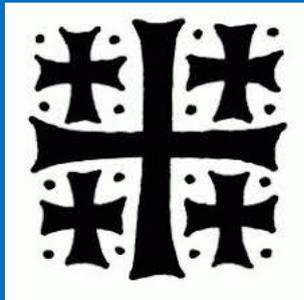




Proclaiming the Praises of Christ in Prague



September
2020



May God bestow on us His grace,
With blessings rich provide us;
And may the brightness of His face
To life eternal guide us,
That we His saving health may know,
His gracious will and pleasure,
And also to the nations show
Christ's riches without measure
And unto God convert them.

Thine over all shall be the praise
And thanks of ev'ry nation;
And all the world with joy shall raise
The voice of exultation.
For Thou shalt judge the earth, O Lord,
Nor suffer sin to flourish;
Thy people's pasture is Thy Word
Their souls to feed and nourish,
In righteous paths to keep them.

O let the people praise Thy worth,
In all good works increasing;
The land shall plenteous fruit bring forth,
Thy Word is rich in blessing.
May God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Spirit bless us!
Let all the world praise Him alone,
Let solemn awe possess us.
Now let our hearts say, "Amen!"

"May God Bestow on Us His Grace"



Deacons Dominik and Martin

A Step Out in Bohemia

Recently, two deacons, Martin and Dominik, and I took a daytrip through the northern region of Bohemia. Our purpose was to look at opportunities where we can bring the Gospel to the people, especially places where there had been a strong Lutheran presence before World War II and the subsequent hard times brought on by communist oppression. We visited the towns of Varnsdorf, Teplice, and Most. Without a doubt, we found the situation in Varnsdorf the most promising for two reasons: a building and willing city leaders.

In the town of Varnsdorf, there is an old Lutheran church building that is called "The Red Church" (Červený kostel) by the locals. The building used to be a part of a regular parish, filled with services and Christian education. However, after the horrors of World War II, when the ethnic Germans were "encouraged to leave" by the Czechs, the building fell into disuse, made worse by communism's campaign against the Gospel. Currently, however, the building is being refurbished by the local government and is being used for community functions. Recently, it was used as a concert hall to raise money for its refurbishing. It is great to see the old, beautiful building back in use. But there is even more to get excited about!



The sanctuary set up for a concert

The city leaders are hoping to restore some of its original function to the building. And this is where our two deacons fit in! Deacon Dominik has expressed interest in taking on this parish especially as his function here in Prague seems to be winding down. For over a year, he has led the Czech-speaking congregation at St. Michael Lutheran. Now, the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (ECAV) is talking about bringing in another pastor to lead that congregation. Deacon Dominik and Deacon Martin are expected to take the pastors' test in February next year; and, presumably, they will be ordained in May. With two new pastors, and both of them gifted with a mission heart, we are hoping the mission work of the ECAV might get started again.

That is a lot of hoping! Tests will need to be passed. City officials will need to be met. Ordinations will have to happen. And people will need to be reached and invited to come to services. But that is what the Church does. We take seriously the commission of our Lord to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth so that many might come to confess Jesus Christ as Lord. And even if only one person comes to believe, the labor is worth it. *I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance* (Lk. 15:7 ESV.)



The Red Church in Varnsdorf

Please, pray for this work. Pray, especially, that the leaders of the ECAV will look with favor on this work. Unfortunately, missions are not an emphasis here. But we thank the Lord of the Church that He has put two deacons in our life and in our work who get it. They are not "normal people." They are the people of Christ and His Word. Thanks be to God!



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

Immanuel Lutheran
Greenfield, IA

St. John's Lutheran
Tecumseh, NE

St. Peter Lutheran
Deshler, NE

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 possibility of new mission work in Varnsdorf.

Please, pray for our Office of International Mission in St. Louis.

Please, pray for our son's new daughter as well as the family.

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 COVID-19 Update

Now that autumn has come, so has an uptick in COVID-19 cases here in the Czech Republic. The Czech government has declared a new state of emergency in order to get the rate of infections under control. We thank God, however, that they are—at least for the moment—not as stringent as they were under the state of emergency we had in the spring. So, beginning from October 5 we will have to do the following: limit the number of gatherers for inside activities to 100 (not a problem for us, but a concern for the Slovak congregation), cease from singing in the Divine Service (as it spreads the virus more easily), and return to social distancing and use of disinfectants. It is our prayer that these limitations will help us turn the corner on infections and that we will not have to have stronger limitations.



Funeral Customs

When we served in Ghana (2014-2018), we learned that different cultures mourn sometimes very differently. The same holds true here in the Czech Republic. Recently, Pavel Čícel, a member of the Slovak congregation died. Mr. Čícel was a wonderful Christian man, always greeting us on Sunday with his great smile. The mourning culture here includes the placing of black on the outside of the church, the use of black paraments at the funeral, a bouquet in the pew where he sat, and the placing of flowers on the casket by all. It was as it used to be in America a century ago. We give thanks, though, that the things that really matter—faith in Christ and in the resurrection from the dead—we still hold in common.



Exciting News from Home! - A New Granddaughter!

Our son and daughter-in-law, Joshua and Sarah, welcomed a healthy baby girl, Rebecca. She came into the world 7 pounds and 8 ounces and 20 1/4 inches. She came a little early, so she came at the right size. We are so glad that they and big sister, Rachel, are a growing and happy family, faithful in church. We will travel in November to see them and for Dale to officiate at her baptism. God keep them all in His care and send His angels to attend them.

Mushroom Evangelism

Czechs are known to be reticent in their interaction with strangers. That is, until you get a huge mushroom in your hand. Autumn is the season for mushroom picking, and Czechs take it very seriously. During this time of the year, one can spot cars parked along forested roads, a sure sign of someone picking mushrooms. Recently, we went with our deacon, and Dale found a whopper! All of a sudden, the quiet Czechs came up to us to praise our mushroom, extolling its healthiness and telling us it was very delicious. It was. We are always searching for new ways to get people talking about Jesus. Perhaps we should carry a mushroom around with us.



One reason we can work here is because of the hard work that the Office of International Mission does in St. Louis. This small staff works so hard for us and we rejoice to know that they have our backs. We thank all of them for their use of God's gifts in keeping our missionaries the world-over on the field and speaking Jesus!

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

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

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

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