



Proclaiming the Praises of Christ in Prague



August
2020



Church bells of České Budějovice

Are We Listening?

Church bells are just a part of everyday life here in Europe. Many of them are hundreds and hundreds of years old. They have served as clanging communicators that the services of God's house are about to begin. The bells at the top of our congregation at St. Michael Lutheran are literally just across a very narrow street from a hotel. I wonder sometimes if the guests there are cursing our bells as they ring out an invitation to the 9:30 Slovak service, followed by another

invitation to our 11:00 English service. One thing is true, they could not have missed our bells' invitations as the bells ring for several minutes!

In the Gospel lesson for Trinity 12 (one-year lectionary), a man who could neither hear nor speak is brought to Jesus. They ask Him to place a hand upon the man. But the Creator does so much more. Taking him aside, Jesus sticks His fingers into his ears, spits and applies it to his tongue, and, with a deep sigh, He utters the word, *Ephphatha!* (Be open.ed.) And, in the way that only Jesus can do, the man hears and speaks correctly. What was an impenetrable wall of soundlessness has been broken down by the One who fashioned our ears. The tongue that could not even ask a simple question was freed to sing the praises of the One who gives it speech. The man heard. The man responded. And Jesus was at the center of that.

St. Paul reminds us that the same *Ephphatha* is pronounced over us when we come to faith in Christ. He writes to the Romans: *So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ* (Rom. 10:17 RSV.) There are a lot of sermons being preached all over the world. Some are filled with deceptive words that answer what itching ears want to hear (2 Tim. 4:3-4.) But where the true Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, it rings out loudly and clearly, inviting all to faith in He who died and rose again and is now reigning over His Church. How do you tell if what is preached is the true Gospel? Ask this: Is Jesus at the center of it? Where He is marginalized, being pushed aside for our works or our feelings, that is not the true Gospel. But where Jesus is the center and substance of what is preached, then you have the Word that opens ears and frees the tongue for the praise of our Creator-Redeemer God.

Are we listening? There are far-off bells of false doctrines and false messiahs that seek to lure us away from the true Gospel. Or, perhaps, we are hearing the true Gospel, but we are pulling the sheets over our head so that we might linger in self-serving sin. The problem is not in the ringing Gospel, but in ourselves.

So, what do we do? How do we move beyond such faithless and sin-filled lives? The answer is still ringing in the bells, the bells of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Recently, Dale has been stopped twice by people on the street who wanted to ask him about the congregation and what it is that we are all about. (You have to understand how un-Czech that is!) But what a great time to ring the bell of Jesus Christ, to invite them to receive the gifts of Christ at the Divine Service. It is our prayer that we will have more and more opportunities to invite others to come and see the wondrous work of Jesus Christ, the Lord who calls all to faith in Him.

Please, pray for this work here. And we, here, pray for you there. That the Church would always seek to do more and more to share the love of God revealed in Christ-crucified. He now lives and reigns to eternity. Through the preaching of this Gospel, men and women from all over the world are being invited to confess Jesus as Savior and Lord! May their confessions ring out like bells!

Built on the Rock the Church will stand
Even when steeples are falling,
Crumbled have spires in ev'ry land;
Bells still are chiming and calling,
Calling the young and old to rest,
But above all the souls distressed,
Longing for rest everlasting.

We are God's house of living stones,
Built for His own habitation.
He through baptismal grace us owns
Heirs of His wondrous salvation.
Were we but two His name to tell,
Yet He would deign with us to dwell
With all His grace and His favor.

Grant, then, O God, Your will be done,
That, when the church bells are ringing,
Many in saving faith may come
Where Christ His message is bringing;
"I know My own; My own know Me.
You, not the world, My face shall see.
My peace I leave with you. Amen."

"Built on the Rock"
Lutheran Service Book #645





We thank the Lord for all of the people and ministries that support us. This month, we especially give thanks for:

Holy Trinity Lutheran
Kingsland, GA

Peace Lutheran
Grand Island, NE

Redeemer Lutheran
Nashville, TN

Our address in Prague:

Rev. Dale and Suzanne Kaster
Bubenečská 365/41
160 00 Praha 6
Czech Republic

The church address in Prague:

St. Michael's Lutheran Church
V Jirchářích 14/152
110 00 Praha 1
Czech Republic

Please, pray for the outreach work being done in Silesia and Bohemia.

Please, pray for our regional director, Rev. James Krikava.

Please, pray for our new year of Christian education.

Please, pray for Bishop Marian Čop as he leads the ECAV.

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

Our email address is
Dale.Kaster@lcms.org



A New Member of the Congregation

We are here with the charge to serve the English-speaking people who live in Prague. So, we are always looking for people—who come from all over the world—to share with them the peace that is found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. On 16 August, we welcomed Becca into communion with our congregation. Becca is a missionary herself, serving in a non-denominational Christian school here in the heart of Prague. She teaches English literature and the Bible to high school students. We are, consequently, blessed to have her love for the Lord and His sheep here among us at St. Michael Lutheran Church; and we pray for her witness to her students.

Outreach in Silesia

Usually, when we head out to Silesia (northeast Czech Republic), we are going to visit and to minister to our LCMS team members there. In August, however, we got a chance to add some other ministry to that trip. It just so happened that the church in which Chelsea (one of our missionaries) serves and the church in which Ben (our other missionary there) serves were both doing mission outreach weeks. Therefore, we stayed four days giving a hand to both outreach efforts. It was wonderful! We made new friends who live out in Silesia, and we were able to invite people off the streets to come and participate in church activities. We are hoping to take some of the things we learned and apply them to the work in Prague. Already, we are planning a retreat and some English language day camps for summer 2021. It is our hope that it will bring others to Christ.



Sunday School and Adult Bible Classes Begin Again!

One of the things that COVID-19 took from us was the ability to hold Christian education classes for groups. By mandate, even after we were allowed to hold worship, we were kept from these classes. It has been that way since late March. This Sunday, 6 September, we will finally be able to return to classes. Deacon Damašek will begin again with what he was doing when the shut-down occurred, a look at the Exodus and the Ten Commandments. Dale will begin with a class on 1 Corinthians. We are looking forward to being back in the Word together!

Outreach for the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (ECAV)

Recently, the deacon who serves the Czech-language congregation, Dominik, has put together a proposal for outreach in the northwest region of Bohemia (western Czech Republic). We are thrilled that some outreach is being proposed by the ECAV, and it is our prayer that this will occur. In order to look further into it, on Saturday, 19 September, Dominik, Martin, and Dale will visit the locations where the work may happen. We beg for your prayers for this, that the clear Gospel might ring out like a bell here in Bohemia, calling many to the peace of Christ.

COVID-19 is still here in the Czech Republic. But even though the infection rate has increased, the need for hospitalization has decreased. Perhaps, this indicates a weakening of the virus. We continue to pray for our whole world and for the preaching of the peace of Christ at this time.

We commend you to Christ!

Rev. Dale and Suzanne Kaster—*Your Missionaries to the Czech Republic*

To support the LCMS through the work of the Kasters, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod **OR** Mission Central
P.O. Box 66861 40718 Hwy E16
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861 Mapleton, IA 51034
Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod or LCMS. Include “Kaster – Czech Republic,” in the memo line. Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website at www.lcms.org/kaster.