

ECM NEWS

..... SUMMER 2023/24

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European Christian Mission

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION

Europe needs Jesus, now more than ever. A hundred years ago 70% of the world's Christians lived in Europe but it now has the **smallest number of committed Christ followers in the world.**

European Christian Mission's vision is to see the peoples of **Europe transformed in the name of Jesus Christ.** Our workers partner with local believers to **Equip, Connect and Multiply** followers of Jesus through disciple making and church planting across Europe.

Can you partner with us?
Can you Go, Pray or Give?
Visit ecmnewzealand.org.

New Zealand

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For information and feedback, email info@ecmnewzealand.org

.... GETTING TO KNOW

A WOMAN WHO PRAYS



GILLIAN

Gillian is 87 years old. She has two set times a day which she devotes to prayer. First thing in the morning - after getting her coffee - she prays, and then in the evening, once she is settled into bed, and before she puts the light out, she prays again.

She has a very comprehensive prayer list tucked into her bible (13 A5 pages of daily and weekly lists in tiny font), which she prays through morning and evening after she has read her bible. She prays for family members, including those as distant as third cousins, and who are scattered far and wide across the globe. She prays for all the clergy in her diocese (she is Anglican), and she prays for a vast range of missionaries from at least three different mission organisations.

What she loves most, though, is when she hears of a new baby on the way. She prays for that baby every day from the time she hears about its conception until it turns one!

Interested in praying for Europe?
Please email info@ecmnewzealand.org and ask to become a Partner in Prayer.



EDITORIAL

VISIT A MISSIONARY IN EUROPE

This issue of ECM News is packed with stories about prayer from ECM missionaries. Read them and be encouraged to keep praying!

Over the last few months, while reflecting on the need for the Gospel in Europe, I started thinking about the number of Kiwis who head off to Europe for a holiday each year. This sparked an idea to connect Kiwis with a local missionary during their travels. I canvassed some missionaries and asked them if they would be keen to host a Kiwi tourist for a few days a couple of times a year, and the response was extremely positive. I "put legs" on the idea, and the result is that our "Visit a Missionary in Europe" programme has been launched.

Spending time with a missionary host for 2-3 nights can be a unique and fulfilling experience. Kiwis will gain a deeper understanding of the missionaries' work, culture, and faith, and they will have the chance to see a corner of Europe through the eyes of someone who has dedicated their life to serving.

We have five missionary families - in Italy, France, Ireland, Albania & Bulgaria - ready to host Kiwi tourists, with more destinations coming soon. Our first Kiwi visitor just enjoyed three days with missionaries in Bulgaria.

If you, or anyone you know, are planning a holiday in Europe, then visit our website for more details: ecmnewzealand.org/visit-a-missionary.



Féy Cotter
Editor

WHY PRAY?

ECM Britain asked their workers about how prayer affects them and their ministries. Here's what they said.



When you call me, and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. Jeremiah 29:12



Blessed by prayer

Delyth Sutton
in Spain



I learnt last summer that God is able to supply my every single need. And when he decides to give, he can do it in abundance.

Spring last year I was checking in with Sarah Hay (ECM Britain's HR Manager) and she asked me how I was doing. I needed to rest but didn't have anything planned for a holiday. So Sarah suggested we pray about this. Three days later I attended a friend's retirement celebration in the countryside. It was here that God showed me His love and care for me.

Two friends from the town came up to me and said, "Delyth, would you like to come on holiday with us? We want to go to La Palma" (this is the Spanish island whose volcano erupted in September last year). Without thinking twice I told them that I had been praying about this and it was God's provision for me so I'd love to go with them.

Later on when we began to add up costs I thought, "Oh Lord, have I made a mistake? How can I afford this?" And then God confirmed His goodness yet again as two special gifts were given which covered the entire cost of the holiday! What's more, apart from it being a magical holiday, and being able to testify to my friends, I was able to raise support to send to a pastor on the island after the volcano erupted.



Coincidence or answered prayer?

Sally Pagano in the UK

This is a great exercise to try if your faith ever needs a top-up.

My family was around the dinner table one day complaining about things that weren't going right. So I asked them, "Have you heard the quote from William Temple, the former Archbishop of Canterbury? He said, 'When I pray, coincidences happen, and when I don't, they don't'. How about I pray for you and we can see if things change?"

