

# APRIL 2019



Dear friends



We have just celebrated the first anniversary of our arrival in Valencia; it fell during Las Fallas and so we were able to celebrate with friends and fireworks. It was a really fun time in and around the city and our children were allowed to eat candy floss and churros and throw bangers in the streets with the other kids. There were so many fallas to see and we took the opportunity to walk around parts of the city, firstly with a group of friends from Theo's school and then with some church family.

All good fun especially watching the fallas burning

on the last night but we are very happy that the noise has gone and we can now sleep...

Christmas for us was quite different, it being our first in Spain. We spent Christmas day with the Snowdon family who are CMS missionaries based at our church. We managed to track down a real tree and we joined our neighbours for a lovely (and very late!) Christmas soir ee in the foyer of our building which was a great way to get to know people a little better. We went orange-picking on 27 December with the family of one of Theo's school friends, all of whom we are getting to know well. 6 January is a very big day here in Spain: it is called 'D a de Los Reyes Magos' (Day of the Kings) and the tradition is to eat Roscon (see photo) so we did! It fell on a Sunday and it was brilliant to be reminded at church that day of the amazing gift that Jesus is to us.



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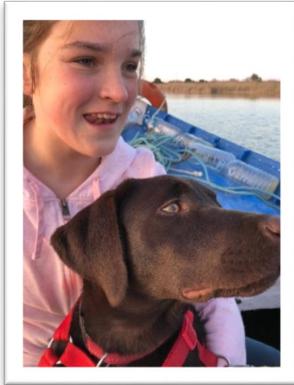
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After the excitement of the Christmas season, we all had the flu which was miserable. And then not long afterwards, Theo and Nicky had a sickness bug, so the first two months of 2019 were quite a challenge. Thanks to God that we are all feeling so much better now.

We have seen some change and growth at the church over the last few months during the 'normal' Spanish service. Amazingly we have seen a small influx of adults (but some children too) and we are hoping this will mean we need to begin to think creatively about the fairly limited space. We held an English 'Carols by Candlelight' service for the first time at Christmas and about 20 people attended. We continue to enjoy building relationships with individuals in our church family and feel we are gradually getting to know people more and more. We continue to hold the weekly Grupo de Vida (bible study group) at our house.

Julian is now taking more of a lead role at church as one of the ministers, planning and organising services and preaching regularly.

Nicky continues to lead the children's group once a month at the English service and is involved with the music as regularly as possible. Sundays at church can be quite a challenge for Jemima as she has a limited ability to communicate and she can become quite overwhelmed and anxious. She particularly struggled over the Christmas period as everything was different to her 'norm' but we look forward to next year when, we feel, things will be more familiar for her. Theo, at 11 years old, is the oldest boy at church and so he is quite looked up to by the other little boys! He joins in well and is a helper in the Sunday school, which is great for his Spanish, not to mention helping him to learn more about God.



Theo continues to enjoy school and this term has been spent revising topics in English, Maths and Science ready for exams at the start of April. His Spanish is slowly but surely improving and, as well as classes at school, he now has a private Spanish tutor at home twice a week after school. Jemima loves her little routines and we are all happiest when she is happy, therefore we try to ensure she knows a rough plan for each day and for any upcoming events. She generally enjoys topics in her schooling and these are often very practical to meet her learning needs. She loves taking Koda to the



dog park every morning with Julian and between them they have got to know many dogs and their owners!

Julian was meeting regularly with a couple to work through Christianity Explored and they now attend the English service with their young son. As mentioned above, the dog park features greatly in our lives and Julian and Jemima particularly are getting to know other regulars there. Julian has had 'deeper' conversations that go beyond just small talk about dogs! We hope and pray that we might see fruit from those relationships and also those we are building with parents at school. Nicky continues to attend language classes and she has formed very good relationships with classmates.

Despite all of the amazing things that God is doing in our lives here in Valencia, at times, over the last few months we have felt lonely and possibly hit that 'low' that is talked about often when people relocate abroad. The good thing though is that we know we have a faithful and unchanging God who is working to complete the good work he has started in us. Psalm 138:8 reminds us that, *'His faithful love endures forever.'* God can cope with the stuff we cannot cope with; with illness and pain, doubting and questioning, fear and rejection. He doesn't *'abandon the works of his hands'* but he is doing a good work, despite our weaknesses. Through his Spirit, may we know and rest in his faithful love and have complete confidence that he is leading us in all that we do. Please pray that God would continue to use us for his glory and that we seek his help in all things.

We continue to thank God for you as our mission partners and we are so grateful to you for faithfully praying for us.

With our love, Julian, Nicky, Jemima and Theo.

## Prayer points

- To continue to make the most of on-going and new evangelistic opportunities.
- To grow and nurture relationships with people at church, at the dog park, language classes and with friends at Theo's school.
- That we will continue to trust and rely on God and know that His love is endless.
- That we support Jemima wisely as she continues to face new challenges and anxieties.
- That Theo will continue to be a good and godly example to his friends at school and church.
- That our upcoming appointment to gain residency will go smoothly despite the potential complications with Brexit.