

CHRISTMAS IS HERE

Celebrating the Birth of Jesus - with Christmas love and greetings

Wow & Joy! Christmas at Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital & Services Centre (LLHSC), Nepal

A glimpse back on work during 2017 – and how Christmas will be celebrated at Lalgadh Hospital

From Dr Graeme & Meena Clugston – Medical Director, and Nursing Advisor -
and the entire grateful team at Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital & Services Centre (LLHSC) - 12 December 2017

Dear saints, friends, helpers & supporters of NLT/LLHSC's front-line battle against leprosy, poverty and need,



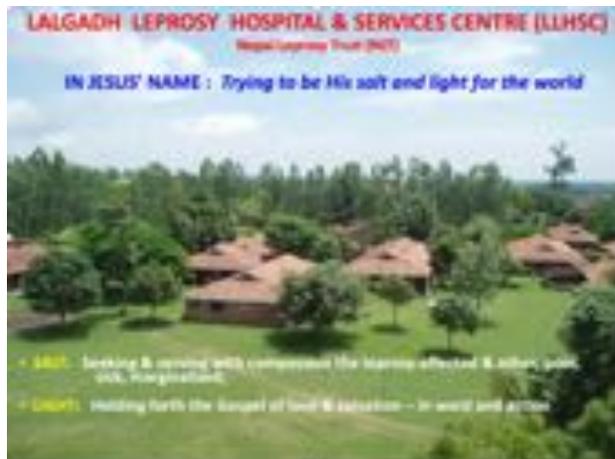
Christmas is here (almost)! ... and Wow! Sometimes we wish we could be there to share Christmas joy with you there. So we send you an enormous "THANKYOU" - to God, and to you - for your support, prayers and encouragement during 2017. I



Nurses and doctors singing Nepalese Christmas carols at the Christmas Eve hospital Christmas program, with about 100 leprosy patients gathered for the celebration ... in our new spacious Children's Unit

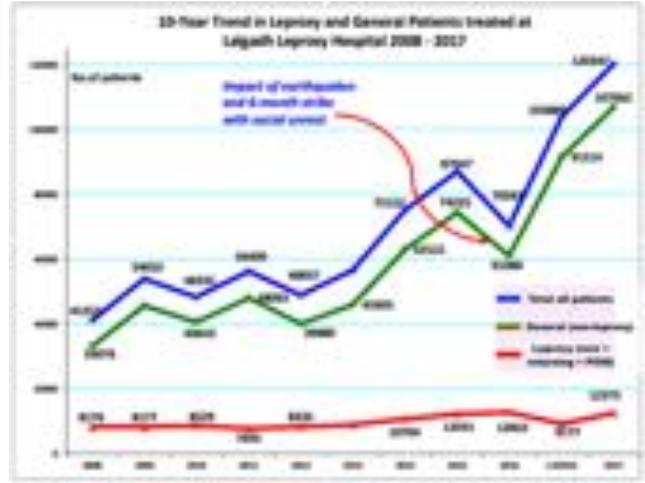
With your prayers and encouragement, the front-line mission work here gets a terrific boost with Christmas light-shining in a dark superstitious world here, even in this remote part of Nepal, where most people, being Hindu, have never heard of Christmas. Blessed by God's amazing grace we all here strive to faithfully pursue Jesus's double calling, to be:

- **"the salt of the earth"** – seeking and serving with compassion the leprosy-affected and other poor, sick, needy and marginalised including development work and continuing earthquake relief efforts; and
- **"the light of the world"** - by shining the Gospel light of love and salvation through word and deed, in this awfully dark difficult superstitious world



As we look forward with excitement to Christmas, we look back over the past year of 2017 great gratitude. Again with your help, and with the enabling Grace of the Good Lord, the numbers of patients coming for consultations, diagnosis and treatment LLHSC have continued to soar - **reaching 120,000 ... including 54,000 women and 22,500 children**. And grab these rocketing patient numbers over the past 10 years!

Outpatient Consultations at Lalgaadh Hospital - 2017	
July 2016 – July 2017	
New Leprosy	1,233
All Leprosy	113,285
Other diseases (TB, typhoid, malaria, meningitis etc)	107,062
Total Outpatient consultations	120,347
Total Children consultations	22,503



Jam-packed busy busy busy Outpatient Clinics



Septic surgery for leprosy ulcer care is part of the busy daily work in the Inpatient wards.