I got rolling of eyes and, "Okay Mum, WHATEVER!" So I said, "Great, I will pray." And I DID. But since I really want my family to know that God is interested in our lives, I thought I'd get all my believing friends to pray too — just as a kind of insurance policy.

Not long afterwards my husband and I were going through a particularly difficult time and, having exhausted all our finances, were still short by £800. I said, "I

will pray." My husband looked at me as if I was from another planet.

We were, at that very moment, walking out of a bank after being declined a loan. Three steps later his phone went off. It was our accountant. "You won't believe it!", my husband said after the call finished. "Our accountant says he's been doing our tax returns, and we have a cheque coming for £800." The exact amount we needed! Coincidence or answered prayer? You decide!

Most recently, my eldest son was unsuccessfully applying for jobs and coming up against all sorts of barriers. He was getting really despondent. So, I told him, "I am going to pray for you, and I am going to get everyone I know to pray for you, and I am going to do it over the next two weeks." His response? "Mum, right now I think anything would help." (Note the advancement from rolling eyes here) Within two weeks he got a job in the very field he wanted to be in! When he got the job, I asked the same question: "Coincidence or answered prayer?" His response was, "Mum, that was definitely answered prayer."

So, start praying and let those 'coincidences' start happening!



Quick answer to prayer

Jim and Christine Memory
in Spain



Whilst preparing for a six-month stay in the UK a couple of years ago, we asked our supporters to join us in praying for somewhere in central England for us to live, from where we could work, but also visit family, friends and supporting churches easily. The very next day we were contacted by a couple who needed their empty student house occupied for that same time in Kegworth, just off the M1 near Nottingham. It was just what we needed at just the right time for us... and them. We had an amazing 6 months there and realise every time we drive past that area that it will always have a special place in our hearts now. What an amazing God we have!



Persistent prayer

David and Linda James in Austria



We live in a close-knit community of 15 houses where everyone moved here between 14 and 16 years ago. For years we have regularly prayed for our neighbours and sought to share our faith with them but, despite good friendships, there was little interest in faith.

Four years ago, we intensified this prayer, and three years ago Covid suddenly hit. This resulted in close neighbours becoming the only contact many were having with real people (rather than on a screen). It also opened people's hearts, with a greater willingness to discuss deeper issues, such as society, health, illness and dying. What we had initially perceived as so many ministry opportunities being cancelled, meant

that we were travelling far less and were, therefore, home more and able to spend more time with our neighbours.

When the lockdown measures in Austria allowed, a group of us would regularly meet in a garden. Suddenly, in one gathering of about ten of us, someone who worked in a care home said, "I think people who have faith die more peacefully than those who don't". What an amazing opportunity for us to affirm the hope of the resurrection.

Opportunities like this (but not quite so well set up) continue to this day. We try to challenge values by displaying an alternative Christian lifestyle and often tell people we are praying for them when they are facing challenges. One of our most frequent prayers is that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on our neighbourhood, and that the Lord will draw some of these good friends to himself.



Practical prayer

Sarah Deacon in Slovenia



In August 2021, I was preparing to move back to Slovenia that September. I had been searching for somewhere to live in Ljubljana. This was the top of my prayer list and many of my supporters and people in my church were praying for me. I was struggling to find a suitable flat in any part of the city within my budget that had a separate living area, an office space and (surprisingly) an oven in the kitchen. Then out of the blue I received an email from a friend in Ljubljana who knew of a flat that might be suitable. On paper it sounded like it might work. My friend did all the work for me. He spoke to the landlords, and he went over to take photos of the flat for me.

I agreed to it all, not really having another option but also because it did sound like an answer to my prayers.

I saw the flat for the first time when I moved in in September 2021 and I have been blessed by it for the past 2 years. God not only answered my prayers but went above and beyond what I expected and had asked for. It is bigger than I expected, with more features than I expected, in a better location than I expected and within my budget! Added to this, friends from my church live in the same building. I have been so blessed by my flat and I am grateful to be able to use it to be a blessing to others. The Ladies Bible Study regularly meets here and I also occasionally host other church meetings and the youth group. Every day I am reminded that God does answer our prayers, however big or small, and that I need to keep turning to Him because He is a God who loves to bless us.



