

# February 2024



*Youth camp*

(Titles inspired by our recent mix-tape selection from the many hours of travel up and down Argentina – prize for anyone who can name all the artists!)

## **I Will Wait**

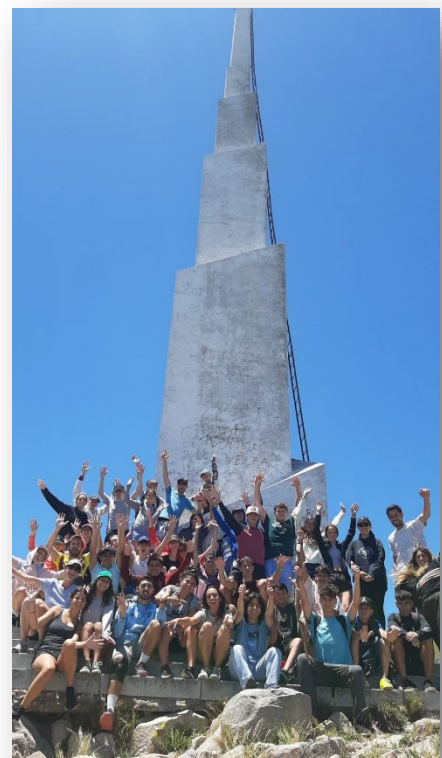
This letter was supposed to be out in December. However, we believe in God's sovereignty and that before eternity He planned for it to be out in February instead! And what a good thing that is, because now you get to read about what happened in January too!

## **Unstoppable**

In our last letter we commented that a neighbour to the church had started coming to our Sunday meetings. We are so happy to share that she is still coming and has also brought with her various members of her family, and other people who live nearby. Last week, we had to put out extra tables on Sunday morning because so many people came! This time last summer we had 6 people who weren't our family. This summer, we've had over 20 each week. This is massive for us!! I don't know whether it's our lack of faith, or a British negativity, but I keep being surprised every time people come back. The new people just want to know God better and are so keen to open the Bible and study His word. It's a really exciting time. Please pray with us that this new group would come to know Jesus and love him through our times together studying Colossians.

## **Reflecting Light**

The second half of the year also saw an initiative to reach our neighbours through drinking 'maté' (an Argentine herbal tea you drink through a metal straw) and playing games with the kids. It started off as a tiny thing and grew into a full-fledged production of the nativity in church at Christmas! Elisa (Ely) and Francisco have been so important in developing this. Francisco leads a Bible study with the parents, while Ely, Leah (a short term in her sandwich year) and others have led activities with the kids. A particularly nice touch is that there's a shared Bible time at the beginning all together. We've been going through the Jesus Story Book Bible, which is a fantastic resource. We've recently named this group CEPA, which is the name for the trunk of a grapevine, but also a play on words with the word 'to know'.



*Youth camp in Cordoba after trekking up a hill!*

## Summer camps (or I Predict a Riot)

Our little team from Mendoza enjoyed a week in Salta, in the NW of Argentina, to help on a youth camp up there. Andy did the main teaching, but everyone got involved in encouraging the teens and twenties. They came back buzzing from how good the week had been.

I would like to be able to report something similar from our second youth camp, in Cordoba (the one we do every summer). Sadly, it was a real struggle this year. There were various serious health problems, tensions between different church groups and issues with planning. However... the Lord was gracious to us in the sad moments and enabled one of the most beautiful moments I've seen on a camp, when we were encouraged to share the peace together. A very Anglican moment. Actually, a very gospel moment (it can be both!). The two groups who had been very hostile towards each other, wholeheartedly hugged each other and it felt like a corner had been turned! Despite being difficult, it felt like a very important camp this year. The youth groups are dwindling in Buenos Aires and if we can work with teams from other churches with a similar vision, then we hope and pray the gospel witness will be strengthened.

This camp also saw the rebirth of 'la Bola' (the Ball). The boys of the camp collected every blanket available and rolled them together (like you would a snowball) to form a rug-ball so huge the smallest camper could sit on top. Boy on Ball was then processed through the campsite leaving us weak with laughter and did a lot to raise our spirits. Rock on common grace!

## Holiday!

After camp, as a family we had a few days in Cordoba to rest and play in rivers. Highlights include squeezing through an indigenous rock pass, Andrew getting a tick, jumping off from high heights into deep pools and watching fireflies and a moonrise over the hills. It was an actual moon rise. Amazing.

We now have the treat of Andrew's parents visiting, and we are also going to spend some days in the South of Argentina with them. These are always special times for the grandchildren, who feel like they miss out on their quota of grandparent hugs!

## What's that coming over the hill?

Heading back into term time, Maia and Emilio start back at their catholic school (it's Emilio's first term there) and Lucy will accompany Noah for his first year at the local state school. We have some more visits coming up over Easter, and then it'll be time for the gospel conference again, this time in June. Andrew won't be teaching at CEP this term, which is a relief, so we hope to spend time investing in the new people at church, discipling Fran and Ely and training up new small group leaders. Pray for wisdom as we enter into this new phase of church life. We also say goodbye to Leah, who is heading to Italy for the second part of her language year.

Thank you for reading this far, I have included prayer points in the paragraphs above, so please do thank the Lord for his work in and through us during 2023, and for His strength to sustain us in 2024.

Much love,  
Andrew, Bethanie, Maia, Emilio, Lucy and  
Noah xxxxx

*If you would like to receive slightly more regular updates by WhatsApp, please do get in touch directly or via Crosslinks to ask how.*



*Leah's last Sunday*