

Mission at a Glance: Spreading the Gospel in Padua, Italy



Location: Padua, Northern Italy

Population: 300,000 – with a university of 70,000+

Current Church Status: Only 1-5 members

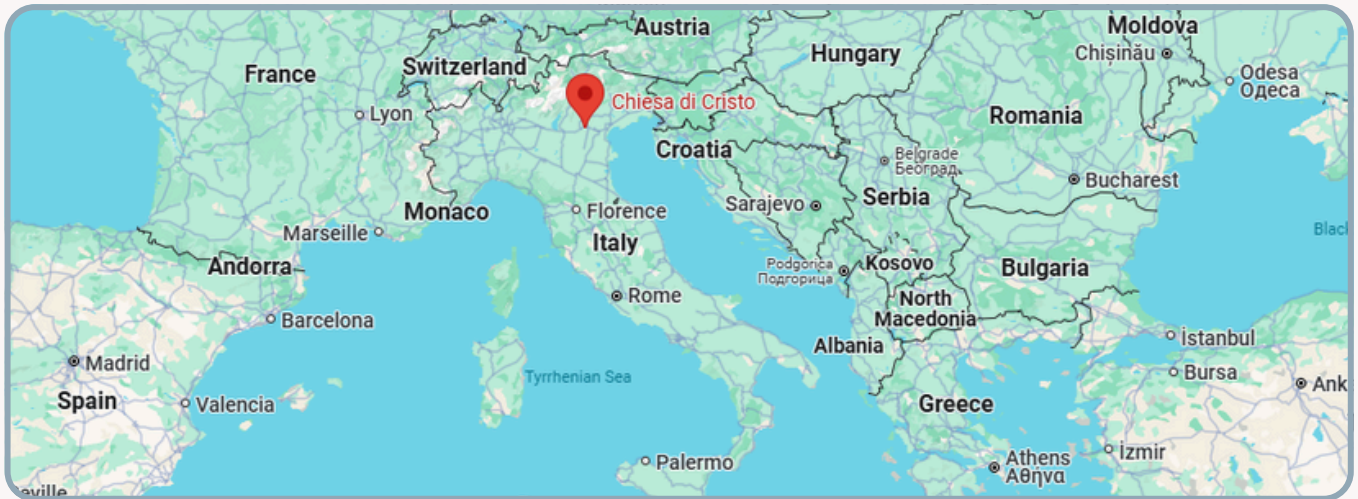
Objective: To support the evangelistic efforts of the Italian churches by leading a campus ministry center in Padua, fostering relationships within the local community and university, and creating opportunities to share the Gospel through free English conversation, events, and personal interactions.

Team: Richard & Caleigh Allen (us), Vicenza Church of Christ in Italy, “Let's Start Talking”, Jim & Jane Cox, Cru

Goal: To revitalize the church in Padua and to train and equip local Italian believers to take leadership roles in the church, ensuring the continued growth and impact of the ministry in the community long after our time there.

Our Need: A Sending Congregation & Financial Support

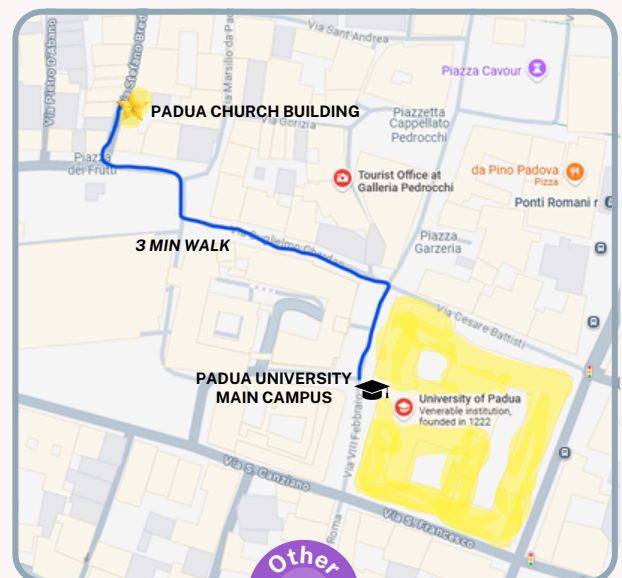
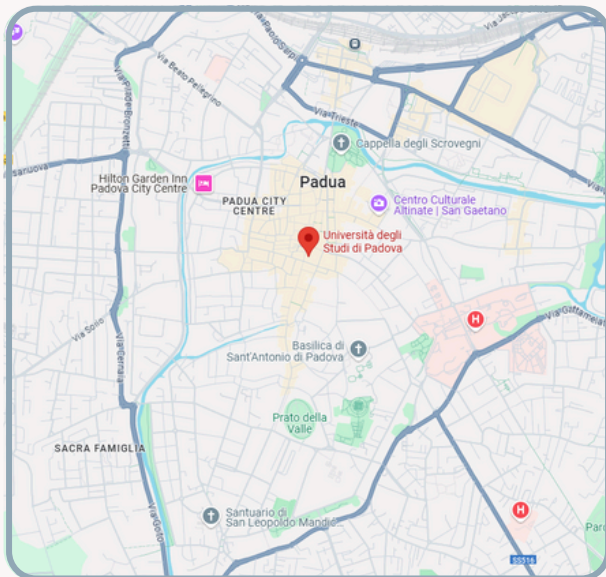
Why Padua?



