

In the church

For the past few weeks, the activities of the church have been finishing up before the summer break. This has kept us as busy as usual, because a lot of the time it was at our house. So in the space of 10 days, we had the final meeting of the Monday night group (a film), hosted the Young Adults' group for Saturday dinner to finish their year, and then a dinner for the Wednesday night group. There was also the end of year dinner for the group at Rovereto on Tuesday, but that was held in a pizza restaurant, so for us it was a good break!

In the midst of this end of year winding up, we were also thinking about the next year of studies that will restart in September. I first met with the elders to talk about it, and then there was a meeting with all the group leaders to explain and discuss the program. We will be doing studies on 1Chronicles and the Apostles' Creed. During the next few months, I will be preparing the studies on the Creed for the others to use, as well as creating some notes on 1Chronicles to help the other leaders prepare those studies. So I will have a bit to do during the summer.

The other exciting news for me was that we will be starting a new group, the fourth outside of Trento. Like all of our groups in the province around Trento, it will have the long term aim of becoming an autonomous church. The group in the Valsugana has had some difficulties this year, because it has been a very "fertile" area, with lots of children born in the last few years. This has made it difficult for their parents to get out to go to the studies. So the plan is to start a new

group in the western part of the valley (the part nearest Trento) on Saturday afternoons, and to continue the other group in the eastern part of the valley on Friday evenings. Since my main responsibility is to start new ministries, and also because the church is still short of leaders, I will be running it to begin with. But since my other main responsibility is to train people to take my place, and there will be a lot of capable people in the group, I hope that I will only be in the group for a couple of years before I can hand it over to others, and so be free to start another group elsewhere. The other advantage is that Pinuccia will be able to come as well, so that we can go to the same cell group again. We should be starting off in September with 6 couples and 9 and a half children less than 4 years old, so it will be interesting!



At one of lakes in the mountains around us.

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The other end of year events recently were two church camps. First the whole church had a weekend away together. Unfortunately, with a lot of people working on Saturdays, we don't start until mid morning on Saturday (and even then there is little more than half the people present), so by the time we finish with lunch on Sunday it feels like it has only just really got going. But apart from that it was a good time together. The second was a four day camp for a dozen children (7 to 11 years old) in the church. I was there mostly to help the three "official" leaders, since there were so many children that there was no space in



Leading a song and dance.

the house for me to sleep. In fact, Pinuccia, after having organised the whole camp, had to remain at home with our children, except the final day when they all came with me. So I had an hour's drive each way up and down the mountain for four days, which meant that I missed some of the activities of the camp. But I helped out especially with the music, but also generally being and talking with the children, helping with the games and activities, and filming everything so that I could make a video of the camp. It was good being able to participate in the lives of the children, especially those who were in my Sunday School class this year. And I saw that the camp was effective in teaching about following God, not just in the studies but also showing how to apply God's Word in the many everyday situations that we lived together in the camp.

Last Sunday was another important event in the church, with three people being baptised - a lady from Romania converted this year (who also announced that she was pregnant, becoming the fifth pregnancy at the moment), one of the people from the group at Rovereto, and one of the young adults who also

goes to the Wednesday night group. There was also another person from a church about an hour away, that wanted to be baptised together with others. It meant that the hall was packed again, which is unusual for a July service.

In the family

Stefania and Pinuccia both finished school last week, and now have two months of vacation. Next week we will be going to Sicily for about a month, for holidays at the beach and keeping busy with family and friends. Another pleasure that I have now is regular Bible meditations and prayer times with Stefania, now that she is a bit older and can do a bit more than just listen to Bible stories.

Upcoming events

11 July: Bookstall at Rovereto, and arrival of Suzanne Bikker to start her ministry at Rovereto

13 July-19 August: In Sicily with Pinuccia's family