Dr Yamuna and nurse Laxmi treating Chintu's bilateral foot ulcers.

End-of-Year Highlights – Reconstructive surgery bash; Community Program; Rebuilding earthquake-wrecked Kalika School

A couple of weeks ago we organised our annual intense 8-day **hand-reconstructive surgery bash** - thanks to visiting specialist reconstructive hand-surgeon Dr Donald Sammut & his team from UK. With our own hand-reconstructive surgeon - Dr Krishna Lama, away for a year on training in USA - Dr Sammut's visit was especially needed and welcome.

This reconstructive-surgery bash attracts many – especially children with their parents, as well as teenagers, adults and elderly - often from many days travel away, often from distant districts of Nepal, from high mountains and Terai, and some from across the border in India.



Dr Sammut & team with LLHSC's surgical team



(a) Annual intense reconstructive-hand-surgery bash; (b) this beautiful tendon transplant work is that of our Dr Krishna Lama

Many poor and needy people come in desperate hope that this could be their one-chance-in-a-lifetime to get their hands restored, healed or reconstructed. Not just leprosy - it includes hands mutilated, deformed, often with limited or no function ... especially due to the ravages of leprosy, but also from burns, or crush injuries, or congenital malformations, and several other causes.



Post-operative nursing care after reconstructive surgery on both of Gulshan's hands. This is where compassionate loving nursing care shines bright at LLHSC

For many with leprosy it's often a desperate hope that with reconstructed hands they may be accepted back into their families and communities, with the stigma, marginalisation and ostracism a thing of the past. For younger women and girls – it means they can get married.



Three thrilled girls – waiting for the Christmas-joy when bandages come off. Hand reconstructive surgery has transformed their lives and hopes.

The LLHSC Community Programme continues – across 4 Districts (2.5 million people) *(and yep! I know you may have seen some of these pics earlier this year, but hey! We are looking backwards through 2017 here!)*



(a) Laxmi got a cow through microcredit. She paid back the loan and now supports her family; (b) Water pumps installed – clean water!



Staff Nurse Krishna Maya – running a remote village antenatal clinic.

Maternal and neonatal mortality rates are very high in this poor part of Nepal

Building a new school to replace the earthquake-wrecked one - Kalika school in remote Sindhuli District

We've been waiting for the monsoon and landslides damage to be cleared away so we can get access and resume work for rebuilding Kalika School, high up in remote Sindhuli District. It's a 5-hour trip from LLHSC including a steep one-hour climb on foot from where the rough road ends.



We planned with this needy local Tamang community to help them put in a water supply, latrines and to rebuild the earthquake wrecked school. Other support for this remote community has included training and supporting the school-teacher, and for the children warm clothes, shoes, schoolbags, books and writing materials. We have also run health clinics up there for the children... and then the adults want to be checked-up too.

Imagine their excitement ... Many of these children have not even seen colored pencils before. They have never seen a doctor up there before. Neither has any foreigner even been up there before we came!

More pics and information about this project on our Facebook site:

<http://www.facebook.com/pg/nepal.leprosy/photos/KalikaSchool1> and www.facebook.com/pg/nepal.leprosy/photos/KalikaSchool2



(a) Rugged hair-raising scary road..... Then an hour's steep climb on foot; (b) See the school? ... way down on the ridge. Rugged remote country



Measuring out the site for the new earthquake-proofed Kalika School



Running a health clinics – no doctor has ever been up there before nor has any foreigner been there before

CHRISTMAS IS COMING – shining the Christmas light at a leprosy hospital

(with pics from Christmas last year)

CHRISTMAS EVE at Lalgadh Hospital is always a fun-filled exciting combination of sharing the Christmas meaning and message with its wonder and gospel significance, to amazed leprosy patients. Many of the patients have never heard of Christmas before

Lalgadh Hospital is normally a wonderful haven of care, love, cure and compassion throughout the year. But then at Christmas these things reach a marvellous climax. The children in hospital, if they can, usually help with decorating the hospital wards. On Christmas Eve all the patients gather together with the staff for sharing together in singing Nepalese carols, children - both patients and staff-children performing together, the nurses singing, and the special Gospel message of Christmas is told. And there's Nepalese dancing - can you imagine.... even when one is missing some toes and/or feet! ... with much hilarity and laughter.



