

## **CHRIS AND LINDA HAINES' MISSION NEWS FROM UTILA**

### **ISSUE 1 AUG 22**

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap” (Luke 6:38, NRSV)

Well, we finally made it. I am typing this newsletter behind my desk in my air-conditioned study, but it hasn't always been like this. Though I'm writing this at the start of September, I've entitled it 'Aug' because I wanted to share with you all some of the challenges and joys which have brought Linda and I here.

All of the recipients of this newsletter have expressed some sort of wish to receive it, either through your church or personally, so if anyone wishes to unsubscribe after reading this first instalment please let me know. Conversely, if anyone comes across it and wishes to receive it, or hears of it and has accidentally been missed off the list, please e-mail me at [thebirdrev@outlook.com](mailto:thebirdrev@outlook.com), or message us on Facebook, either on our personal pages or on the joint Mission Partner page we are looking to set up. Thank you all for your prayer support as we have trained and prepared for this, it really is very much appreciated.

As some of you will know, if you've seen any of our presentations, Utila is one of the Bay Islands off the north coast of Honduras in Central America, which borders Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. The island is about 17 square miles in size, with a population believed to be about 4500 and increasing. Our manse is on the main street, and is actually visible on the Wikipedia article for the island. There are no cars, but a couple of vans, and large numbers of golf carts, tuk-tuks, motorbikes, and what they call motos (basically quad bikes), which go past the study window. The back of the house backs onto the Caribbean sea, which sounds idyllic, though we discovered last night that there is a nightclub at the end of the nextdoor but one jetty. We are serving two churches, Mizpah further down Main Street, a busy church, and a smaller congregation on Pigeon Cay (a small islet off the coast), as well as a Methodist school/college here educating children aged 5-18 in English and Spanish.

We had quite a journey to get here. We left our manse in the Bury Methodist Circuit, and the churches and school we had served for nearly ten years (for Wesley and the school), in April after an intense frenzy of storing, discarding, selling, donating and packing our possessions, superbly managed by Linda. We then moved to Cliff College in Derbyshire to train as Mission Partners for three months, while we donated, stored, packed and finally sold our cars, before we set off in a hire car to Manchester Airport to begin our journey proper.

After sleeping in an airport hotel (and losing our debit card) we flew to Orlando, stayed overnight and caught an early flight to Houston, followed by further flights to San Pedro Sula on the Honduran mainland, where we saw a wonderful circular rainbow, which seemed to us to symbolize God's blessing on our journey. Then we flew on smaller planes to Roatan and finally Utila, where we were welcomed by a large delegation from the local church, including its minister, Rev Esther Hanners, with whom we will be working. She is Utilian and has been

such a blessing ever since we arrived, indeed even before this on Zoom. In fact, the whole journey was full of blessings, though it had its difficulties too.

My left leg had been swollen for some time before we set off (since diagnosed as lymphatic oedema), and the stewardesses on the long haul couldn't have been more helpful, providing me with a box to rest it on despite being in an emergency exit seat, and ordering me a wheelchair to get through the airport, which actually made security less trying than we had expected. A kind taxi organizer explained where to get the shuttle bus to our hotel, which lacked a restaurant so we went to a local restaurant for a truly delicious meal (my first in the US). When we got to Houston our gate was changed to a much nearer one (we had about 50 minutes between flights) so we made it, though our luggage didn't- the blessing of that was that we didn't have to carry it up the steep steps of the small planes at the end of the journey. It also provided the ladies of the church another opportunity to demonstrate God's amazing love and abundant generosity manifested through their lives and welcome, by feeding the hungry and clothing the otherwise (almost) naked (Mt 25:35-36). As the manse wasn't quite ready when we arrived, we were also temporarily stationed in a beautiful cabin overlooking a lagoon, where tourists usually stay (see below). We are truly humbled, and are praying that we can prove worthy of the love and generosity lavished on us by the people here, and the people at Global Relationships in London, and indeed everyone who has been supporting us through their prayers. Our heartfelt thanks to you all.

Please continue to pray for us, here are some of our early prayer concerns:  
Settling in to life in the manse and the routines of the life of the churches we serve  
Prayers for Linda in particular as she copes with living so far away from family  
Wisdom with budgeting as we get used to prices, currency and new priorities  
God's help in discerning which current activities we should both focus on, and the right new ideas and initiatives to pursue over the next 2-3 years.

Thanks, love, prayers & blessings,  
Chris & Linda



Sunset at the lagoon



Utila from the air



Reception committee at airstrip



Mizpah Methodist Church



Neptune Beach, Utila



Boat trip to the Cays



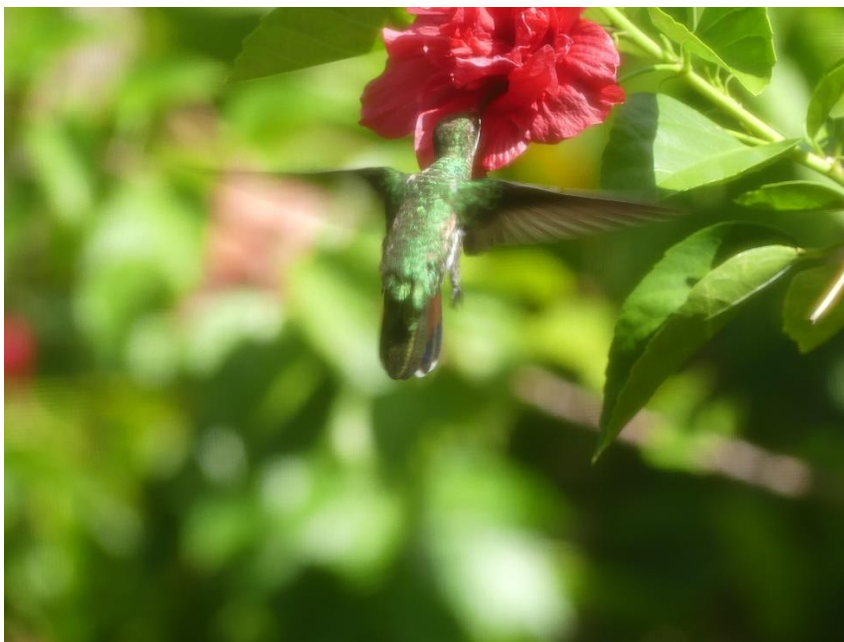
Pigeon Cay church harvest



Pigeon Cay Church



La Ceiba, mainland Honduras



Green-throated mango



Moving by motorbike trailer



Utila's endemic iguana



Our manse, Main Streeto