

Corato, Italy
Spring, 2019

Stevanus News

Dear Praying Friends,

It is with great joy that we update you on how 2019 has been coming along for us here in Italy. Continuing to enjoy as well as make use of our new church building, an ex-reception hall, we were able to host over 155 women for *Festa della Donna*, an annual **women's night out** on March 8th. Although it is a secular event, which is growing in international popularity, we seek to use it as an evangelistic evening and opportunity to bless our women. Denise along with two other women from our church were able to organize not only a full program but also a sit down dinner. The theme of the evening was *The Gift of God's Grace*, which was highlighted through a youth skit, personal



"But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!" *Romans 5:15*



testimonies and a closing message. We also invited women from area churches, representing one third of those in attendance. Another third were our unsaved family and friends, many of whom are of Roman Catholic background. Events like this serve as great icebreakers in demonstrating the love of Christ and sharing the true Gospel message, with which Denise closed the program. Several of the mothers of our young adults came and all first time visitors received a Gospel of John along with other small gifts or prizes.

Another *milestone* event we pulled off was a surprise **60th birthday** party for Mark. Normally, we have a Bible class on Tuesday evenings and as we closed the study, we quickly shifted to party mode with a



“Yet, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.”
II Corinthians 3:15-16



In His Service,

Mark & Denise



potluck and lovely cake. Each of our four children sent in a personal video of blessing to their father, which was projected for all to see.

Our home **life group ministry** is also coming along well, especially in the near by town of Andria. Several new people have joined this last year who are also nicely integrating into church life as well. Although we will take a break for the summer, we hope to start up a few new groups in September. We are so thankful for the difference of experiencing the body of Christ in the homes has made by means of ministry and encouragement in solidifying one's new faith in Christ. We are also grateful for our group leaders who have been so faithful in ministering to one another during the week and in time of need.

This past year, we entered into our 31st year of ministering in Italy, the last years basically as tent makers serving in the local church, *Chiesa Risveglio* alongside a businessman-lead pastor who works full-time as a clothing designer and manufacturer. **New challenges** present themselves as we also receive new requests and even surprises! One proposal is to assist in a church plant in the city of our Province, Bari, where we initially ministered for 10 years. A pastor from a historical denominational church in the city with a very small congregation has given us the keys to the building and we are allowed to use it as we see fit. Where to begin? Do we start a Bible study? Do we start a new church? How do we reach out? What does the Lord have in mind here? To help us answer these questions, we covet your prayers for us that we will be completely led by the Holy Spirit to DO what HE is speaking. We thank you so much for your prayers!