(a) Hospitalised Children with leprosy (mostly) – singing Christmas carols; (b) Nurses & doctors singing Nepalese Christmas carols;



(a) Patients and staff (> 100) gathered in the new Children's unit for the Christmas Program; (b) Dambar explaining the wonder of Christmas

Then it's present-giving to all the patients, followed by feasting in the wards – always wonderfully moving and unforgettable....



Nursing staff and doctors – ready to distribute Christmas gifts to all the patients



Most of these patients – children or elderly – have never heard of Christmas, nor experiences the joy of Christmas presents ... nor had a hug and loving arm around their shoulders, when they are mostly shunned or untouched... because they have leprosy



The ladies all get fine colourful warm woollen shawls; the men get man-coloured (favorite brown) woollen shawls



The children all get beautiful warm anoraks .. plus extra children-favorite items



Then the Christmas-Eve feast begins ... nurses and doctors distributing the goodies – oranges, samosas, sweet julabis, sweet rice and chocolates



Joyful happy inpatient ladies – totally thrilled the whole never-experienced-before Christmas event, and their warm woollen Christmas shawls.

Christmas Day, down at Lalgadh Village Church - it's about 1 Km walk from Lalgadh Hospital – down through the rice paddies, buffaloes and bamboo, to reach Lalgadh Church. The church has been decorated a few days before, and despite the cold everyone sits on the floor as usual, ladies on one side, men on the other. The service is longer than the usual 1½ hour weekly service. This one lasts about 2 hours - the sermon being at least an hour.

While the prolonged Christmas service goes on, some of the hospital guys kill and dissect 2 or 3 goats. Goat-meat is the most preferred meat (not for me!). The goat-meat is cooked along with great steaming cauldrons of rice, very spicy vegetables, tomatoes, and lentils, on wood fires, behind the Sunday-school building. When the service is over there is a rush out the church door to queue-up for food. The local village folk are also made welcome to come and join in, both church and feast. Several hundred feasting folks!



Christmas Day at Lalgadh Village Church



Killing and prepping the goats – then cooking the goat, along with rice, and spicy vegetable Behind the Sunday School building



When the Christmas church service ends – there's a rush out the door and excited line-up for the feast



Christmas feast – at Lalgadh Church – with several hundred folks from church and village



Lalgadh Village families also come to join the Christmas feast



Have we managed in 2017 to make Lalgadh Hospital's work both the "Salt and Light" that we had aimed to be?

On the "Salt" side ... in reaching out loving caring healing hands to the many thousands of leprosy-sufferers and over 100,000 other poor, sick and needy, Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital is now one of the world's busiest leprosy hospitals. Leprosy is still rampant here. High numbers of children are affected. Nevertheless - all leprosy treatment at Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital is free – whether operations, ulcer care, antibiotics and steroids, inpatient care and outpatient consultations, laboratory and X-Ray – all free for all leprosy patients. We want to keep it that way, especially because leprosy patients are amongst the poorest of the poor, at the bottom of the social woodpile – facing stigma, marginalisation, ostracism from their communities, schools, and even families. We could still do much more, and hope, with your help, to improve our "Saltiness" in 2018.

On the "Light" side – LLHSC's Christian outreach continues to reach out with word and deed - in the hospital with daily devotions, Bible studies and fellowships, and compassionate love and care. Outreach into the community continues especially through the local churches. Baptisms continue and Christianity, which is still at only about 2% of the Nepalese population, continues to grow. There is an increasingly pro-Hindu anti-Christian line taken by the Government at the moment. Christian conversion has been criminalised. But the Light-shining continues, with caution, in this dark world.



Baptisms in the local river

So Thank you immensely for all your support, prayers, love and encouragement.



The Himalayas – border with Tibet.... just north of here - a mind-blowing incredible view of God's Creation

With your continuing prayers and encouragement, and God's amazing grace, we can surely move mountains together, as "salt and light" in compassionate love serving the poor and sick, the leprosy-affected and the needy, and in sharing the wonderful news of God's love, through Jesus Christ.



HAPPY CHRISTMAS ...and a fabulous New Year!

With love from all the team at Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital - love, thanks, warmest wishes and our prayers for God's blessings on all you do, and for a totally wonderful Christmas and a totally blessed 2018

Dr Graeme A. Clugston & Meena Clugston,
Medical Director, & Nursing Adviser,
Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital & Services Centre, Nepal Leprosy Trust,
Dhanusha District,
Nepal

Lalgadh Hospital web-site: www.nepal-leprosy.com
Lalgadh Hospital FaceBook: www.facebook.com/nepal.leprosy