



Clinton Church of Christ <churchofchristclinton@gmail.com>

March 2026 Newsletter

Scott <scottshanahan@106922010.mailchimpapp.com>
Reply-To: scottshanahan@hotmail.com
To: churchofchristclinton@gmail.com

Tue, Mar 17, 2026 at 1:57 PM

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Buongiorno a tutti!

We hope that you're doing well and that this newsletter finds you in the best of physical and spiritual health. We are close to the first day of Spring and so far the weather in Italy is nice. We hope that as the season changes you and your family are able to enjoy it.

Here's what we've been up to the last month...

Youth Baking Class

We had a recent annual meeting with the congregation at Pistoia. During the meeting we talked about the importance of working with the youth, and how they are not really being taught right now. We have been offering to teach a class to the youth, but it has been difficult to schedule. We decided to try and schedule two activities a month, in which we would do something fun and have a devotional.

For our first meeting we offered to teach the kids how to bake cookies. On New

Year's Eve we had gotten together with several families from the church and Rebecca made frosted cut-out cookies, that the kids LOVED (I made snickerdoodles which they just liked). The kids all seemed excited to be part of the class.

We were happy that Christian also wanted to join. He is the 15 year old son of Tommaso and Silvia, two very faithful members of the Pistoia congregation. He was the only boy who was able to come. He had a great time.

Rebecca organized everything and got the kids all the materials they needed. Our house is not very big, so she arranged it to where the kids would be grouped in twos and work together on their cookies. We had 6 kids including Violet. Everyone had a lot of fun, and the cookies were really good.

After the cookies were baked we sang some songs together, and then had a short message about Jesus as a boy. There were two things that made me happy about this - First, all the kids participated in the singing, even if they didn't know the songs. Second, during the lesson all of the kids paid attention as I talked, and all of them read along in their Bibles.

The parents came to pick them up and all the kids thanked us for having them over and teaching them. It was a really great day, and we are looking forward to the next meeting.











Studies, Letterboxing and a Prayer Request

Our studies continue to go well, especially with Daniela (who I study with every Friday) and the Seminara family.

The Seminara family are Barbara, Ginevra and Carlotta, that we told you about last month. Barbara is the non-Christian wife of one of the members of the church, Gianluca.

The study is going well, though at times one member of the family will be too busy to meet. We went one night and Barbara told us that her brother and nephew had just called and said they were spending the night with her as a surprise. What a surprise! I love my family, but I probably would have said, "There's a hotel nearby if you want to stay there." Anyway, we got to meet them as well. They were very nice. They live in Milan and we hope to make contact with them through the church there.

One thing that has come out as a result of the study is that Barbara is wanting to get together with Rebecca as friends as well. They have arranged to get coffee a couple of times, but then it has not worked out. They are supposed to try again this Wednesday, so we ask that you pray that it happens and that the relationship develops.

One thing that we are trying to work on is getting more studies going. To facilitate that we are distributing advertisements in mailboxes (we call this, "letterboxing" which I thought was when you fight the alphabet). Last week I was able to go with Giovanni to a neighborhood in Pistoia that I had never seen before. There were dozens of apartment buildings. We managed to hand out 400 flyers in about an hour. We haven't gotten much of a response from that. But, we did have a couple visit worship last week (they were not there yesterday).

So here is the prayer request - contacts. We need more. We have a few studies going on, especially with the Chinese, but we need more. Please pray that we find more students and we can fill up our schedule with studies!



Avanti Get Together

For those of you who don't remember, there is a program in Scandicci (near Florence) called, "Avanti Italia." Rebecca and I got our visa through this program and are considered Avanti workers in Italy. Because they mostly work in Scandicci (though there is one couple in Sicily, they've been there at least ten years), and mostly attend the Florence congregation, we do not often get to see them. Right now there are five volunteers, including two new volunteers that we will call, "Grant and Sarah" (because those are their names). We have spent just a little bit of time with Brandon and Beth who have been here for just over a year. Another volunteer, Elijah, we have only met once or twice. The directors of the program, our very good friends, Zak and Aleece, have recently stepped down as directors. Since there were some new volunteers and we are temporarily without directors, we decided to see about getting together with them more often (that went on longer than I expected).

We invited them to our place for dinner a few weeks ago and it went very well. All of us seem to be very compatible as far as our spirituality is concerned and

we had a great time. I suggested we maybe meet for dinner (or something) once a month and they were all very happy about that. We will meet again towards the end of March.

They also do a weekly English devotional at the building they live in at Scandicci. We have started attending that. It is a little hard for us to get there, so we decided to go every other week, but it's a really nice opportunity to be with them and to discuss the Bible, so we've gone more frequently. Also, Violet really enjoys it, even if there are not other kids there and asked us if we can go every week. Since we want her involved in spiritual things we have made an effort to be there.

We are so happy to have this group just a few towns away. We are all doing our best to increase our influence.

(I'm an idiot and have never gotten a picture of us together, enjoy this old picture of Violet and me).



Family Stuff

We are all doing well. We don't have a lot to update you on as far as our personal lives go. Buddy is doing well and seems to love being a part of our family. He is a really good dog, except he does not like when people come over to our house. This makes having guests difficult. (He is actually really friendly to people outside of our house, but does not like when they come into our space).

Violet is doing well, but we have a prayer request for her as well. In May she has to take a final exam at a school near Rome. It is something that all homeschooled children have to do. She is very anxious about it. Please pray that her anxiety will be relieved and that she will prepare well for the exam. One part of the exam is she has to make a presentation on a subject of her choosing. She has to include aspects of all the things she has learned this year. She chose to talk about scuba diving. She will need to present information on: history, geography, math, science and Italian as it relates to scuba. She is enjoying this part of the preparation.

One other thing you can pray about for us is a mold situation we have in our new house. We are finding it a couple of times a week in different places. Please pray we can get that under control.

Thank you for all you do for us! Until next time - arrivederci!



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Mission Italy
[6745 Margaret St](#)
[Milton, FL 32570-4859](#)

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