

Richard, Pinuccia, Stefania, Daniele, Luca, Mattia

Helping a church to plant new churches and start new ministries in Trento, Italy

In the church

The church tries to move in different directions, as God leads us and as people exercise the various gifts and callings that God has given them. As a result we are looking at starting some new ministries after the summer break, but that will be for a future newsletter. In the meantime, we are currently reaching out to parents, with a series of three meetings, using the professional expertise of **Daniela** and **Enrica**. It is always a good sign when half the people who attend are not from the church.

The ministry to migrants I mentioned in my previous newsletter goes ahead. We had a meeting which was supposed to be a time of discussion between the migrants and the others in the church about how we could work together. Unfortunately, we had not thought about the different cultures, and held it when was best for the non migrants (on a Wednesday at 9pm) but impossible for the migrants. The result was that there were no migrants present and so no discussion. Although we did learn a good lesson about cross-cultural ministry! From that meeting, a group was set up to

take this ministry forward: **Ruben** and **Mary**, Brazilian missionaries who have worked with refugees in various countries, **Maddalena**, a social worker, myself, and **Cassia**. We have been trying to get Cassia involved in the life of the church for some time, and it is good to see her finally mobilised in a ministry. As she said herself when the group met together, "I enjoyed this time together. I was missing being useful to others". We had only had to find and help her serve in a way she desired, rather than try to force her to serve in a way the church already ministers. The group then had a lunch together with the migrants in the church (that I missed because I was sick), mostly to listen to their stories and desires, and so get an idea of how to help them.

The church planting ministry is going ahead as well, with the **Valsugana group** pretty much autonomous in this. Last Saturday they organised an evangelistic dinner, to which about 50 ladies came. Continue to pray for our dream of another church in that valley.

The other direction in which the church would like to move is of course towards the new hall. As is usual, the renovation and paper work are taking longer than expected, so we still have not moved. However, the folding walls have gone to the new hall, but this means that the Sunday School is not functioning as it should in this period, as there is only one room for all three classes. Continue to pray that we will be able to move soon, and for good relationships with the neighbours, with the local area, and with the town authorities. We are trying to do things right, but it is always possible for people to make trouble if they want to.



At the lunch for the migrants

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In the family

During the Christmas / New Year period, we spent three



There were many wonderful moments in Australia. But one of our favourites was at the zoo, where Mattia and Luca started hugging a sheep and would not leave it. All the tourists started taking photos of them, because they were a lot cuter than all the animals!

weeks in Sydney for a family visit. It was a nice break, being pampered rather than having the usual hectic life style looking after the family; being able to go to the pool rather than being stuck in the snow; and

Points for prayer and thanksgiving

- For the next two meetings on parenthood (March 18, April 8), that it would help the parents and be a good witness.
- For wisdom in knowing how to help and reach out to the refugees.
- For the church plant in the Valsugana.
- That the church will continue to be a help and encouragement to the members as they pursue different ministries.
- That we would be able to move into the hall soon, and be a good witness rather than a cause for arguments in the neighbourhood.
- Thanks for a great time in Australia.
- For Luca and Mattia, giving thanks for the care they receive from the health services.

"topping up" in their second culture – the children especially need occasional visits to get their English speaking abilities back. But most of all, it was a time to spend with my family, that we appreciate more as we all get older, and there are small children again who do not know nor are known well by their extended family.

Last month **Luca** got a fever and, shortly after, a febrile seizure. I thought it strange that Luca had one but not Mattia, but sure enough three days later **Mattia** caught the fever and then had a seizure. (The next day, Stefania and I got the same fever, which is why I missed out on the migrants' lunch.) These seizures are more frightening than dangerous, but in any case Luca spent a night at the hospital (they did just a few tests for Mattia, without keeping him overnight). Since they are more likely now to have another seizure, for the next three years they will always need to have some medicine with them, after which they should not have any more seizures.