Groaning prayer

Roland and Carolien Smith in The Netherlands



How do we pray with the threat of war, or for someone who is in chronic pain, or for a family member who is mentally ill and whose condition is worsening? At times like this the words don't really matter as much as we think they should. What matters is that we have deliberately inserted ourselves in the painful place where we partly feel the pain and distress that other people are feeling. We groan with creation as we long for justice, healing and the restoration of all things, and the Holy Spirit offers our groans and anguished emotions as prayer to God. The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us, who feel spiritually feeble and lacking in confidence. We also lack confidence because we know our motives may be mixed. But God does not receive our prayer because our motives are pure, but because of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is as if the rather murky or unclear motives that leave us are transformed by the work of Christ, interceding for us, into fragrant incense as they reach the Father. So the sighing, tears, hand-wringing and mumbling all make perfect sense to God and are as much prayer as any prayer can be.

(Inspired by The Message of Prayer by Tim Chester)



Hopeful prayer

Peter and Kate Knowlson in Spain



A big concern for us as we look to transition into retirement is how to continue to support the growth in the church plant we have worked in for over 20 years in southern Spain. We have been praying that God would show us the way forward and many of you have been praying with us. Therefore we were very excited when the Spanish ECM director rang us to say there is a couple who are interested in coming to serve in the church in Peñarroya. This has been the best encouragement we have had in a long time! The Ceballos family are raising support and hope to be with us by August. Praise God!

We missionaries also need to pray and one thing Peter and I have found really helpful is using the PrayerMate app. There are lots of ideas on how to pray more regularly and plenty of space to add your own ideas. An added bonus for us that ECM's Prayer Diary can be added to use in the app. It's a wonderful addition to our morning cup of tea. Take a look!



If you want to pray for ECM's latest prayer needs, sign up for our free monthly **Partners in Prayer** email or subscribe via **PrayerMate**

Head to: praynow4.org/ecmz or scan the QR code.

Pray for

SLOVENIA



With a picturesque landscape of the Alps, thick forests and stunning coastline, Slovenia lies on the Adriatic Sea between Italy and Croatia. Despite having a strong Christian influence since the Reformation, there is a limited presence of Christ following communities.