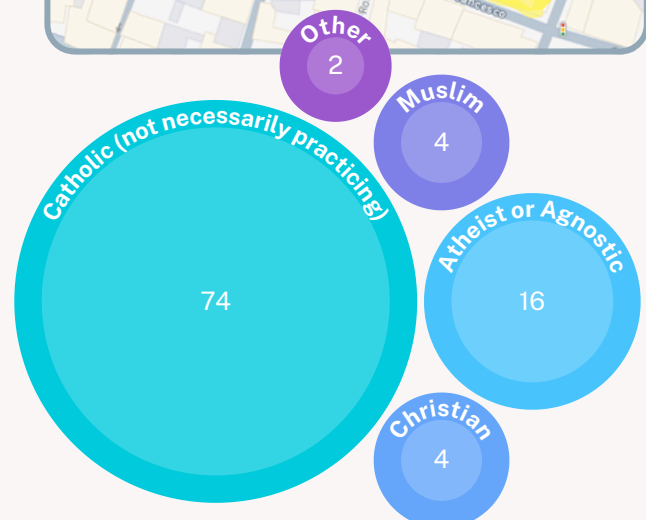
Current Church Status: Only 1-5 members

University of Padua: no existing campus ministry center

Church Location: central Padua, 2 blocks from university



Religious Landscape:
most people we meet are
non-practicing Catholic,
atheist, or agnostic, and
very hungry for Truth



How God Has Already Prepared the Soil

They Heard the Call:

2022. Spring. Christians from a neighboring church in Vicenza gathered to **pray and discuss ways to revitalize** the Padua church and reach university students.



They Developed Ideas:

- **renovate the church building** to create a welcoming, functional space for students to gather, study, & hear about Jesus
- **host “Let’s Start Talking” volunteers** to give lessons
- **invite American Professors** to hold seminars on certain topics

They Took Action:

Build It and They Will Come

- 1. Raised money**
and renovations began in Feb. 2024
- 2. Renovations complete**
in May 2024
- 3, 4. Hosted first volunteers**
to teach LST lessons



5, 6. Invited and hosted the first American professor seminar, around 80 people came! But there is currently no one to follow up.

How Will We Carry Out This Mission?



EVANGELISTIC OPPORTUNITY

- * The churches in Italy have invited us to help bring their vision to life, through launching the campus ministry center using the Padua church building.
- * As native English speakers, we can bridge connections and strengthen the current church in Padua, making it a beacon for evangelism and spiritual growth.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- * Build relationships in the community
- * Offer free English conversation taking place either in the church building or at our apartment creating opportunities to share the Gospel in a natural way.
- * Host various events for the community in order to expose them to us and the church building.



EVENTS FOR IMPACT

- * Coordinate American professor speaking events, advertised locally and on campus. This will attract students eager to improve their English while also hearing about topics related to Faith and Life.
- * From these events, we will gather contacts for follow-up conversations and studies.



SERVING THE CHURCH

- * Richard will preach and lead worship
- * Caleigh will teach children's Bible classes, helping to nurture the next generation of believers in Padua.



DEVELOPING LEADERS

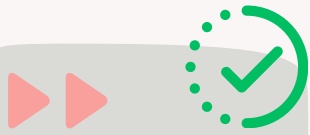
- * Long-term goal to train and equip Italian leaders to eventually take over the ministry. We believe this will equip the church to continue growing and evangelizing after we leave.
- * Richard is already working on recruiting Italians from other cities to see if they are interested in moving to Padua to join these efforts.



