



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Hi! My name is Elijah Baine. I am a member of the Starkville church of Christ in Starkville Mississippi. Although I grew up in Starkville, I was born in Rome, Italy. My parents served as missionaries for over a decade in various parts of Italy. Now, I am excited to follow in their footsteps with an incredible mission opportunity. This mission work aims to spread the Gospel to those have not heard the good news and to build lasting connections with our fellow Brothers and Sisters across Italy.

Being born in Rome, I never imagined that I would one day return to Italy as a missionary. As Christians, we are called to show the love of Christ to others so that they might come to know Him. Matthew 28:19 (ESV) tells us, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." Now, I have the chance to do just that, and I am overjoyed to be partnering with **Avanti Italia!**

Avanti Italia, meaning "Forward Italy," is a two-year mission program with a 40 year history. This program has blessed not only Florence but all of Italy. I will be joining a dedicated team under the direction of an experienced leader, Zachary Kelley. I am so excited to be continuing this impactful ministry.

Florence is a city of 382,000 people with over 1.5 million in the surrounding area. It's a true melting pot, attracting people from many cultures around the world. This diversity provides unique opportunities to minister not only to Italians but to people from all corners of the globe. In this vibrant city, I'll build relationships by engaging in Bible studies from day one.

The work I will be doing will consist of teaching English using the Bible, serving in the church in Florence, and participating in national Christian retreats. The majority of my time will be to creating lesson plans for my students. Each plan will be different due to having a diverse range of students. Students can vary in English comprehension as well as interests and Bible literacy. While in Italy, I will also travel to different congregations to edify and serve each congregation. I would describe this work as **Friendship Evangelism**. In building a bond, students are more willing to open up and be honest with you and themselves. The goal in this is to teach them about Christ and his sacrifice, with a genuine effort to continually grow with them spiritually.

My connection to Italy runs deep. Both my parents participated in *Avanti Italia* and later returned to direct the program at the Bible School. Their mission is how I ended up being born there. They were a part of the Rome church as well as the Florence church and served various congregations across Italy, including Anzio, Aprilia, Taranto, Prato, Pistoia, Vicenza, Naples, among others. Community service was a big part of their lives, a trait I believe has been passed down to me.

I am very blessed to be well-traveled and can relate to those from various backgrounds. I have been on several mission trips across the South, in Panama, the Navajo reservation as well as in Starkville. I returned with my dad to Italy in 2017 and long to reestablish those connections.

There is still much work to be done before my **January 2025** departure. I know God is already at work in these matters because Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans, "...we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28, ESV).

I look forward to being a light for God's kingdom in Italy and am confident that God will use me to help others see Him. I am prayerful through every step of this process, and I am trusting in the Lord that He will supply me with everything I need. This call is not something I take lightly, and I understand the responsibilities that come with it.

Returning to Italy is truly coming full circle in my life – *from birthplace to mission field*. I am eager to contribute to the community that shaped my early years, and I am inviting you to partner with me on this journey. Your support will enable me to dedicate two years to this mission, teaching, learning, and spreading the Gospel. If you feel called to participate with me to help, bring the Good News to Italy, it would fill my heart with joy!

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. PRAYERS: Your prayers are invaluable. I humbly ask that you pray for my team and those currently in Italy to have continued strength and faith in the Lord. Pray for the success of this mission, for the hearts of those we will reach, and for wisdom for myself and my fellow workers.

2. FINANCIAL SUPPORT: To make this mission possible, I need to raise funds to cover my living expenses, program costs, and other essentials during the two years I will be in Italy. Your contribution, no matter the amount, will make a significant difference and help me carry out this important work. I've attached a detailed budget for your review, which outlines the specific needs and costs involved.

You can support my mission in a couple ways:

- **Checks:** Send any checks to **Starkville church of Christ, 613 E Lee Blvd, Starkville, MS 39759**. Please be sure to write "**Elijah Baine, Italy Support**" in the memo line.
- **Online Giving:** Visit <https://starkvillechurch.org/give> and select "**Elijah Baine, Avanti Italia.**" This can also be done in the **UCSC/Church App**. You have the option to give in a variety of ways ranging from one-time to monthly contributions.

All contributions are tax-deductible, and any support you can provide will be greatly appreciated!

Thank you for considering partnering with me in this incredible mission. However, if you are unable to partner with me financially, your prayers are also greatly appreciated. Together, we can make a lasting impact in Italy, sharing the love and hope of Jesus Christ.

With gratitude and excitement,



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ELIJAH BAINE | AVANTI ITALIA

RECURRING MONTHLY EXPENSES

Expense Category	Monthly Amount	2-Year Total	Description
Bible School Rent	\$1,000.00	\$24,000.00	Room rent, all utilities, some groceries for three weekly group meals, office supplies, gas, etc.
Supplemental Groceries	\$220.00	\$5,280.00	Additional food for weekends and personal preference
Personal Care	\$70.00	\$1,680.00	Haircuts, toiletries, clothing, etc.
Health Care Expenses	\$100.00	\$2,400.00	Medical expenses including doctor visits, medications
Smart Phone	\$40.00	\$960.00	Monthly cell phone service
Transportation	\$260.00	\$6,240.00	Bus passes, train tickets, etc.
Miscellaneous	\$110.00	\$2,640.00	Unplanned or miscellaneous expenses, such as fluctuations in exchange rates, etc.
Contribution	\$230.00	\$5,520.00	Monthly donation to further the work of the Florence church of Christ
Social Security and Taxes	\$350.00	\$8,400.00	Mandatory social security contributions and taxes
Banking Fees	\$120.00	\$2,880.00	ATM withdrawal fees, currency conversion fees, etc.
Total Monthly Expenses	\$2,500.00	\$60,000.00	

ONE-TIME EXPENSES

Expense Category	One-Time Amount	Description
Health Insurance (\$700/year)	\$1,400.00	Required Italian health insurance
Permit of Stay Fees (\$175/year)	\$350.00	Fees required for all non-EU citizens to legally stay in Italy for extended periods of time of more than three months
Retreat Costs and Travel (\$500/year)	\$1,000.00	Expenses related to attending retreats such as conferences, summer youth camps, etc.
2 International Roundtrips from GTR to FLR with extra baggage fees	\$4,600.00	2 roundtrip tickets are less expensive than purchasing 2 one-way tickets 2 years apart. Coming back in summer 2025 for a brief visit.
Language School (3 months)	\$2,100.00	Tuition for 3 months of intensive language lessons
Emergency Fund	\$700.00	Funds set aside for unexpected emergencies
Room Setup	\$300.00	Cost to customize my space
Smart Phone Purchase	\$550.00	One-time mobile phone expense
Vlog Camera and Tripod	\$500.00	Equipment needed for weekly vlogs for my supporters
Total One-Time Expenses	\$11,500.00	

TOTAL BUDGET FOR 2 YEARS

Category	2-Year Total	Description
Total Monthly Expenses	\$60,000.00	Sum of all monthly expenses over 24 months
Total One-Time Expenses	\$11,500.00	Sum of all one-time expenses over 2 years
Total Budget for 2 Years	\$71,500.00	Combined total of monthly and one-time expenses