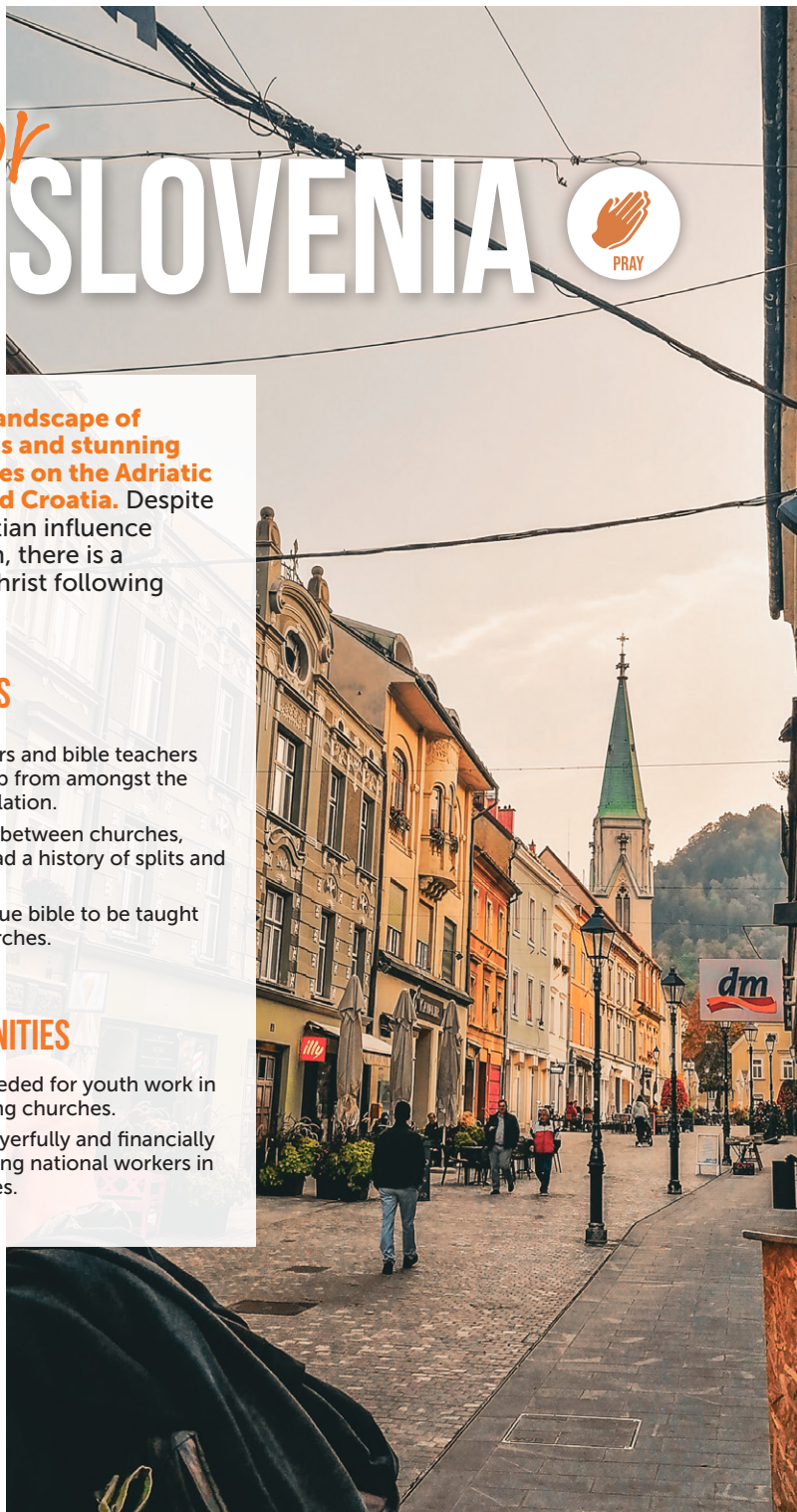
PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for leaders and bible teachers to be raised up from amongst the Slovene population.
- Pray for unity between churches, which have had a history of splits and infighting.
- Pray for the true bible to be taught clearly in churches.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Personnel needed for youth work in young growing churches.
- People to prayerfully and financially support existing national workers in their ministries.



POPULATION
2.12M*



51 births per day



57 deaths per day



5 migrations per day

With one of the most rapidly aging populations in the world, the Slovene working population continues to decline despite immigration.

*Population estimates based on interpolation of data from World Population Prospects.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Following World War II, Slovenia became part of Yugoslavia and then gained independence in 1991. Slovenia has Roman Catholic roots, but the substance of that faith has faded away through the years. Now with a prosperous economy, faith has a marginal role in the lives of many Slovenians.

UNREACHED PEOPLE

629,000 (9.4%)

"Unreached" people have no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate resources to evangelise their people group.



Ljubljana

RELIGION

Christian Adherent
54.18%

Christ followers believe up only 0.1% of the Slovenian population

Non Religious
43.79%

Muslim
1.95%

Other
<0.1%

CHURCHES



Within the 210 towns in Slovenia, only 28 have a Christ following community, so there is a great need for church planting. Within these communities there is some confusion of ideas with people turning to sources like Youtube instead of the bible. As there is no national bible college, there is a great need for trained pastors and leaders.

BELIEFS IN SLOVENIA

Believe in God	32%
Religious	41%
Non religious	25%
Athiest	28%
Unknown	6%

ECM MINISTRY

ECM has 10 national workers and one cross cultural worker in Slovenia in Slovenia who are all involved in either leading a church or working to plant churches, which can take many years to establish.

ECM Australia has three candidates (Josh and Bethany, and Terence Bell) planning to move to Ljubljana sometime in 2024

Sources: ecmi.org, joshuaproject.net, pewresearch.org, worldpopulationreview.com, cia.gov, operationworld.org

TO FIND OUT MORE, HEAD TO [ECMNEWZEALAND.ORG/SLOVENIA](https://ecmnewzealand.org/slovenia)



SUPPORT THE TEAM

BEHIND OUR MISSIONARIES



A Message From Our Workers



Scan the QR code to watch video stories from our workers, and to support the team that supports them this Christmas or head to ecmnewzealand.org/christmas



MISSION OPS



DO YOU SEEK TO SERVE THE GOSPEL NEEDS OF EUROPE?



