from Pakur Bengali Methodist Church led us in praise and worship, and their children's group danced in worship. Many of our own St Luke's Church Sunday school were also able to come. Our oldest most faithful staff member- James Hembrom gave a warm welcome to all, and told us the history of St Luke's Hospital and you could hear a pin drop. James also was in his element leading the congregational hymns on his violin. It was altogether a joyful occasion and we are indebted to our God for His faithfulness in keeping St Lukes Hospital alive - how we pray for further revival in this place.

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Cervical cancer screening programme

It is a Government of India (GoI) Guideline, that every woman who is sexually active between the age of 18 and 59 should be routinely offered cervical cancer screening in the form of VIA (visual inspection with acetic acid). India has a lack of doctors, and also a mismatch of doctors. Whereas 80 percent of the population live in rural areas, only 20% of India's doctors practice in rural areas. Neither a pathologist or cytologist will be found in a rural area - they practice exclusively in cities. And it is expensive for patients to make a six hour journey to a city in order to have a PAP smear done. But more than that, nobody has taken the time to counsel women about the need of cancer screening. The largest number of deaths in the world due to cervical cancer occur in India. Here women present late with cervical cancer, when it has gone beyond the stage for surgical management. Elisabeth has seen three such ladies with end stage disease in the past year. Radiotherapy also requires travel to the major cities, and most rural women are too frightened to travel to a big city, even for palliative cancer treatment. So prevention is the answer. From the start of our work here in St Luke's, we found people here to be unaware of any cancer screening, whereas in KSN Hospital in West Bengal from where we had

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Dear Everyone,

Dear Everyone,
We wish you all a very Happy New Year and pray that 2020 brings each and everyone much blessing. As we look back over 2019, culminating in the 90th birthday of St Lukes Hospital, we are ever grateful to our faithful God. This - our Winter 2019 newsletter, comes to you with our love.



Mr Sainen Dixit opens the Thompson solar power plant with James assisting

Mr Sainen Dixit formally opens the Thompson Solar Power Plant

A good friend of Drs Bryan and Helen Thompson, Mr Sainen Dixit formally opened the Thomson Solar power plant. He recounted stories of the old days, not only their dedication in regards to medical services, but also of Dr Bryan's love of "discussion about many things", and Dr Helen's "delicious food - she was a marvelous cook you know " And after he had cut the ribbon and switched on the Thompson solar power plant, we presented Sainen with a box of Dr. Helen's homemade fudge, which Kirsteen had kindly made and sent out with us.

Cluster clinic working from Maheshpur Hospital

Shubhro and Elisabeth have been approached by Maheshpur Hospital Administration for help. This is another closed down mission hospital, which has great potential, and also a good number of trained nursing staff.

We explained to them, we cannot work in the hospital, since our first commitment is to St Luke's Hospital but, we could run clinics in the villages, maybe on a monthly basis. The Maheshpur Hospital covers around 13-14 villages. So word went out to the nurses and workers in these villages that a cluster clinic covering 7 villages would be held - to see if this was helpful for them. Elisabeth and Shubhro would go on alternate months so that SLH was not left without a doctor. And Shubhro, very wisely suggested we take Haridas with us.

PATIENT NEWS *(More news on the web page)*

Mum with twins.

Twin girls born 11 months ago - Monika and Miriam. Miriam, the younger twin was well until the age of 8 months, and had started taking solid foods along with Mums milk from 6 months. But around the age of 8 months Miriam became unwell, refusing to eat and could only tolerate breast milk. (photo). Miriam only weighed 6 kg and her tiny arms and legs were like sticks. Her tummy was swollen with a huge liver and spleen and lots of fluid. This is where Elisabeth becomes out of her depth with a sick child. She suspected underlying liver disease or malignancy in this tiny child. She required special investigations that we could not organise, and also were costly. Poor Mum was breast feeding both Monika and Miriam, and she was herself anaemic, exhausted and desperately worried about Miriam. We asked if she could bring Miriam or both twins to see Dr Shubhro at SLH, but she knew this would be impossible. Public transport in such remote places is poor, and would require change of vehicle at least four times and takes several hours. We could only pray for this family, and hope they will be able to see Dr Shubhro when he goes for next cluster clinic.

Child with polio

Bablu - a boy of 11 years brought by his parents, who said they had been told their son has polio. He has progressive



weakness in both his legs, and polio usually affects only one limb. But whatever the diagnosis, he would benefit from physiotherapy and to be fitted with calipers. Our Maltese friend

Marcette who works in Pakur mission would be delighted to see him, and get physiotherapy exercises started. But again - it is the problem of linking up Marcette with Bablu,

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just come there was a greater awareness, and often folk came to OPD specifically to get their smear done. Since 2015 we have been offering cervical screening free to all women, and now we have a good number waiting for treatment for pre-cancer cervical lesions. Elisabeth has trained nursing staff in SLH and other clinics to do the screening themselves.

