

Corato, Italy
Summer 2018

Stevanus News



Dear Praying Friends,

Most churches usually have a spring-cleaning workday, but this year ours lasted an entire week. In August of 2017, we left our former building and temporarily rented a conference room close by. We were in negotiation towards renting a vacated **dining hall** belonging to a local hotel for several months and were hoping to sign a contract by this summer, when all of a sudden it was made available on May 1st. We had only six days to clean an enormous dining room, bathrooms, industrial sized kitchen, two marble staircases and wall-to-wall windows before our first service. Mark was able to put his power tools to use in assisting with a customized stage. Since, we have many new people attending church, it was a wonderful way for everyone to get to know one another as it was *all hands on deck*. The church is right off a main four-lane highway making it accessible for those coming from surrounding towns.



This will be a wonderful opportunity for us to host in-house weddings, seminars and conferences. In fact, on June 2nd we organized a wedding for a young African immigrant and his Italian bride and in September we will host a youth leadership conference sponsored by our mission, NLI. We waited on the Lord and He went above our expectations!



Going into the summer, we suspended our three **home groups** but not without challenging members to stay in the Word as well as encouraged them to meet occasionally. We've met twice so far by way of two barbeques. These events have served for inviting other young people from our church who have not yet transitioned into this ministry. In fact, both these two fellas, although having grown up in the church, are now engaged to two young ladies from a Roman Catholic background. This ministry is a wonderful way to welcome



them into the fellowship for making new friends and asking questions about the faith while sitting around the table. Our pastor and his wife continue to join us and support us in this ministry where these young people can get to know them better, as well. By next fall we hope to set up two more home groups including middle-aged couples, too.

“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.’”

Luke 14:23

In His Service,

Mark & Denise

Our English work is also going well and expanding. In fact, a Christian family who attend another church asked Mark to tutor their two teenage sons. This has expanded to a children's class with their younger sister and cousins. In addition, another young man who Mark does only conversation with came to a lesson that Denise was doing with this statement, “tonight I want to discuss the differences between JW.org and what *Mark* believes.” Talk about a wonderful open door to share the Gospel and Christian walk in both these situations. In fact, after sharing the second week with Domenico (35) about Christianity, Denise felt led to invite him to church the following Sunday. He made it through our almost two-hour service (much longer than the mass he is accustomed to) and texted Denise in English on Monday saying, “I think I come back next Sunday. I felt good yesterday!” He has also asked for a Bible in English, so please pray for him as we do have a home group close to his house that he could easily plug into when we start up again in September. We sincerely thank you for your prayers!