

February 2018

Dear Praying Friends

**Megan Wilkes was with us for 5 weeks before Christmas.** Together Megan and I were able to finish cutting out the flannel graph set; design and order our new Prayer Cards; make an inventory of the church's property; certify, then legalize my degree in the UK – ready for it to be legalized in Albania; plan and prepare for the Christmas Services; get a first aid kit together; discuss 'Church of Hope' vision statement; change the photos on the notice board in church; alongside making quiche, eating rice pudding, visiting the DHL office in Berat, and some coffees in Berat! Her expertise in choosing and implementing games was brilliant. Naomi and Tilly especially enjoyed having Megan here and playing 'Ligretto' almost every night. Thanks Megan for coming out and spending time with us. We trust the Lord is making the way for you clear.

**Christmas Day was busy, busy!** 160 children and teens were warmed in the sunshine, as they watched and were taught about the real meaning of Christmas, from the balcony of our house. After a drink and plate of food, they received their shoeboxes – this year provided for us by Warminster Baptist (and other Baptist churches in the West!) Thank you for all your hard work WBC! We appreciate your partnership and the example of your unity in the gospel. If you'd like to get a glimpse of that morning's activities, please go to Facebook: btbc – prayer share and encourage.

After lunch for 26, the adults had their Christmas Meeting, where there were a few new faces.

**The children's meeting is the place to be in Morave on Saturday morning!** Radio 7 (our Christian station) has translated 'SuperBook' into Albanian and we are piloting a teaching program for them. We divide the teaching program out between 5 of our teenagers and train them to teach the children. (Real progress!) As part of the program they watch 'SuperBook' on the screen, then the time is filled out with the usual memory verse, indoor and outdoor games which all relate to the 'SuperTruth.' (Instead of the crisps the littlies bring – they'll be bringing popcorn if we don't watch it!) Last week we had 44 children, this is a good number for January; but we are unsure whether they came because of the video or whether it was the day the 'points' shop' was open!

**The teenager's meeting is stable.** Our plan for this year is to disciple them. The Nicky Cruz 'Transformation Meeting' was encouraging. Some of our teens went forward at the end to receive The Lord Jesus as their Saviour. It was good for the teens to see the church on a wider scale, and some of them met up with friends from Camp they'd met in the summer. The music was good, and I was asked whether we could sing some of the songs they'd heard there. One of the mums came with us, and we finished by eating a 'sufllaqe' on the beach (Sufllaqe = chips, meat, salad, wrapped in a 'pizza base' type bread!) Thank you to those who made it possible!

**Sajmir and Irma Brazhdi** have just completed their two-year contract with OM in Lushnje and are now 'freelancing.' They have been helping us once a month with the teens and do a fantastic job! They are committed to helping us and have asked for our help as they plan to plant a church amongst their own people group in Lushnje. We are looking forward to serving more closely with them in Morave and Lushnje. (Gjergji met Irma when he was at Bible School in Tirana.)

**Naomi, Tilly (now 14) and Lidia (7) are well.** Schooling here isn't easy, although they survive and are learning huge life lessons as they rub shoulders with other students. The 72-year-old Physics teacher and her hearing aid usually makes the tea-table headlines! Lidia does more school work at home, than she does in school. (She's a little whizz at her 2,3,4,5,10 times table! And she loves dancing and jiggling away to jiggles in her head!)

Piano and Guitar Lessons continue – with me teaching them. (The difference between reading and playing classical music to improvising worship songs was too much – so I’m trying to teach them a happy medium.) The guitar is the favourite and the three of us now play for the children’s meeting.

**Gjergji received a certificate of gratefulness from ‘Albanian Partners for Change and Development’ for his ‘philanthropy’ efforts!** We dressed up and went to the Rogner and mingled with others from another world – and Gjergji told them that it was because of Jesus’ input into his life that he now wanted to help and encourage others. A part of that ceremony was then broadcast on afternoon television a few days later!

**Plans for the coming months include:**

- World Prayer Conference, Durres, 28<sup>th</sup> February – 2<sup>nd</sup> March for Gjergji and Esther.
- Evangelistic Outreach meal, with mums of our teenagers, 8<sup>th</sup> March.
- CorDeo Intensive Ladies Conference, Devon (!) 9<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> March for Esther.
- Camp with our teens in Pogradec, 27<sup>th</sup> Aug - 1<sup>st</sup> Sept, with Bovey Baptist, Sajmir and Irma.

Thank you all once again for your continued support in many ways. I would really value your prayers as I've not been feeling so good for a long time - somewhere between burnout and hormone imbalance I think! Seems I can regulate 'things' if I eat super sensibly - but I'm not always so strong to eat correctly! Still learning how to deal with 'myself/body' and all that is required of me.

With our love and In His Service.

Gjergji, Esther, Naomi, Tilly, and Lidia xxxxx

*P.S. If you do not yet have Esther's new Prayer Card, please contact her via [gjergjiandesther@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gjergjiandesther@yahoo.co.uk) and she will send you one*