

AUGUST 2020



Dear Friends,

Many things have changed since our last newsletter as we are experiencing much more freedom than back in April. For this we are grateful. It is compulsory to wear masks everywhere outside of your own home, which is uncomfortable in the high temperatures, but a small price to pay in the midst of the pandemic. Although many local businesses have opened up again, the city, and indeed country, has been severely knocked by the effects of a lack of tourists. This had begun to slowly improve as more people were starting to travel from abroad. However, with new travel restrictions in place, the fear is that the country will fall deeper into financial difficulties as fewer tourists visit. The country's main income is from tourism and so this is a huge blow for the economy. Nicky and the children were recently walking along a street in the neighbourhood when

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they came across a very long line of people queuing at a small doorway. As they walked past they observed a large mound of groceries simply piled up on the floor of the little room and the people outside were waiting in turn for a small bag of food supplies to take away with them. They were struck by how there was no order to this make-shift 'foodbank' but more significantly how the line of people was very long and the people looked so desperate. Many have lost their jobs so they have no income and there is little help available from the government authorities.

Many bars and restaurants are open again and it seems that local people are trying hard to support each other. There is a bustle in the neighbourhood, especially on Friday and Saturday nights as people meet to socialise, and masks are allowed off when sitting in a bar or café. Although in some ways life does seem very different post lockdown, our neighbours in the building stop to share their thoughts and experiences and most seem to have struggled very much with being 'locked in' for so long. But there definitely seems to be a healing process happening. There is a 'normality' to day-to-day living; we all still pop out every day to the local bakery for bread and the supermarket for supplies, we can go to the park and beach, travel in the car, sit at a café and even visit IKEA! These are all things we took for granted back before the lockdown happened and now we appreciate them so much more.

Julian has opted to continue to run church on Zoom with a live link to Facebook, rather than pre-record and broadcast, for the sole purpose of maintaining a good level of contact with the church family each Sunday. Numbers in attendance have varied a little but generally we have a core attending and participating live each week. We have been very much



encouraged by people using Facebook to also join in. Some of the church family have only limited data so struggle to join in live but they have been able to watch at a later date. Julian has just finished teaching and preaching the first three chapters of Revelation, the letters to the churches.



Our mid-week groups have continued and the group that meets at our house was able to meet in person from the end of May, which was fantastic. We are waiting to resume services in the church building, perhaps in September, numbers permitting. Everyone is keen to get back to worshipping together in person and Julian and the PCC regularly chat about the next best step for this. The problem at the moment is that our church building is too small to adhere to social distancing restrictions, despite the numbers in our church family being relatively low. Nicky, Jemima and Theo have continued to hold their own small church and seem to have created a small gallery of bible-verse

posters! They have enjoyed 'Minno', an online bible programme, and have been looking at the fruit of the Spirit.

We were due to return to the UK in late June for a month to visit some of our partner churches and this, sadly, was cancelled for obvious reasons. However, we have enjoyed joining in services online and meeting people over the last few months for interviews, prayer meetings and socials and for a couple of missionary days. We managed to get away for a few days in July. We hope to have a holiday in August, virus-permitting...

Theo has coped well with online schooling and he finished at the end of June. It was hard going towards the end as his Easter holiday was cancelled! Jemima has also worked so hard with her schooling at home and she continues to visit the dog park and her friends there almost every day! We are grateful that Nicky and Julian were able to resume their weekly Spanish classes with Alex in June and Theo has continued his Spanish tutoring.

Last week we have 'tuned in' online each day to the Keswick Youth events, which have been a real blessing. Their theme for the week, both morning and evening, was 'Hope'. It helped us to consider how, although this year so far has been extraordinary and has meant that plans have changed and life has seemed surreal at times, God is still faithful and constant. His will cannot be changed, he loves us the same each day and our hope is sure in him. One of the passages we looked at was Psalm 3. In verse 8, David writes, *'Salvation belongs to the Lord; may your blessing be on your people.'* Such a great reminder that this is God's work we are doing and that he has a perfect plan for us all.

We are always so thankful for your partnership with us and for your prayers for us. With our love, Julian, Nicky, Jemima and Theo

Prayer points

- Give thanks that Julian is able to continue to hold services online each week and that we have regular contact with our church family. Give thanks for the three mid-week bible study groups.
- Give thanks for our Spanish teacher, Alex, and that he continues to read through Julian's bible-talk each week. Please continue to pray that he will be saved.
- Pray for Spain's economic situation and specifically for those in our local community and our church family who are in great financial need. Please pray for wisdom for us in knowing how best to help those in need.
- Pray that our planned holiday happens and that we have a restful break away.
- Please pray that we will continue to feel at home in Valencia and that God will use us to make Jesus known.