The doctor who heads up the WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), Dr Partha Basu, has been most encouraging about the St Luke's Screening programme. Dr. Basu says that in a low resource setting such as ours, the best treatment for VIA positive lesions is thermal ablation. WHO have recently designed a portable battery operated thermal ablation machine, ideal for use in rural Indian setting. Dr Basu has put us in touch with the company in USA who sell the thermo ablation machine, so that we will be able to buy it at a reduced cost. So this is high on our priority list for equipment.

CTG monitoring now helping in antenatal care of mothers to be at SLH



Sister Susanna and Reena lying being monitored and delighted to be hearing her baby heart beat for the first time

Due to the generosity of another Scottish colleague we have been able to buy a cardiocography (CTG) machine which records the fetal heartbeat and contractions during pregnancy. One of our own staff - our laboratory technician Haridas is married to Reena, and they have a wee girl nearly 3 years old - her name is Shilawanti. Reena and Haridas lost their first son, since he was born six weeks prematurely and died after 3 days with breathing difficulties. Then they were blessed with a daughter - until very recently Silwanti was the youngest member of the Sunday School. Reena had an episode of premature labour in November, when she was 9 weeks early, so she got her steroid injections and some oral medicine to stop contractions. When our CTG machine arrived Elisabeth wanted to check Reena's baby - Reena and Haridas had been unable to afford a scan, so getting a CTG was exciting for them both. The CTG got a score of 10/10, and there was no evidence of premature contractions. Both Reena and Haridas were delighted. Reena decided to go home to celebrate Christmas with Silwanti in her home village, while Haridas stayed back in SLH managing the laboratory. On Christmas Eve Reena went into labour, and although their son was 5 weeks premature, he is thriving, and now weighs 5 lbs 1oz.

Staff News



The School Principal of Pandheni Mission School receiving the medicines from Dr Joni

Dr. Joni joined us in December 2019.

Joni Grace is trained in Homeopathic Medicine, and spent her first year after qualifying working in the Jharkhand Government Hospitals, especially working in rural areas and amongst children. Joni has quickly picked up the art of getting the patient story and history of their past health problems. She sees and examines patients by herself, and then discusses their management with Elisabeth or Shubhro. Patients, especially the

younger women warm to her gentle sympathetic manner which is essential in a good doctor. There are times when allopathic medicine has repeatedly failed, and when there is no underlying serious problem we encourage Joni to practice her homeopathic skill - it can work in tandem with allopathic medicine. To this end when we renewed the annual registration for SLH we added homeopathic practice. This allows Dr Joni to practice independently when we are not present.

Christmas Day is a holiday at St Luke's Hospital, and Joni took the opportunity to be with her family over Christmas. She and her parents went to a local church to celebrate Christmas, and then they ran a free medical camp for anyone who was in need.

Below Joni describes in her own words her first homeopathic patient at St Luke's Hospital -

"On 23rd December, the first patient an anxious 14 years old girl - Sangeeta (name changed) studying in the government run hostel with school for girls at Hiranpur. She was from the village of Rampur, a few kilometers away from Hiranpur, had come to St.Lukes and decided to be treated with Homoeopathic medicines. She looked pale and poorly nourished. She had complaints of a swelling in the left side of her neck for 6 months and also a pain in her right shoulder. Previous investigations were normal.

She had lost her father when she was just 4 years old, and her mum was putting a little pressure on Sangeeta to stay at home to help look after her younger siblings. But Sangeeta was quite determined to study and thereby made it a point to go to school.

So, after assuring her and her mother about how education could help them come out of poverty and also the ideal diet, Sangeeta was taught exercises to strengthen the muscles of her neck and advised regarding her sleeping posture. She was given homeopathic medicines to bring down the swelling in her neck and also homeopathic pain killers. Sangeeta will return for review in a month to see her response to treatment, and if necessary to investigate her further. But she left the OPD on 23rd with a smile on her face and a regained confidence."

Sister Premlata

We welcomed Premlata to our small team at the end of 2019, and she has been keeping busy from day one. With Elisabeth's help, Premlata has taught the other three nursing staff how to make up and sterilise the various instruments (see photo) we will need for normal delivery and minor operative procedures. And, in time, we will do the same for major operative procedures also.



