

Corato, Italy Summer, 2025



Dear Praying Friends,

It has been several months since our last letter and many wonderful events have taken place that we'd love to share. In February and March we spearheaded two evangelistic banquets: A **Valentine's party** for couples and our **annual Women's meeting**, both well attended.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Mark 10:7-9



We had around 90 in attendance with about 12 couples as first time visitors, including two engaged couples plus many single friends. Several were involved in skits, one of our young couples gave their testimony of how God brought them together and Mark finished with an evangelistic message—all to the theme of how to *strengthen your marriage*. Next year Feb. 14 falls on a Saturday so we are thinking about a weekend seminar/ event possibly with guest speakers.

Throughout the school year, Denise taught **English (ESL)** in a private school (middle school - adults), a Catholic institute (problematic high schoolers) and a public elementary school (5th graders). All this coupled with private online students continues to be a way to make friends and develop relationships within the community. She was also able to get a job where she works for a new English friend, a believer in our area.



In addition, for over 3.5 yrs now Denise has been assisting her counseling supervisor, Dr. Stefania Marchi, who over the years has provided **counseling classes** for evangelical believers. The ministry is growing and she is further involving Denise in developing new courses for Level III. This is a great challenge and opportunity to teach what she has learned throughout the years and university study. This ministry *first* calls for personal work and self-awareness followed by a weekend module together in Toscana as students come from all over the peninsula and from various denominations. They are required to read several books, follow online courses (often in



“And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

Romans 10:15



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the evenings on scheduled weekends) and finish with a final research paper and oral exam. This is a unique opportunity in Italy as the nature of this type of ministry is greatly needed due to more and more wounded individuals coming to Christ, where the field of psychology is routinely secular. Those of us who have been able to study abroad are being used to bridge the gap, equipping pastors and lay leaders to assist individuals and work with professionals towards a more holistic healing.

As in the fall of '23, we once again participated in a **missionary retreat** sponsored by *Times of Refreshing* in Switzerland. For several years now, a ministry team has come from the States to bless and minister to English speaking, long-term missionaries from the UK to the Ukraine. Some say that modern-day missions is now more short-term assisting



national leaders and institutions and this may be a valid point, however we continue to meet those who have given their entire lives to missions, willing to finish out their days in their adopted country. It is inspiring to hear their stories and be associated with those of like mind and vision.



In early June, our **Life Group ministry** shared during the Sunday service. Each of our three groups had one leader and one participant share about how this ministry encouraged them in their walk with the Lord. Several new persons began attending this year as we went through the book of Galatians.

This summer we spent several weeks in the US to connect with our kids and grandkids, especially Chris' family in from Thailand, who we haven't seen in over three years. It was wonderful to spend quality time with them and see how much our five grandchildren have grown. Mark preached in a couple of churches in Ohio and we participated in an intensive program at **Heartstream Resources** in N. Carolina for global workers returning to the States after a difficult time of service. Denise served as a staff counselor alongside their director, Dr. Lois Dodds.

As we return to Italy on August 12th, we go with thankful hearts for having connected with many of you this summer. We covet your prayers as Mark is looking at herniated groin surgery in a few weeks and ministry roles will soon start up. The Lord has so blessed us and we have much to be thankful for in these days. Thank you for your prayers!

Love, Mark and Denise