

February 2024



Happy New Year everyone, from Valencia!

Getting to the countryside for Rosy's birthday

We are excited to share the news of what God has been doing in Valencia! We have been encouraged to see firsthand lots of your prayers being answered.

We are all enjoying Santi's addition to our family, and despite a short spell in hospital after catching a cold off Lydia in the early weeks, he is doing well, and we are gradually adapting to life and ministry as a family of four. Spanish people love babies so it's fun getting to enjoy him with people in the street and the friends we have made.



The crucifixion statue on our street

As you walk down our street, like most in Valencia, you'll come across a Roman Catholic church with a huge statue of a dead crucified Jesus on the wall. In general, people here have got used to the idea that Jesus is not relevant to their daily life. Not a surprise when they see images of him so regularly, dead on the wall. This week as a church, we have looked at John 1:1-18 and been amazed at who Jesus truly is, his grace and truth, and that he makes knowing God possible.

No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, [Jesus] has made him known.

We have been struck that, in our own personal life, in the lives of those in our church family, and those on the fringes of the church family, **what we all need this year is to see our constant need for the crucified yet risen Jesus.**

Praise God that through a series of events, as a church, we've been able to invite people into our church building (most people won't have been in a protestant church here in Spain), **give them a warm experience and a taste of the gospel.** These events have really gained momentum and the whole church family has been involved and encouraged.

Fiesta de la luz (light party) – loads came along and had fun together, giving us opportunities to get to invite friends we have made and get to know the families of the afterschool club (Club de Inglés). There was a short drama explaining Jesus is the Light of the World.



Outside games at 'Fiesta de la luz'

Gingerbread house making night –

members of the church family were so encouraged by seeing so many come to the Light Party *they* organised this as another follow-up bridging event.

Christmas Eve family service –

the Club de Inglés kids were invited to come and perform the songs they have been learning. Almost everyone came, AND they brought lots of family along, AND they loved it! It was a great time celebrating who Jesus really is. God blew us away with over 30 guests!

Lots of these people said positive things about our church, e.g. that it's a nice welcoming community. **Please pray they would go further and see that Jesus isn't just a nice thing, but that they need him for their salvation and that God welcomes them into his family! Please pray for us too as we plan the potential of an Easter holiday club to follow up these events.**

The youth club has also had a great term. Friends of our regulars and youth from churches that are too small to run their own group, have joined us, meaning we always have a decent crowd along. However, some come to be with their friends more than to engage with the Bible. **Please pray that the Holy Spirit would strike in their heart a desire and curiosity to truly know Jesus.**

For a while we have been wondering how we can enable more of our church family to access our midweek group Bible study. Only having one group rules out those who can't make that time, which included lots of our Spanish members. Chris is now leading a new group on Friday evenings and eight have signed up to participate, almost doubling the numbers involved in a group. **Praise God! Pray that studying God's word would become a priority for this group as they enjoy knowing him more through it.**

A special encouragement to share is that last Sunday, after a *lot* of searching, someone who's been joining us for a few months told us that they finally saw that God is all they really need. Sometimes you can go a long time as a Christian without seeing this kind of clear fruit, so it was so precious to see someone come to this realisation. **Please pray for God to help them grow in this newfound faith.**

Finally, please pray for us as we keep learning and adapting to how we do ministry, parenting, marriage and life here, that we too would keep seeing our need for Jesus and enjoy getting to lean on his grace each day to help us.

We are so enjoying watching, in amongst the challenges, your prayers being answered. Thank you for them!

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