



YOUTH ACTIVITY
ONE OF OUR TEENS CLIMBS AN OBSTACLE AT A MARCH YOUTH ACTIVITY



DADDY & SAMANTHA
BATTLING THE COVID SYMPTOMS TOGETHER ONE AFTERNOON.



FULL STRENGTH
A PICTURE FROM OUR FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CROWD RESTRICTIONS ENDED

THE HUTCHENS FAMILY



April 2022 Update

I mentioned at the start of my last letter that many of us are likely getting tired of talking about COVID. If that was true then, it is *doubly* true now. I trust you'll bear with me as I report regarding the past few weeks of ministry, and unfortunately, have to reference the impacts of COVID multiple times along the way!

At my last writing in February, COVID was just beginning to spread uninhibited for the very first time in New Zealand. We're about 18-24 months behind the rest of the world in our COVID journey, due to our borders being shut and us being able to operate relatively COVID-free while the rest of the world went through it all. In late January, as Omicron arrived and the NZ government decided against yet another lockdown, they instead instituted a crowd limit of 25 for any venue unwilling to use check vaccine passes. This put us in a position of having two identical services from 30 January, averaging around 30 attendees per service. It also forced the cancellation of one of our bigger outreaches where we set up a booth at the local university orientation day in February.

Easter Sunday dinner outdoors. It was a chilly autumn afternoon, but we had a great day!

We knew it would likely only be a matter of time before most of our church was sick, and that was exactly what happened. Over the middle-to-late portions of March, most of the church was sick. Juliana started feeling unwell and tested positive on March 19, and I ended up feeling sick and testing positive a few days later on the 23rd. Current New Zealand regulations require that you isolate for seven days whenever anyone in your home tests positive, with that seven days resetting if and when you test positive personally. This meant our family spent a total of ten days at home. Our youngest, Samantha, had the roughest experience, but in the end, we all came through with no problems.

Thankfully, several of the men of our church stepped up and helped fill the gap while we were down. The final two Sundays of March were very slim in attendance, and all other calendar events had to be cancelled or postponed. It was, by far, the quietest, and frankly, the most frustrating season of ministry we have experienced here. That said, we are grateful no one in the church experienced serious illness, and we're glad to finally "get it over with!"

April has, at long last, brought some positive changes. Around the first of the month, vaccine passes were dropped across the board, and crowd restrictions lifted entirely. It felt so good to have a big service full of people! And all of this just in time for Resurrection Sunday! Our church folks worked hard inviting people in a very short space of time. We put handwritten invitations in every letterbox in our neighborhood. Much prayer and anticipation went into our first big outreach in several months.

On Resurrection Sunday, we were thrilled to have four families visit for the first time, including a South African mother and daughter from our neighborhood! I preached a simple Gospel message, and while no one responded at the invitation to be saved, we were so thankful to be able to sow the seed in peoples hearts. Afterwards, we enjoyed a wonderful dinner together as we celebrated the Resurrection of Christ.

Looking forward, we're excited about our annual Missions Emphasis Month in May, and the arrival of our son in June. Continue to pray for us as we work to regain some traction as we enter into winter!

Prayer Requests

- Pray for Juliana's pregnancy and safe arrival of Harrison!
- Pray for the follow up with our Easter visitors!
- Pray for a great Missions Emphasis Month in May!

*The Hutchens Family
Sam, Juliana, Emma, Alexa, & Samantha*

Family news & pictures



TOP: A new family picture. Feel free to use as you would like in your churches!

BOTTOM: The girls enjoy some extra time at home during our COVID isolation.

Juliana's pregnancy continues to go well. Harrison is due mid-June!