

# HUTCHENS FAMILY

Serving in Christchurch, New Zealand

## Family News



*Alexa, Mommy, & Emma enjoy a day at local lavender fields.*

Life with our newest daughter is going quite smoothly. Samantha is probably our most easy-going baby to date, sleeping large portions of the night, crying infrequently, and smiling more than you'd think possible. She's a very sweet baby, and we're thankful for her!

Emma is preparing to start K-5 homeschool (known in NZ as year 1) the first of February (the NZ school year runs from February-December).

Earlier this month, Juliana and I celebrated our 8th anniversary. It's amazing to look back on a short 8 years! 3 kids, living in a foreign country, and happy in the service of the King!

## Summer Holidays

Here in New Zealand, we are right in the middle of the summer season. Because summer coincides with Christmas and New Years, many people and businesses take most of the month of January off. For instance, my printer just came back to work a couple of days ago. After an incredibly busy November and December, we were happy to take a breather as well - though we only took about two weeks. During that time, I enjoyed some fishing (see picture), we took a few days to do some spring cleaning and reorganizing around the house, and we attended the annual South Island Family Camp, which is attended by several other South Island Baptist Churches. The downtime was refreshing, and we are now gearing up for a busy late summer and autumn season of ministry!



*Blessing of living in New Zealand - awesome salmon fishing!*

## Ministry Updates

It has been right about two months since our last update, so there is a **lot** to report to you!

I'll start back in November with the final Sunday of the month - our Missions Refresher Sunday. I've always had the desire to lead our church to invest in missions, even as other churches are investing in us. Each year, at the end of May, we take up missions giving commitments, and take on any new missionaries that we can. Then, at the end of November, and thus the halfway mark of the missions giving year, we hold a Missions Refresher Sunday. All glory to God that we were able to surpass the 50% mark a couple of weeks early! I'm thrilled to see God working in the hearts of people to support missionaries around the world!

On Missions Refresher Sunday, we also held our latest baptism service. You'll recall in our last letter that we had just seen several people saved, and this was the Sunday to see them all baptized! On this particular Sunday, I was privileged to baptize eight new believers! That included Andrew, the Kiwi man recently invited and won to Christ by one of our men, two children, and five Chinese! These baptism Sundays are always such a highlight, and I love watching new Christians grow. Keep praying for each of them as they walk with Christ!



*Church volunteers serve food to a man at our Christmas BBQ.*

## Praises

- Praise the Lord for a strong first half of our missions giving year - over 50% to our goal!
- Praise the Lord for the 8 people baptized on the final Sunday of November.
- Praise the Lord for an overwhelmingly good response to our Christmas Community BBQ!
- Praise the Lord for the recent salvation of a teenaged young man named Wyatt.

## Prayer Requests

- Pray for our Vision Sunday service on 31 January.
- Pray for our outreach at the University of Canterbury Orientation Day on 19 February.
- Pray for our application for residency status here in New Zealand. We are now eligible to apply and are completing requirements for the application.

The first weekend of December brought us to one of our biggest summer outreaches - our annual Christmas Community BBQ. While there are currently no COVID cases or restrictions in New Zealand, we did spend a good period of time under both full and partial lockdowns last year. This threw our outreach plans into disarray, and I was determined to have a major push for our Community BBQ. We printed 7,500 invitations and distributed them, and we advertised the event on Facebook. I purchased 200 sausages, 200 pieces of bread, 200 cans of soft drinks, 200 bags of chips, and all of the sides. The BBQ began at 11:00 AM, and by 11:45 AM, we had served it all! Off to the store I ran frantically to purchase the exact same amount of food, only to serve it all by 1:30 PM! I estimate we served somewhere between 200-300 people! What a blessing to see so many! We were able to present the Gospel to several who attended, and make some points of contact for follow up. We've had one gentleman attend thus far as a result, and we are praying for more as time goes on.

Following the BBQ, we turned our attention to the church for some internal ministry to finish off the year. We hosted a paintball activity for our youth, along with the youth groups of two other churches with whom we are friends. We held our first ever family campout at a local holiday park, with around 30 of our church folks attending. We had our annual Christmas party for the youth group. On the Sunday before Christmas, we combined our English and Chinese services into one, and had our 2nd highest attendance ever of 89! And finally, we had a blessed Christmas Eve service with our church family.

Looking back on those several weeks of ministry, I start to feel tired all over again! But I also feel immensely blessed to have been allowed the chance to minister to so many. Praise the Lord for a strong end to the year!

## Looking Ahead

As I've already mentioned, January tends to be a quiet summer month here in New Zealand, so I've spent the majority of my time in the office finalizing plans for the rest of the year. Our Vision Sunday service will take place on 31 January, and I've never been so excited to share with our church what the Lord has for us in 2021. Already God has been blessing, even in the "quiet" time. A few days ago, a man named Sam allowed me to go through the Gospel with him on his front step. He didn't accept Christ, but I'm *always* thankful for the chance to sow the seed. One of our teenagers named Ethan led his friend Wyatt to the Lord just a few days back! Wyatt is a young man that I had witnessed to, at least two other men had witnessed to, and Ethan had witnessed to multiple times. We've been praying for his salvation for about two years - what a blessing!

Our first major outreach of 2021 will be on the 19th of February at our local university. The university holds an annual orientation day at the beginning of the school year, and allows vendors to hire booths to promote their business. Thankfully, they also allow churches! We did this outreach last year and it opened some great doors, so we're praying for another blessed event this year.

That's not even all that has happened or is about to happen, but I'll close the letter there. I hope this glimpse into the craziness of our ministry here has been a blessing to your heart!

*Thank you for your continued prayers!*  
*Sam, Juliana, Emma, Alexa, & Samantha Hutchens*