

JANUARY 2020



Dear friends,

Happy New Year! The reality is that January can often be a difficult time in our lives, feeling a little 'flat' after the festivities of Christmas and a pressure to embark on something new or begin a fresh project. However we approach the new year (and decade!) it's really good to remember the unending love that we have in the Lord Jesus. He is our Forever, Unchanging and Reigning King, no matter what lies ahead or what muddles we may be trying to reclaim right now. There is such a comfort in knowing that he is the same forgiving God today as he was yesterday, and he will be exactly the same in the future – he never makes a New Year resolution.

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We had a great time focusing upon Jesus during the Christmas season. Every day during Advent, as a family we read a chapter of a book called, 'Unwrapping the Greatest Gift'. We felt greatly blessed this year during these very special and uninterrupted times. We were reminded that we are so blessed that we have a Saviour who came to us in such a humble way, as a baby to save us. And we felt so privileged to be shown throughout the Bible how God's amazing and unstoppable plan came to unfold and how it is still unfolding as we continue to wait for him to come again.

The autumn was a very long term with no school break for Theo, so no break for us as a family. Both children worked hard at their schooling and we are very thankful that they are settling into living in Spain. The biggest change for us was that, after Julian was installed as Rector at the church on 20 October, we said goodbye to the Lovell family who have been living and serving in Valencia at our church for the last eight years. John, who was the Rector here, has now taken on the role as the New South Wales Director for CMS. The Snowdon family have been on home assignment throughout this period too (they return here shortly) and so it has felt very strange with many changes happening around us in our little church community in a short space of time. God has graciously provided very good friends for us in another missionary family, Jim and Tanja French and their children, Evie and Silas. We are very grateful for them.



Last term saw a wonderful little group of young people and Erasmus students at our church, mainly from the UK (but not entirely). They have supported us well and have become part of our church life here this year. As we mentioned in our last letter, we began an English-speaking bible



study group for any of us 'still developing' our Spanish language, not just for the students. Jim French leads this group.



We pray that the weekly bible study group for Spanish speakers will continue to grow and more will find time to join. Both groups meet weekly and the times we have had looking at the first few chapters of Isaiah have been really worthwhile and spirituality very uplifting. Times of fellowship with both groups meeting together have been great also.



We had two Christmas carol services; one in English and one in Spanish. After last year's first traditional 'Carols by candlelight', there seemed to be a desire from our main Spanish congregation to do something similar. Both services went really well and, not only were there locals from church, but people invited friends, neighbours and fellow students!



Theo read a bible passage at the English carol service. Traditional mince pies were made (and eaten!) and were adapted to Spanish mince pie 'empanadillas'!

The two-week christmas break Theo had from school felt fairly lonely for us as a family this year; although our good friend, Will, visited just beforehand, we didn't have any visitors from abroad during the holiday period and many people here were away. We missed being in England with family and friends.

We spent an afternoon in December with some Spanish friends in their village about an hour's drive down the coast from us, where we ate 'Arroz al Horno', picked lemons and oranges from their trees then went for a stroll around the old village which was fun.



Theo and Nicky continue to work with their Spanish tutors, Neus and Alex. Julian also continues to have lessons with Alex and we are thankful that he reads through Julian's sermons before they are preached and that mistakes are becoming fewer.

We are so thankful for your support, as always. With our love, Julian, Nicky, Jemima and Theo.

Prayer points

- Give thanks that, despite being on our own this Christmas, we were reminded of our God's goodness to us in his gift of Jesus.
- Give thanks that Julian is now the Rector at the church and pray for wisdom as and when new and challenging situations arise in this post. Please pray for positive relationships with other clergy in the denomination.
- Please pray for Theo's and Nicky's weekly language lessons and pray that Nicky can help Jemima learn more Spanish as part of daily lessons. And pray for the children's learning at their schools.
- Please pray that Jemima and Theo will continue to feel settled and be used by God to make Jesus known. Give thanks for the friends that we all have.
- Please pray for the Christians living in Valencia, that they will have a desire to tell more people about the reason for their hope. Give thanks for the young people and students at the church.