

OCTOBER 2020



Greetings to you all! In our last prayer letter, I started with the words, ‘since our last prayer letter...’ and then went on to detail the many crazy things that had happened in the run-up and move to Mendoza. It feels like a another, ‘since our last prayer letter...’ moment again! Well, you all know what’s happened, but perhaps you’re less familiar with how it’s been playing out in Argentina. So, wash your hands and read on to find out about how the Lord has sustained us amidst the turmoil.

‘Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”’ James 4:13-15

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We are so thankful for an abundance of blessings in this lockdown...

We arrived in Mendoza, from Buenos Aires, full of excitement and plans for the future. Until, out of almost nowhere, total lockdown started at midnight on 19 March. At that point we had 128 cases and three deaths. Seven months on, we have passed 840,000 cases and have a new appreciation of that verse in James! Andrew was able to preach just one sermon as the new pastor in our church. We had just one bible study in our house. The children had just 13 days in their new school. It has been the Lord’s will that this season has been, and will be, mostly online.

However, we are so thankful for an abundance of blessings in this lockdown. We have a garden with lots of space for energetic children (especially wonderful as, for five months, the children weren’t allowed further than 500m from the house!). We have two working laptops, two working phones and a Kindle, so we can manage the demands of Zoom and school work without fighting over devices. We even acquired two lockdown cats (Malbec and Mimoso) who have been very funny and saved Noah from overdosing on sibling love!

We are amazed at how much ministry can be done online and how many open doors it has provided. Currently we know three Argentinian lads studying at the Cornhill Training Course whilst friend and co-worker Jony has been studying at Oakhill – something they would not have been able to do pre-lockdown. Andrew and I have enjoyed online courses on Habakkuk and Job and some really interesting seminars from our old bible college in Chile. We’ve also been involved in



When a steamroller parked outside our house!

prayer meetings and church services for all our partner churches at some point or another, so there have been wonderful blessings.

More challenging has been trying to meet as a church without leaving people behind because of technological issues, or the struggle of simply not connecting emotionally with the meetings. Restrictions on gatherings seem to change each week but, as we head towards our peak, we have plenty of time to continue honing things to encourage and build up believers, trusting that God has good plans for the growth of his church and his glory in all the madness. We have looked to churches in other countries for inspiration and seen that, even when churches open, there's still a need for online streaming. Our current challenge is to see how we can set up this kind of 'hybrid' system, especially as we don't have internet in the church building!

We very much need your prayers so, as well as the above, please pray for:

- **Energy and a deep trust in the sovereignty of God!** For Andrew, who has been working hard to get to know the church family almost entirely online. We're so thankful for growing understanding in relationships, despite the situation. But he has been struggling with the number of Zoom meetings. Sometimes he finds it hard to switch off (mentally) especially when meetings run late, so we would appreciate your prayers as we continue to look for ways to help him wind down and sleep well.
- **Energy and a deep trust in the mercy of God!** For me, as I've been struggling the demands of school at home, with classwork for the older two while juggling the younger ones. The children won't be back in class until March 2021, after their summer holidays, but there is no guarantee about that yet. We have good days and bad, but it is very tiring. I often feel like I have no space in my brain to be able to think about anything extra and I feel like I'm dropping balls all over the place.
- **Patience and a deep trust in the promises of God!** For the children, who have had to put up with grumpy parents, not leaving the house more than 10 times in the last seven months, stitches (Lucy), terrible insect bites (Noah), a desperate sadness about many things (Maia) and the ordeal of having your mum check your handwriting all the time (Emilio)!
- **Perseverance and a deep trust in the cross of Christ!** For our church family, who have been a great joy to us in these last months but are growing weary of the uncertainty. There are even trickier days ahead for everyone, as people lose jobs, lose loved ones, lament lost freedoms and begin to question what's going on? Is God really in control? Pray for them, for us, for the Church worldwide, that we would keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, whose endurance of the cross and promised rest is our joy, our hope and our antidote to weariness.



Lucy showing off our homegrown and cured olives.

So, with Christians the whole world over, we remember that God is sovereign, that we are not in control and that the words, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live to do this or that,' are the only way to plan the future.

Much love to you all, Andrew, Bethanie, Maia, Emilio, Lucy and Noah