



My brand-new suitcase left Wisconsin with four wheels but arrived in Prague with only three.

TRAVEL ADVENTURES

Some of you may remember my cancelled flight on my way to America in August. For the most part, my trip back to Prague in November went smoothly, until I got to the baggage carousel. Since the zipper broke on my older, large suitcase while coming to America, I replaced it with a brand new hard-sided and lighter weight suitcase.

Somehow, during its maiden voyage across the Atlantic, one of the suitcase wheels was completely sheared off. I filed a report right away at the baggage claim in Prague and they put me in touch with a local company to fix the broken wheel. The company provides free pick-up and delivery services, and guarantees to replace the damaged suitcase with a new one if they cannot repair the airline's damage. Within a week of picking up the three-wheeler from my flat, the repair company returned the same suitcase with all four wheels intact. I am ready to roll again.



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And what about angels?



The handmade Czech angel ornament was a special gift this year for Christmas.

During Advent, we heard about the angel Gabriel visiting Mary to tell her she was chosen to bear the Son of God. Most of us know that an angel first told the shepherds about the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. And soon we will enjoy so many Christmas songs about the angels and the important role they played after Jesus' birth, singing with joy and proclaiming the good news of his arrival on earth.

But we also know that angels are heavenly creatures and not human. So, I was surprised when my Czech friend handed me a gift bag and told me it was her Christmas gift for me. She is an atheist and just learning about Jesus. She doesn't celebrate Christ's birth at Christmas but enjoys a few days off work to travel and spend time with her family.

She explained that while she was at one of the many Christmas markets in Prague with her friends, she saw the ornament and knew she had to get it for me because, she said, "You are an angel."

This was the first time in my entire life that I was mistaken for an angel. I was touched by her thoughtfulness, but I also knew that I needed to share the truth with her about angels and their support role for God, as well as the fact that I am a human being, not an angel.

We talked for almost two hours about Jesus, his birth, his life, his death and his resurrection. The angels weren't just there at the first Christmas to share the good news that the "Savior is born," but an angel also shared the good news on Easter morning that "He is risen!"

When I got back to my flat, I put the angel next to the nativity ornament on my tree and sent her the picture. I reminded her that the angels were messengers the night Jesus was born. They shared the good news of his birth and joyously sang praises to our Savior and King, who came to save all humans from sin. Jesus came to save her, all the Czech people and, of course, the person she thought was an angel, but is only human. And that's the real reason we celebrate Christmas and join the angels in singing praises to our Savior and King, the baby born in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord.



Safely Back in Prague



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Fluency in the Czech language.
- Strong leadership in the Czech Lutheran church in Prague, the ECAVvCR.
- The Czechs to know about the real baby Jesus, born to be their Savior.

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- Safe travels back to Prague.
- New Together In Mission (TIM) congregations, St. John, Pickerel, WI and Shepherd of the Hills, Onalaska, WI.
- All of the individual donors who support the mission work in the Czech Republic.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

I returned to Prague the latter half of November and have been quickly readjusting to life in the mission field. As I look back at my home service, I am grateful for the opportunity to visit with so many of you. You welcomed me warmly and shared my passion for reaching the Czechs with the Gospel. You promised to support me with prayers and financial gifts, and I am so grateful for your support.

As my time went on in the states, more presentations were added to an already full schedule. I sincerely apologize if I was unable to personally visit with you or your church during this trip. I plan to be back for another

home service within the next three years and will do my best to honor your invitations.

Here are a few interesting statistics from my first home service:

Total number of mission presentations given: 58

Number of miles flown: 10,971

Number of miles driven: 8,965

Number of different beds slept in, courtesy of gracious hosts: 17

Thanks again for your tremendous support and walking with me on this mission journey!

This month, we remember the angel sharing the good news with the shepherds:

“And the angel said to them, ‘Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.’”

Luke 2:10-11 (ESV)

- Cindy Zirbel Wrucke



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