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All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

Matt. 1:22-23



The Czech Republic

Did you know?

The communists tried to replace Baby Jesus, Ježíšek, with Grandfather Frost, Děda Mráz, a mythical Russian import akin to Santa Claus, but were unsuccessful.



Grandfather Frost, Děda Mráz

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Peter.hoffmann@lcms.org

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Veselé Vánoce

(Merry Christmas)

The Czech Republic is an amazing place during Advent and Christmas. One would never suspect that this is one of the most atheistic countries in the world. Images of Advent and Christmas are everywhere. The number of Advent concerts is astounding. Christmas decorations are everywhere and the Christmas markets are overflowing with visitors from all over the Czech Republic. Crèche scenes are numerous. There are three in the mall and several life-sized ones around the city. However, if one looks closer they will also see many non-Christian traditions such as the bell in each Christmas market to ring for good luck, along with plenty of horseshoes, golden pigs and hearts for extra good luck and love. The devil is also on display to remind all children that they must be good. The Gospel message is desperately needed.

Mikuláš

Mikuláš is Czech for St. Nicholas. December 6, commemorates Old St. Nick's Day. It is at this time that Mikuláš visits the homes of the children with two friends, an angel and a devil. If the children are good they receive candy or small gifts from the angel. If they are bad the devil threatens to put them in a sack and take them to hell. To escape this cruel fate, the kids have to recite a poem or sing a song. Instead of candy, they receive coal or potatoes.

Czech Christmas Customs

Christmas dinner is eaten during the evening of Christmas Eve. If one does not eat meat during the entire day of December 24, they may see a flying golden pig in the evening sky, which brings good luck. The meal usually consists of fish soup (made of carp), fried carp and potato salad. It is during this meal that Ježíšek, Little Jesus, brings presents and leaves them under the Christmas tree. Your future health may be read from sliced apples and your future may be predicted from nut-boats or molten lead. To ensure you will be loved for the coming year just put honey on your cheeks on December 24th. Money will stay with you if you carry one scale from the carp in your wallet.



Christmas Market - Olomouc



Christmas Market - Prague



Christmas cookies



Crèche scenes



Advent concert



Good luck bell



Christmas market



Carp for Christmas dinner

A Mission presentation to the Silesian church in Oldrichovice



On November 29 one of the members of our M.I.S.E. team requested that we give a presentation to the youth, 18 – 25 in her church in Oldrichovice, Silesia. We not only accepted the invitation, but told them that this would be an interactive presentation where the youth would be asked to respond to typical questions that atheists might ask them when attempting to share the Gospel. We started the presentation by giving them some of our background and why we became missionaries. We also stressed the importance of spreading the Gospel to everyone, including atheists. The importance of being able to provide answers to questions that non-believers may have was also stressed. We then asked them why they believed in God and the Bible. This is when it became very quiet. It was evident that there was a thirst for these answers and many others. We emphasized the need for a world view conference and follow-up Bible studies.

Christmas ornaments with a purpose!



For members of our Silesian church outreach team, M.I.S.E., that had not yet left for Christmas, we held a session where they came to our flat and painted a Christmas ornament. They then took it home and hung it on their Christmas tree or gave it to someone in an effort to share the Gospel.



Christmas celebration with the seniors of Olomouc



The seniors in our club have become dear to us. They are most generous and kind and have accepted us graciously. During Advent we exchanged cookies, candies and small gifts. George, the club leader, joined us to play both Czech and American hymns and songs for Christmas while the group sang. It was the first time the club had a keyboard, flute and alphorn all play together. We shared the Gospel by providing each club member with a homemade Christmas card from us in the Czech language.

The end of an unforgettable chapter in our life

It is hard to believe that our missionary journey started on March 12, 2018, and that it will end on March 12, 2020. The road was difficult, but extremely rewarding. The friends and relationships we have made will last a life time. We know that God sent us here and wants a church to flourish here. So please pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to soften the hearts of the good people of Olomouc and that a church will some day be planted here. Also, pray that Czech speaking pastors will be trained and available for Olomouc and other locations throughout the Czech Republic.



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

To support the LCMS through the work of Peter and Lucy Hoffmann, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861

St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

OR

Mission Central
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