A group of 5 British midwife volunteers plan to come to St Lukes Hospital in February 2020. Our vision is that they could supervise and support local girls to train them in how to look after women in labour, helping the woman's own relatives to share this service. In this way the local girls would learn what is normal, and thus learn to recognise when things are not normal, and when they need to call for help. Many families are frightened of coming to a hospital for delivery, since they see this as a natural event which should happen at home, and this is true. We want to steer away from "medicalising" the birth of a child, but at the same time, be present to help when things are not normal. A simple example is to encourage a mother to be up walking around and eating and drinking in the early stage of her labour - many women end up with medical intervention unnecessarily and avoidable - because they feel when they come to a hospital they have to lie on a bed and fast.

Still praying for a surgeon to join the team at PJH. We should love to have a surgeon at St Luke's Hospital also, but at present we do not have the ancillary staff to support a surgeon, whereas PJH do, so their need is greater. Also, if there were a surgeon there, it would free Elisabeth up from attending emergency surgical calls to PJH.

Ultrasound News

When we began to put the newsletter together there was still no word of Ultrasound Licence being passed.

We were concerned that the Company selling the USG machine may have to raise the cost as the value of the rupee falls. Although we have put the deposit down on the machine, it is impossible to go ahead and order, in case the Civil Surgeon and District Collector refuse to give their signature for the Licence. Such things are not unheard of in India. **But the great news, and a real answer to prayer is that a Civil Surgeon and five government officials visited the hospital to scrutinise the proposed Ultrasound Department to check it comes up to Government standards.** He asked if we had bought the machine, and we confirmed that we have put the deposit on the machine, but it cannot be released until the Licence is granted. But the 2 KVA UPS and the AC and everything else is ready to go. At the end of the inspection he said " I will grant the Licence, and you may pick it up from my office next week."

Please keep praying the Civil Surgeon keeps his promise on this.

Prayer changes things!

Prayer points and thanksgiving

You may remember in our Summer newsletter that we asked specifically for several staff to join our team - amongst them a pharmacist and midwives.



We have found a pharmacist who is registered in Bihar, and he is willing to join the staff of St Luke's Hospital on a part time basis. He will be able to help Manik familiarise himself with the common

medicines that we use. At present Manik needs much help retrieving the drugs we prescribe, since he does not read English. Elisabeth wonders how he copes, for if the boot were on the other foot, she could not manage to read Hindi. Pray that the online application goes through smoothly, and is lodged in Ranchi early in 2020.

Give thanks for the Thomson Solar Power Plant being switched on. (see page 1)

Pray for regular supply of sand to renovate the old Sisters bungalow and do many other construction works going on at present.

Thanks to Dr Joni Grace Jacob, for offering to join SLH, and leaving her "safe" Government job.

Rosy and Sandip have a baby daughter - a wee sister for Rohan. And there was a safe arrival of Benedi - Reena and Haridas's son.

Thanks to Premlata for spending 10 months training in the operating theatre at PJH, and keeping her promise to come and join the staff of SLH.

Thanks that elections went smoothly without any untoward events.

Thanks for James - he played such a major role in both the 90th Thanksgiving Service and also in the various Christmas programmes in SLH, and he did this with such enthusiasm and joy. We need to keep praying that James remains in good health.

There are other patient stories on the website - please take a look there and keep remembering the work in prayer.

Internet connection

Since coming here Shubhro and I and others have used mobile wifi connection, but often there is little or no signal, and we cannot even contact each other if on different sites in the hospital campus. We waste a lot of time in communications - maybe a document is 90% downloaded, and then the signal disappears, so we have to start again. There is one tower in the bazaar about 2 kilometres from the hospital, but there is a plan to have a second tower much closer to the hospital. At present there is a land dispute between two brothers regarding the placing of the tower. Our plan is to approach the telecommunications company and offer a space within the hospital compound to place the tower.

Even if the telecommunications company declined our offer, it may speed up the resolution of the land dispute between the two brothers, for they would lose the contract.

The Ambulance fund

The Ambulance fund is growing fast, due to some extremely generous donations from both individuals (Shubhro's CMC classmates, and other Scottish wellwishers with SLH connections) and also church fellowships such as the Lerwick Baptist Church.

Possible visit from friends and colleagues from Lerwick Baptist Church Shetland - pray this plan may happen in October/November 2020

We continue to pray for another doctor, some qualified nurses, a pharmacist, a second laboratory technician and a pharmacist to join our staff. With Sister Premlata and Dr Joni joining us, we feel we could open the hospital to day in patients, and do some minor surgical procedures.

We were without ECG machine (heart monitor) for past 14 months because it was not charging. We had an email from the company who sold us the ECG promising to come in January 2019 but we are still waiting for it.

A Mess for SLH

Trying to start a "mess" so that fresh hot food will be made three times a day on the SLH campus - which means when visitor are here Elisabeth does not spend time preparing food.

We are very grateful to Dr Joni, who has offered to train any willing 'cook' in different preparations.