

MARCH 2020



Since our last prayer letter, we've had a new baby, we've moved city and church, we passed our driving tests so we can drive our new car, a new bishop has been named and Argentina has a new president. Not too much then.



Church group in Mendoza

Firstly, we are incredibly thankful for your prayers in an insanely chaotic time. Somehow we got through, wondering how everything went so smoothly with the distances involved and a tiny baby in tow. Your prayers have been answered in abundance with many details slotting into place with miraculous ease. Our church families in Lomas and Mendoza helped with time, muscle, cleaning, provision of beds, child care, takeaways and general loving care. My sister, Nadja, came out to lend a hand for a week too, so we are tremendously grateful for all of you, near and far.

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As I write, we are installed in our new house (not a flat!) and the children are busy making a compost heap with Andrew, as we use this time to prepare for the start of official ministry in the next few days.

Youth Camp Los Cocos – Law vs Grace

Two weeks after our arrival in Mendoza, we set off on a 10-hour journey to Los Cocos, Cordoba, for the annual youth camp. With new driving licenses, motorway driving is forbidden for six months, so a friend drove us the whole way, setting off at 5am to arrive by 5pm! We drove through miles and miles of dusty, dry plains, saline flats and cactus-strewn desert on one of those tumbleweed roads you see in cowboy movies but arrived all in one piece in time for tea.

Galatians is not necessarily the most obvious choice for a youth camp but it was really well received, especially by the older campers. Clarifying the depth and hideousness of our sin (by looking at how we can't keep the law) really highlighted the riches of God's grace and the glory of the cross. Please pray on for these truths to be deeply embedded in young hearts. A particular highlight was the night we had a prayer and praise event under the stars. It was a very Psalm 8 moment.

An unusual welcome

'Motochorros' roughly translated 'motorbike bandits' made an unwelcome appearance as we were taking stuff into church for our welcoming service. Providentially, the kids and I were posing for photos on the front steps and didn't have a clue what was happening a few metres down the road. Andrew, car keys in hand, was quietly cornered by four lads on two motorbikes. With guns. After they demanded the keys, Andrew told them he was a pastor and one motorbike drifted off. He then got his wallet out and handed over the equivalent of about £12, at which point the remaining motorbike moved off, possibly because our visiting friend (thanks Matt Pope!) was jogging over to the car. This eye-opening episode was helpful in a number of ways. We saw God's protection and sovereignty in a situation that could have been very ugly. We still have a car, Andrew still has his wallet with all his ID documents in it and we still have Andrew! It's easy to think that because we've moved from Buenos Aires, where crime rates are very high, we're safe. But this has warned us to be very careful, especially when loading and unloading the car. Finally, we don't think it was a coincidence that this happened at our welcome service. We're in a spiritual battle. Pray with us that we wouldn't grow complacent. And do pray for the men who robbed us - that they would be reached with a better treasure than a stolen car or some pesos.

Alloha Noah

15 November saw the arrival of Noah Keith. His name means rest and comfort and so far he has lived up to it! He is such a great sleeper (or '*dormilón*' as they say here). Now three months old, he is smiling and babbling and generally enjoying being adored by his older siblings.

Much love in Christ,
Andrew, Bethanie, Maia, Emilio, Lucy and Noah xxxxxx

Prayer points

- This month sees Andrew taking on his official role as pastor. It's about 13 years since they last had a permanent pastor, so it's a big change for everyone. Please pray for abundant wisdom and grace in these first few months. Many core members seem pretty tired, so we pray that they would be refreshed by God's word and delighted by the gospel again.
- Andrew was due to attend an apprentice conference in Chile this month, to see how we could run a ministry training scheme here. Sadly it was postponed until November because of riots. Pray for an end to the unrest in Chile.
- Project Timothy, the group of young preachers, is growing. Please pray for Jony and Andrew as they continue to invest in these six young leaders so that they will grow in joy in the gospel, clarity of conviction and godly character. We praise God for how they have grown and developed over the last couple of years.
- We praise the Lord for his provision of a wonderful house, near to church and walking distance from school. We are revelling in the space and the garden and enjoying learning about which spiders are poisonous! Maia and Emilio started school on 26 February. Pray on for them, after an encouraging start, that they would make new friends and enjoy their classes. This year they will be going to school in the afternoon, from 1.30 to 6pm, leaving time in the morning to do some homeschool-type effort in English. Pray for me as I work out exactly how to go about that!
- We're thankful to God for the election of a new bishop, Brian Williams, who is currently pastor in Martinez, Buenos Aires. He'll be working closely with the current bishop, Greg Venables, for a transition period before taking over next year.
- Please pray for Argentina under the new government of Alberto Fernández, including the ex-president Cristina Kirchner as his VP. Inflation is still very high (51.5% in January), and exchange rates are very tricky. Pray for us as we navigate this economic minefield.