

ŠUMBARK SIGHTINGS & STORIES

from Benjamin Helge, LCMS Missionary
Serving our Lord in Havířov-Šumbark, Czech Republic



COVID-19 Update

LCMS missionaries in the Czech Republic (including me) are healthy, safe and continue to share the Gospel. The Czech government in the middle of March implemented rather strict laws due to COVID-19. This included the closing of schools, mandatory quarantine as well as the closure of most shops and restaurants and the compulsory wearing of face masks in public. Many of you are in similar situations. We keep our eyes focused on Jesus and the sharing of His Gospel.



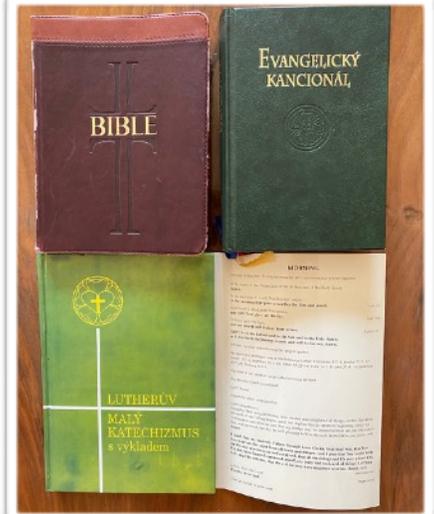
My home office (a corner of my living room) has taken on a new position, now basking in the sunlight.

From A Distance

English Talk Group (ETG) now meets over Zoom. English for seniors now meets over Zoom. Tuesday night prayer group now meets over Zoom. Even our band now meets over Zoom. It is quite possible that your gatherings transitioned completely to the virtual world as well. And praise the Lord that all these gatherings can continue on the plethora of platforms that exist. The virtual existence of our local groups such as ETG has even allowed for those that live in other cities to join us.

Ministry here isn't just continuing on as it had been. New gatherings and groups have formed as a result. After posting a morning devotion on Instagram, a small group of guys (the most present have been seven!) decided to meet everyday together to encourage one another. Our church plant in Havířov has seen how people are even more open to joining an event when there is the safety of being behind the screen.

In addition, LCMS missionaries from different regions are realizing the incredible tools that God has given us. And there are exciting things coming! As so much changes around us, we are still called to share the Gospel. And that is what we are doing.



Using a mix of resources to encourage young Christian men in Silesia, the past three weeks, we (between three and seven guys) met every day on Zoom to read Scripture and Luther's Small Catechism (and explanation), confess our faith and to pray.



English Talk Group showing off everyone's favorite shirt. As part of our online gatherings, each participant is encouraged to wear something thematic for the week.

Serve with the LCMS

There are many opportunities to serve as a short-term or GEO missionary. The Office of International Mission continues to evaluate international service opportunities. Stayed tuned for updates and even virtual ways to serve.

Thanksgiving and Prayer Requests

Join me in giving thanks to God for:

- You, my prayer warrior, supporter and encourager.
- The health and safety of our Czech and Eurasia missionaries.
- The abundance of sunlight He has been showering on this country.
- The Internet and the programs that allow us to stay connected.
- His Word and the truth that His Gospel is still being shared.
- New and upcoming projects for Gospel proclamation with the Silesia Lutheran Church and missionaries around the world.

Pray that God:

- Has mercy upon us and cures this world of COVID-19.
- Opens the ears and hearts of unbelievers that come to ETG and other outreach groups.
- Allows for online activities to continue and for all participants to be able to connect.
- Show us more of the students in Havířov who have received the gift of faith and now need to be disciplined.
- Encourages young men in the Silesian community to become pastors.
- Rid the community of spiritual evil, sorcery and shamanism.



Encouragement in the Kitchen

I've been spending a good amount of time in my kitchen lately. Now, all meals and snacks are coming from it. More than anything I love hosting, inviting people over to sit around the table and eat a delicious meal together. Welcoming people into my home allows me to encourage them and share the Good News with them as well. Yet, during this time of quarantine, I realized that my kitchen, even without the people in it, is encouraging me. A few tea towels rotate through the cycle reminding me that God is in control, His plans are bigger than ours and Jesus is everywhere. He is here with us now and will always be with us.

So step back, take a look around and get a deep breath in because everything is going to be alright.

Christ cares for you.



Thanks to Grandma Postenrieder and Dr. Jody Head for sharing these reminders with me.



I can't find yeast anywhere. Are you having the same issue? I think I just used my last packet up for some pizza (which is being baked at least twice a week now). So I've jumped into the sourdough starter business. (Thanks for some tips Mai.) And I look forward to baking my first loaf of bread.

The other day I read an article commenting on how the world (at least the Western world) has returned to bread and baking bread. And how throughout history, bread is central to so many cultures, stories and teachings. Jesus Himself is the Bread of Life. So as you bake or eat your next loaf of bread, remember that Jesus is the true giver of life and trust in Him.

PRAY | SUPPORT | ENCOURAGE

To financially partner with this ministry, please send your tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks "Support of Benjamin Helge." Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on my online giving page at www.lcms.org/helge.

You can also send your support to my friends at:

Mission Central
407818 Highway E-16
Mapleton, Iowa 51034

Contact Benjamin: benjamin.helge@lcms.org

