

## STEVANUS NEWS

*Corato, Italy  
Winter, 2022*

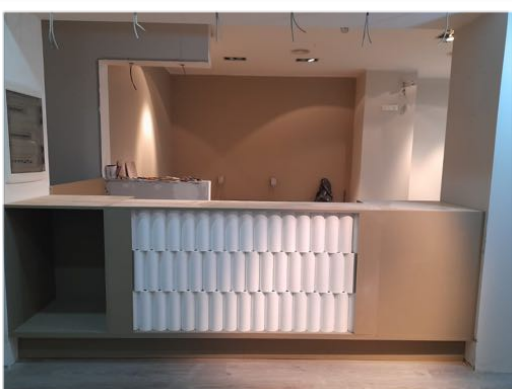


Dear Praying Friends,

Greetings once again from Italy! We trust this letter finds you all well and in great health. We sincerely thank you for your prayers as 2022 began with Denise coming down with **Covid-19** right on her birthday. I tested positive but was basically asymptomatic and did my best to care for her the two weeks she spent in bed. Having to isolate during that time, we were extremely blessed by our church family who drove out to our home in the country to deliver everything from medication to fresh fruit and meat to an extra-large pizza (an Italian staple), even dog food (not for us)!



*“But the Lord stood by me  
and strengthened me, so that through  
me the message might be fully  
proclaimed and all the Gentiles might  
hear it.” 2 Timothy 4:17*



It has been a fairly busy period of late as our local pastor and colleague felt the need to take a closer look at the needs of the **city of Bari**, where we first served from 1993 to 2010. In the Spring of last year, we began ministering weekly to a group of mature believers who had been hurt by a church situation.



*“Bear one another’s burdens,  
and so fulfill the law of  
Christ. For if anyone thinks he is  
something, when he is nothing, he  
deceives himself.” Galatians 6:2*



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Initially, we came to encourage them and pray about what God might do. Continuing to meet and pray into the fall and early winter, we felt led to rent and renovate a spacious two-story storefront building right in the heart of Bari.

Scouting the area, we were quickly made aware of the cosmopolitan facelift that has slowly and definitively taken place here, reflecting a melting pot of **various cultures** through immigration and mobilization. The nations are coming to Italian and European shores from different parts of the earth! And, not only them, through a young couple who went to Christian college with our sons, we’ve met two more young **missionary couples**, representing three different English-speaking nations. Each one has a specific evangelistic call to reach out to either Muslims, the marginalized or university students. In fact, we’ve heard of more young ministers with a call to move here!

At this point, the vision to hold a Sunday night service has begun and blossomed to the prospect of opening a multi-purpose mission, a proposal that we recently shared at a meeting of local pastors. Unanimously, they were enthused by the idea since plans include the **reopening of a Christian Bookstore**, which closed in 2020, at the street level of the building. We cannot help but see the Lord moving pieces together towards getting the Good News out.

As Europeans, the **war in the Ukraine** is hitting close to home. Fortunately, our church is already a member of a Christian organization that sponsors food drives for the needy. So, everything was already in place to prepare supplies to be sent to this stricken area. We only needed to ramp up the collection process and items have been loaded. Naturally, we are all praying for a swift end and for the evangelical pastors and churches who are getting the word out, desperately asking for help.

As we head into the Spring months, we will be coming stateside for a **destination wedding** as our youngest, Dimitri (30) will be getting married on April 3rd to Lexi. We will be gathering in South Carolina, being joined by my father, our kids and grandkids and siblings for this joyous occasion. By late April/May we’ll be back in Italy to attend yet another wedding in our church and prepare for a short-term missions team from Ohio that is planning to come in September.

We cannot thank the Lord enough for his guidance, blessings and even protection on our lives during these difficult days that we are all living in. We thank you also for your prayers and support.

In Christ,  
Mark & Denise  
Stevanus