ERASMUS SCHOLARSHIPS COIMBRA, PORTUGAL

Erasmus scholarships are available to students studying at most European universities. Why not talk to your university about the opportunities they offer and then use your time in another country to get involved in mission with a local team! Christian students in Portugal are very much on their own. Your involvement in their church, life and university will bless them immensely. Study and share your faith in a new, exciting way - get an ERASMUS scholarship and widen your horizons

ecmnewzealand.org/erasmus-scholarship



INTERCULTURAL INTERNSHIPS A VARIETY OF PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ECM is partnering with Bible colleges in NZ to offer students the opportunity to be discipled in cross-cultural missions in NZ (level 5) and then Europe. Placements are possible across Europe from small villages in the Mediterranean to a cities in northern Germany. Is God calling you to work in another culture or country? Perhaps to Europe? Take the first steps to the mission field in a safe and supported environment, and learn more about God, yourself, and missions.

ecmnewzealand.org/internship-programmes



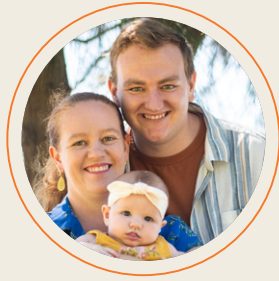
COMMUNITY CENTRE | SHORT TERM KAMENICA, KOSOVO

A short-term missionary experience is available in Kamenica, Kosovo, with ministry opportunities centred on the Community Education Centre. The centre runs evangelistic events and other activities for children, young people and disabled men. Come and serve through the drop-in centre, home visits, teaching English, kids' clubs and more.

There will also be opportunities to run special events/programmes/camps depending on the season. Regular care and support will be offered, including personal mentoring, prayer and guidance.

ecmnewzealand.org/short-term-in-kosovo

To find out more about any of these opportunities, please email us at serve@ecmnewzealand.org



**ROSS AND SHONA
MCGAUGHRAN**
CANDIDATES FOR AUSTRIA

We have encountered two issues with the visa stipulations for residency in Austria. We have to pay tax in Austria, rather than in NZ, which increases our budget. We need to have a basic German language qualification before applying for a visa (which we have to apply for in NZ).

Keziah's hip dysplasia has not yet corrected with her hip harness, so we have to wait until January to know the next steps. If she needs a firm cast, this will affect her comfort, feeding and sleep, and could reduce our ability to move across health systems until it is resolved. We need God's wisdom and provision as we navigate these things.

Please pray:

- **Pray for Keziah's hips to fully heal by January.**
- **Pray for us to learn enough German in order to apply for our visas to go long term.**
- **Pray that God would provide for the increase in our budget.**



**ALEX AND LIZ
PREOTEESEA-WAGNER**
CANDIDATES FOR ROMANIA

We have just graduated from our studies at Eastwest College of Intercultural Studies and are preparing to spend our final few months in New Zealand before moving to Romania early next year. This year has been a big encouragement to us; our studies have helped us grow in our faith and knowledge, and it has been a blessing to connect with more churches around the country and develop partnerships with many faithful people. Over the summer we aim to have some quality time with friends and family, as well as visiting and farewelling our supporters and churches.

Please pray:

- **Pray for quality family time and building resilience in our children, in preparation for our big transition to Romania.**
- **Pray that we will see God's provision in financial support so that we can fulfil His calling on our lives.**



CAREN L
PREPARING TO RETURN TO GERMANY

Please pray for this ongoing season of preparing the fields of my heart and life: together with the Holy Spirit, we are pulling out weeds, but also fertilising, investing in infrastructure and planning how and what to sow next.

I have made the very difficult decision to switch from my current specialisation in Emergency Medicine and apply for General Practice training. The benefits of this are a specialty which exists in Germany as well as less shift work and more time in Australia to invest in mission training. It has been a very hard decision, as it feels like a delay to return to missions. Yet, I trust that the decisions I make for the sake of my spiritual health are good ones. Thank you for your prayers!