OUR COMMITMENT

- * We plan to commit to this mission for at least 5 years, during which we will focus on evangelism, discipleship, and church development in Padua and beyond.

Our Next Steps



Survey Trip



Met on a Bike Ride



Met on the Train

**Already Met
People in the
Community on
our Survey Trip**



Partner with a Sponsoring Congregation



Met on a Walk



Complete Fund Raising



Book Flights and Prepare for the Move

**Time With
the Church
in Vicenza**



Apply for Visas



Richard Speaking



Pack and Move



Settle Into Our New Home and Community



Bible Study



Begin Serving and Reaching Out

Invitation Letter from the Italian Churches

August 22, 2024

Dear Brethren,

It is with great pleasure that the congregations of the Churches of Christ in Vicenza and Ferrara, Italy, invite Richard and Caleigh Allen to visit with us in Italy about a shared evangelistic effort in Padova.

The visit will allow us to explore how we might work together in Padova in three overlapping areas: strengthening the local church, beginning a campus ministry for the 65,000 students currently present at the University of Padova, and working with Let's Start Talking teams (LST) offering free English conversation using the Bible.

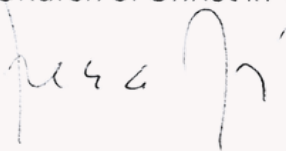
Their time with us will give the Allen's a chance to assess what moving their family to Italy might entail and will give the local churches a chance to explain and show the work to Richard and Caleigh.

With God as our guide, we pray the visit will lead to working together in Italy with clear expectations on all sides.

Church in Vicenza

In Christ,

For the Church of Christ in Vicenza



For the Church of Christ in Ferrara



Church in Padua



Recommendation Letter from the Church in Rome

CHIESA DI CRISTO VIALE JONIO

286-Roma-Italy

chiesadicristoroma@libero.it

www.chiesadicristo.it

We write this document in support of Richard and Caleigh Allen. We know Richard and Caleigh personally because they lived and worked in Italy and in Rome, Italy at the Church of Christ on Viale Jonio, where we serve as Elders. During the approximately three years they cooperate with us in the church in Rome they did an excellent job with the church members and with the contacts with whom they studied the Bible, always setting a good example. They are a faithful and strong couple in their faith.

They have learned Italian very well, and Richard has preached in Italian several times, while Caleigh speaks our language fluently.

We know they are considering returning to Italy to work again with Italian churches, especially with the churches in Vicenza and Padova in northern Italy, and we hope they can realize this dream with God's help and with your support and prayers. In Italy, there is a desperate need young couples, and we believe that Richard and Caleigh, having already lived in Italy and learned the Italian language and culture, can be a great help in the Lord's vineyard.

Please consider their request and support them in this new chapter of their life. We send fraternal greetings and peace in the Lord.

From the Church of Rome, Viale Jonio,

The Elders

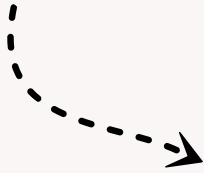
Giancarlo Balboni - gbalboni1@gmail.it
Roberto Innocenti - r.innocenti2015@libero.it
Gilberto Grimozzi - ggrimozzi@libero.it
Vittorio Vitalone - vvitalone57@gmail.com

Rome September 20, 2024



History of the Church in Padua

A Unique Beginning: Over 70 years ago, in the 1950s, Raffaello Paone, an ex-Catholic priest, was baptized by Howard Bybee in a nearby river.



A Heartfelt Request: Raffaello, with a burning passion, asked for someone to bring the Gospel to Padova, his hometown, where his friends and family were eager to hear it.

A Bold Response: Howard Bybee answered the call, traveling to Padova to share the message of faith, sparking the beginning of the church.

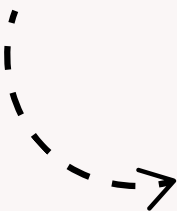


Growth and Commitment: As the congregation grew, Howard and others worked tirelessly, raising funds to purchase a building in the heart of Padova – Via Stefano Breda 2 – where the church has gathered ever since.

Challenges Over Time: Sadly, over the years, the congregation in Padova has dwindled, and only a handful of devoted Christians remain.



Support from Vicenza: For many years, the church in Vicenza, just an hour away, has faithfully supported Padova's congregation, preaching, worshiping, and covering building expenses.



The Struggle Today: The reality now is that only a handful of Christians remain and are having a difficult time maintaining the church building and reaching out to the community.

