

James and Heather Cochrane

Location: **Porto, PORTUGAL**

Mission: **Church planting**



In recent weeks, the number of Covid-19 cases in Portugal has dropped significantly largely due to an extended period of lockdown from January to Easter. In mid-March, the government announced a phased plan of coming out of confinement. Young children have already returned to school, shops and restaurants will open in mid-April (with some restrictions), and by May, if all goes to plan, life will begin to feel more normal. Unfortunately, the vaccination programme is slow. To date about 8% of the population has received the first dose with only 3.3% having received both inoculations. It may take the rest of the year for the whole population to be immunised.

We are thankful that from 21 March churches have been allowed to meet in person. However, due to restrictions that prohibit people moving from one council area to another, only those who live in the council area in which Comunidade Pedras Vivas (CPV) is situated can attend. So, attendance is low on Sunday mornings, but we provide a live transmission for those who have to stay at home.

Throughout lockdown our interns, Leopoldo and Lidiane, have done a great job of keeping in touch with our young people. Once a week they have met on Zoom for a few games, conversation, and a short devotion / time of prayer. Lidiane has also met with one or two at other times for more in depth discipleship. We are hoping that after Easter there will be opportunities for the young people to meet in groups of three or four. Some of our young people are now entering into exam season. The exams taken by 15 year olds in Portugal have been cancelled and there is much uncertainty about exams for older students. Lucy, who follows the British curriculum, is hoping to receive tutor assessed grades via an exam centre in England.



Photo: Leopoldo (intern at CPV) leading a recent Sunday service :

Prayer points

- Give thanks that Portugal is slowly coming out of lockdown and pray that the population will remain careful and follow the regulations set out by government.
- Pray that the vaccination programme will pick up speed.
- Give thanks for the encouragement of being able to meet for our Sunday worship, albeit under various restrictions.
- Give thanks for our interns and their faithfulness in meeting with the youth during lockdown.
- Pray for young people facing exams or other assessment. Pray that Lucy will be able to meet all the requirements to obtain the grades she needs for further study at university in Belfast.