Please pray:

- **Pray for a favourable outcome to my application.**
- **Pray for the Holy Spirit's continued work in my life.**



ECM NEW ZEALAND
STRATEGIC PLAN

The Trustees have recently approved a new Strategic Plan for 2024–2026. In summary our aims are: to grow as a trustworthy, independent and effective sending organisation; to develop and nurture relationships, and partnerships, with like-minded Christian groups and people committed to mission in Europe; to develop new initiatives; to build a strong base of financial supporters; and to raise the profile and good-will of ECM in NZ.

Please pray:

- **Pray for wisdom and guidance as we implement this strategic plan over the next few years.**
- **Pray that we will grow and develop well in each key area of our strategic plan.**
- **Pray that we will achieve many of the goals we have before us in each of these areas.**





'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Acts 20.35

Giving is still a central aspect of Christmas celebrations, even though it gets more consumer focused every year. The ideal of Christmas is encapsulated by the words of Jesus quoted in Acts 20.35: It is more blessed to give than to receive.

churches, financial supporters, prayer partners, and the team at ECM.

We, the ECM team, coordinate placements, provide training and support, and ensure the missionary's well-being throughout their journey. From first conversations to the missionary finally working on the field, we ensure that they

missionaries to Romania and Austria. We also have others in the pipeline planning to go in the future.

Your gift will help us:

- Walk with and care for our missionaries in the field.
- Support and prepare new missionaries following their calling to go.
- Build deep partnerships with churches and donors.
- Uphold good stewardship and commitment to best practice in our operations.

May you have a blessed Christmas, and may God continue to bless ECM and his global mission.



FÉY COTTER
National Director

are equipped and prepared to carry out their work effectively; so they can make an impact and spread the message of hope and love.

We invite you to partner with us this Christmas.

We have the vision to increase the number of new workers we send each year. Next year we are on track to send new

The biggest thing we at ECM NZ want to be able to give is the good news of the gospel, through sending our missionaries. And we'd like to prayerfully ask you to consider giving to us this Christmas so we can continue to fulfill the vision of 'making Jesus known in Europe'.

Many teams are involved in sending a missionary, including

QUICK SNIPPETS



■ ELENA'S CAMP MINISTRY IN ROMANIA

Elena helped at two young kids' camps and a youth camp. She had lots of fun, especially with the games and sports. The camps kept her young!

The highlights of the five weeks were:

- Seeing children returning, and being able to spend time with them, for a second year.
- Great communication with the organisers in the lead up to the camp. This year she was able to spend more time helping the team plan and prepare for the camp.
- Being there for the children and being able to speak into the lives of some of the children who were struggling and being left out.

Elena's biggest struggle was needing translation at times. Her language was okay for everyday vocabulary, but she found communicating in the Romanian church language a challenge.



To read more, please visit ecmnewzealand.org/elenas-trip-to-romania or scan the QR code

YES, I want to be part of changing EUROPE

Name: _____
 Street: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Postcode: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

I/We would like to:

Receive **news and updates** from ECM:

Email Post

Become a **Partner in Prayer** and receive monthly prayer fuel by email

Receive information about **including ECM in my will**

Talk to a **mobiliser** about serving in Europe

Support by **financially** giving \$ _____

Fortnightly Monthly Quarterly Yearly One-off

Designate my gift to:

Specific worker/project: _____

General Funds Where Most Needed

Please acknowledge my gift:

Receipt (email only) Annual Statement via Email Post

No thanks

I have given by Direct Deposit:

Direct Deposit

European Christian Mission

New Zealand: 01-0288-0005475-00

Please include your initial, surname and the name of the missionary/project you are donating to.

I/we would like to give by Credit card:

Credit card Visa/Mastercard

Name on card: _____

Card number:

Expiry: / CVV:

I authorise ECM to debit my nominated credit card for the above amount and frequency.

Signature: _____

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT

ecm

Here are some ways you
can partner with us in
Christ's mission
in Europe!

SUPPORT THE TEAM BEHIND OUR MISSIONARIES



Listen to a message from our workers
& support the team that supports them.
→ ecmnewzealand.org/christmas



Tuesday 14th February
8PM NZDT
→ ecmnewzealand.org/pray-for-slovenia

For more information please head to ecmnewzealand.org
or contact us on 022 303 9667