

Easter Day

A dawn service led by the women of the church, finding an empty tomb and a risen Christ was a dramatic start to Easter morning. Another early start on Easter Monday took us on a walk from the church to Lambete and back as a fund raising exercise for the hospital. We are very blessed by our friends locally and overseas who help us to keep the hospital running. This week has seen the arrival of a group of Rotarians who will spend 2 weeks working here, fixing broken fans & lights, sealing the floors of the wards, sort out the water pump and put up shelving for the Nursing College library. They arrived with a large container full of equipment, books and clothing shipped from Australia. We also have a visiting team from the Uniting Church in Australia who are very supportive, with 2 nurses and a pharmacist, here for a week. There is also an audiologist who hopes to come out on a longer placement next year. All of this is a great encouragement to the staff and ourselves as we seek to provide good health care to this very scattered rural community.

16 April

The official opening of the Helena Goldie College of Nursing! The Minister of Health arrived by plane from Honiara and a church service was followed by a display of the hospital departments and feasting with traditional dancing.

The hospital is looking good after the Rotary group work. Our young paralysed patient has finally left the cubicle by the nurses' station to a newly curtained area in the corridor where he can look out of the window to the hospital canoe shed and watch the comings and goings there.

Graham is managing clinical work and his new role as Hospital Secretary. Jenny has been out touring - we tour in 4 different areas and she has now visited them all. Two different groups of visitors from the Uniting Church in Australia also visited and were delighted to catch up with Jenny and the touring team on one day as they fund the touring. It was also good for the church and rotary to meet up. They hope to work more closely in the future. It is a very exciting time to be here!

23 April

This has been a sad week for us all at Helena Goldie Hospital, contrasting markedly with the excitement of the previous week. The death of a man from a head injury following a drunken fight provoked an outrage which led to the trashing & looting of the bottle shop (off licence) in Lambete. Hoards of young men then arrived drunk at the hospital chapel where the body was laid and caused more damage. The patients were all frightened and did not sleep. Police reinforcements arrived on Saturday morning with a pathologist to conduct a post mortem which was done in our theatre. The perpetrator of the injury is now in prison and the community has paid some compensation money to the family of the victim. On Wednesday an article appeared in a national newspaper criticising the hospital for lack of care, demanding an inquiry & explanation. We are all trying to come to terms with this, and a staff meeting was held on Friday afternoon.

After the meeting we discovered that one of our own staff members had taken his own life. We are all shocked. Jenny and the chaplain broke the news to his mother who is currently an inpatient. Please pray for us at this difficult time, that we will be sustained by God's love and will continue to reach out & serve the community of the West Province of the Solomon Islands.