



A brand-new cereal showed up at my local grocery store.

OH CHEERIOS!

I could hardly believe my eyes when I went to the local grocery store this past week. The European version of one of my favorite cereals was on a special display by the front entrance. Of course, I grabbed a box and expected it to be just like Honey Nut Cheerios from America. Not exactly.

The description clearly points out that the cereal is whole grain, so the taste is a bit different, though more wholesome. And the honey flavor is definitely not as sweet. But the end result is that it is delicious and close enough to home that I would buy it again. Except that two days later, it was sold out! Hopefully, they will get another shipment before my box is empty.

Feel free to keep in touch with me:

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Looking to the Future



The Charles Bridge in Prague contains many Christian statues.

Two years ago, I deployed to Prague. I knew I would be living and serving in the most atheistic country in the world, but I now have a greater understanding of the challenges in sharing the Gospel here. The language, the culture and other factors all present barriers, but I am more encouraged than ever that God's Word will reach the Czechs.

I look forward to using all that I have learned since my arrival to continue sowing the seeds here, so that someday every Czech will know Jesus as their Savior. This month has involved a lot of preparation for the work ahead this year.

Teaching English to Czech church leaders: Weekly English lessons start next week with four Lutheran church leaders and future pastors—a deacon, a vicar, the business manager and one of our alliance missionary pastors.

Women's outreach: Starting this week, I will meet with local women for devotions, prayer and fellowship at our church complex. In addition to the LWML devotional materials, I have found short films in Czech (with English subtitles) in which native Czechs share

stories about their Christian faith, including their initial skepticism. I am very excited that three of the women who plan to come are not yet baptized, but they are curious about Jesus and meeting Christian women.

Czech prayer app revisions: The first year of pilot test data for the mobile phone app shows who is using the app and what features are being used, as well as what is not working. I am currently revising the software to improve the app's functionality and improve access to God's Word through linking to an online Bible.

Czech language study: I have recently advanced to the intermediate level of language study. When I first arrived here, life was very difficult without knowing the language. Daily life is now much easier; sometimes I am even mistaken for a Czech in stores and on the street. I still have a lot of work ahead of me to become fluent and confident in speaking a very difficult language, especially to witness to native speakers.

I plan to provide updates over the coming months about the work that we are doing here together, with more details about each of the outreach efforts. Please pray that the seeds that are planted take root in a challenging environment.



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- A mission-minded pastor to serve the vacancy at our Lutheran church in Prague.
- The Czech pastors and church leaders to learn English well enough to network with other confessional Lutheran pastors in the region.
- The women in our new outreach group to be encouraged and uplifted through Bible study and Christian fellowship.

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- The birth of my first grandson, Owen.
- The encouraging cards and emails that I received through the Advent and Christmas season.
- All of the individuals and congregations who have generously provided financial gifts and pledges.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, who conquered death and gives us life through Him.

Charles University



A statue of King Charles IV next to a tapestry in the first and oldest university building, the 14th century Karolinum.

Soon, I will begin weekly Czech classes at Charles University, in addition to meeting with my Czech tutor. The university group classes provide practice dialogue, as well as standardized testing of fluency, and certification of Czech proficiency levels.

Charles University is the oldest university in central Europe, founded in 1348 in Prague by King Charles IV. Karolinum, the oldest building, is still used today for all

graduation ceremonies. Our class visited the Karolinum as part of our orientation.

Lots of history happened in the Karolinum auditorium, where we sat. For example, Jan Hus was a professor and rector at Charles University in the early 1400s. He spoke in the Karolinum auditorium in a public debate against papal indulgences, the beginnings of the Bohemian Reformation. Jan Hus was later condemned by the Catholic Church and burned at the stake in 1415, long before Martin Luther was born.

Today, the Karolinum is a National Cultural Monument of the Czech Republic.



This month I look forward to what God has planned for the future:

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV)

- Cindy Zirbel Wrucke



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