

Link Letter No.4 July 2013

Dear friends,

"If at first you don't succeed then skydiving definitely isn't for you!" Stephen Wright.

This joke may contain an element of truth but the reality is that all of us, at whatever stage of life we are in, will embark regularly on new ventures. We particularly ask for God's blessing on those who will be bravely jumping in September to raise funds for mission*. CMS are suggesting that vicars that jump might like to do so wearing dog collars! Some "firsts" are fun, exhilarating and successful whereas others may be daunting, imposed on us and can result in feelings of fear or frustration. Whatever these situations are, however, we can chose to have confidence and trust in Jesus, who says: *"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last."* (Rev 1:17)

*See this link for more info: <http://www.cms-uk.org/challenges>

Since we last wrote to you, we have seen our fair share of firsts! And so we thought we'd like to share some of them with you to give you an idea of what we have been up to recently.

Home alone

Being grandparents is simply the best! The last weekend of 2012 was a first as we babysat James for the weekend when his mummy and daddy went off to Scotland for a wedding. He was



Sledging in Ambleside!



Peter and Sally Bartlett

CMS mission partners

Paraguay

Peter and Sally served as SAMS mission partners in Bolivia from 1992 to 2005 where they firmly established the congregation of Cristo el Salvador. They then spent three years at Parr St Peter's in the Diocese of Liverpool. Peter became the Anglican bishop of Paraguay at the invitation of the diocese's leaders and was consecrated on 29 March 2009.

a little star, explaining to us where to find everything that we needed, organising lots of games and play activities for nanny and granddad, and helping with the dog and preparation of meals too!

Bringing up babies has become a bit more technical than it was in our day; we fulfilled our promise to go for a Sunday walk to the paper shop in Formby but without the buggy as back up for tired legs as we couldn't work out how to put up his buggy! James has good walking legs so we needn't have worried. He is currently quite excited about the imminent arrival of his baby sister or brother this month.

Tobogganing

January in the Lakes was marked by very little sun and much snow, so it was with warm clothes and trepidation that we embarked on our very first ever toboggan runs! Karen and Dave seemed much more expert than we were, maybe due to the fact that they are just a little bit younger than we are! We enjoyed visits to a good number of our link churches

but also had a first when a visit was cancelled due to a forecast of heavy snow. Back here in Asuncion, we are enjoying much cool days and nights so now it's our second winter this year, and we are enjoying having a quilt on the bed and hot drinks at bed time.



Karen and Dave's wedding

Hen party fun!

Sally was excited to be oldest member of the group invited to Karen's hen weekend – this being Sally's first ever hen party weekend, and what fun it was. I don't enjoy going up and down the deep escalators on London's underground on my own, but the promise of a great weekend with my daughter and her friends made the travelling worth it. And so I set off on my own for the big lights and I was not disappointed! Laughter, creativity, the showering of blessings, love and friendship are just some of the words that spring to mind.

Father of the bride speech

The highlight of our time back in England was Karen and Dave's wedding at Ascension Church in Balham Hill and then at the Star and Garter in Putney by the Thames. It was a simply beautiful day in



Father of the bride speech...

every way possible. Honouring to God, filled with Karen and Dave's creative touches, a whole community event, great fun, and a wonderful time of sharing as friends and family celebrated with the new husband and wife. For Pete it was a special time through the father of the bride speech to share different facets of Karen's life and what she means to us and just how proud we are of our daughter. We wish Karen and Dave every blessing in their new life together.

Dengue death

This year Paraguay has seen an unprecedented number of dengue cases and a very high number of deaths. Sadly we went to the funeral of Octavia, a church treasurer, who died within days of having the first

symptoms of dengue. She is the first person that we have personally known who has died from dengue. Although we know that she is in heaven with her Lord and Maker, it has been a tremendous shock for her family.

Glitches

Sally is enjoying taking turns on the preaching and service leading rota in the English speaking chapel.

Recently due to technical hitches she ended up leading the worship a capella; thankfully the congregation are great singers and a quick prayer asking for the Lord's help and confidence to ring out the melody meant that we were able to carry on worshipping. The congregation have finished looking at the big picture of the story of Jesus and humankind, and as a personal follow up to this we have set ourselves the challenge of reading through the Bible in chronological order.

As our time in Paraguay unfolds we are increasingly aware of Jesus' words about Himself and truth: "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." Unfortunately some of the pastoral needs that we have recently had to deal with are much more than just glitches in people's lives and so we would love prayer as we deal with situations that are often complex and longstanding; please pray that we would be given wisdom and that the Jesus' truth would set many free.



Discipleship training for leaders, with Mark and Paulette Swiger, St Andrews Cathedral in Asuncion



Laura playing the Paraguayan harp, St Andrews Chapel, shared lunch on our patio

Challenges abound

■ **Leadership:** Along with Asuncion Anglican church leaders we have just taken part in a two-week discipleship training programme. The challenge we now face as leaders and ministers is to implement changes in the way the Anglican Church makes disciples. During a recent evangelistic service over 100 people filled in cards requesting help to become disciples and the challenge is now on for the ministers to handle well this high level of interest.

■ **Financial:** The Diocese and the local congregations are being challenged to trust God for increased giving and a move to greater financial independence. On a

personal note we would like to take this opportunity to thank each and everyone who so generously give to financially partner with our ministry here in Paraguay. Thank you very much.

■ **Creativity:** Sally is enjoying wearing the top that she personalised at the hen party. As always, Sally has many ideas for things she wishes to make, so watch this space...

■ **Healthier living:** We are both getting more exercise this year and eating more healthily. Sally bought herself a pair of sensible trainers to go out walking in and she has recently learned to make “Paraguayan soup” – the only soup in the world that is solid and made

from corn meal, and yes it is delicious! Peter had a “men only in the kitchen” evening recently and we were treated to fish and chips! Rest however continues to remain a challenge as the demands are great at times and a chorus of voices call us to work and minister; please pray along with us that we will listen carefully to the Good Shepherd’s voice.



Men at work! Cooking fish and chips

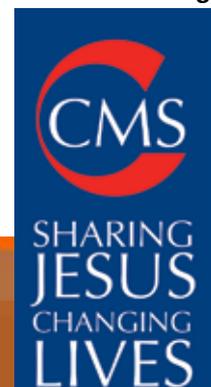
Thank you for praying for us and supporting us in many ways. We particularly value prayer for:

- **Wisdom** – asking that the spirit of wisdom and understanding that rested on Jesus will rest on us.
- **Walking** – humility to walk the paths the Lord has put before us in His company, and with His wisdom, strength and directing.
- **Strong teams** – for spiritual wisdom leading to unity and agreement in purpose and vision, for all the teams that we belong to.
- **Hold firmly to the word of life** – that we ourselves and our colleagues may... do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that we all may become blameless and pure, “*children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation*”, shining in our generation for God’s glory (Philippians 2:14-16).

Thank you,

Peter & Sally

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