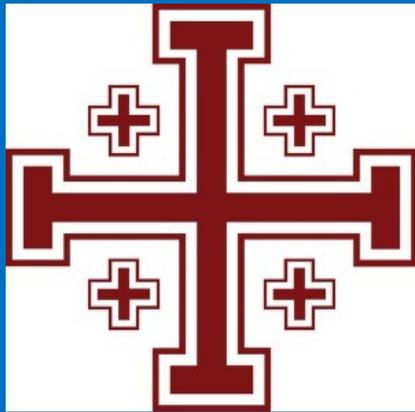




Proclaiming the Praises of Christ in Prague



January
2021



How clear is our vocation, Lord,
When once we heed Your call:
To live according to Your Word
And daily learn, refreshed, restored,
That You are Lord of all
And will not let us fall.

But if, forgetful, we should find
Your yoke is hard to bear;
If worldly pressures fray the mind,
And love itself cannot unwind
Its tangled skein of care:
Our inward life repair.

We marvel how Your saints become
In hinderances more sure;
Whose joyful virtues put to shame
The casual way we wear Your name
And by our faults obscure
Your pow'r to cleanse and cure.

In what You give us, Lord, to do,
Together or alone,
In old routines or ventures new,
May we not cease to look to You,
The cross You hung upon—
All You endeavored done.

“How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord”
Lutheran Service Book #853



Transfiguration Sunday (24 January) also served as
the time to welcome two new families

The Church Gathers Those from All Over

Recently, we received a message on Facebook from someone who asked: How is it that there is an English-speaking congregation in Prague? That question was a good question. Usually, when a missionary is going to a mission field, he or she learns the language and culture in which they will be serving. Those language lessons go a long way in crossing the cultural

divide, so that the name of Jesus might be proclaimed among them.

Prague is a very international city. Walking around, you will hear sprinkled among the Czech language the languages of German and Urdu, Portuguese and Vietnamese, Russian and other Slavic languages, and, of course, English, just to name a few. And as we have reported in other issues of this newsletter, Czech is ridiculously hard to learn. Therefore, as English is the new *lingua franca* of the world, English is often times the language which people from different language groups hold in common. That is why we were sent here to reach out to English-speaking people. And that is why we have an English-language service in the midst of so many Czechs.

Recently, we were blessed to bring into membership one new family from India and one new family from Brazil. And what a wonderful day that was! These two families, who come to us from sister Lutheran church bodies, remind us of the diversity of the Church, just like it was on Pentecost. In that miraculous event, the apostles' preaching reached everyone, no matter the language, just as it happens every week among the saints at St. Michael Lutheran here in Prague.

This is so, because that is the nature of the Church. It was the charge Jesus gave to the apostles and, through them, to the Church as a whole (see Luke 24:46-47.) You see, the Gospel is not for just a few, for a nation that is far better than any other. The Gospel finds people in every land throughout the world, and it leads them to say, with the Spirit's help, that Jesus is Lord (see 1 Corinthians 12:3.) Those, who confess that, need to be gathered and fed by Christ in His congregations—the places of Word and Sacrament.

That, dear friends, is why we are here. That is our mission. We need to be busy doing it so that we might work “while it is day,” before the night comes and “no one can work” (see John 9:4.) It is a joy to do this work, seeing the people from all over the world gather as sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus, because that is what we are! We are melded together by the Word and Sacraments which Christ has given to us to use.

Around the globe, people are dying without the saving name of Jesus. We are here and you are there. But our common call sends us to all people. As the old Sunday school song was sung: *Red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight; Jesus loves the little children of the world.* Praise be to God who searches for us all and puts His name upon us! Praise be to the Lord who gathers us all into the one body of our Lord Jesus to make us partakers and sharers of His marvelous grace! We are indeed blessed in Christ and, through Him, we are made to be a blessing to the world.



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

Bethlehem Lutheran
Jacksonville Beach, FL

St. Paul Lutheran
Mt. Prospect, IL

Zion Ladies Aid
Dexter, IA

Please, pray for the new outreach
in Varnsdorf.

Please, pray for our newest members,
that they would be blessed.

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

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."

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Czech Republic

Basic information about Varnsdorf

- Country: Czech Republic
- Region: Ústí nad Labem
- District: Děčín
- Area: 26.21 km²
- Population: 15 429



Good News from Varnsdorf!
Since September, we have been looking into starting a new outreach in this city. Varnsdorf is a mid-sized town in northern Bohemia that has an old Lutheran church building. It was left empty after World War II and then, later, the communists took hold of it to make it a facility for youth, all of which was hard on the building. Now, the city of Varnsdorf has taken over the

building, and they are refurbishing it for public use. After we heard that the city officials were looking to bring back worship to the church building, we visited the site and were able to see the refurbishment taking place. In January, we visited with the vice-mayor, who was very welcoming to us. From that meeting, we were able to plan four services over this year: Easter (4 April), Presentation of the Augsburg Confession (25 June), Reformation Day (31 October), and Christmas Day. We are praying that this will be the beginning of a new congregation that shares God's Word.

COVID Update from Prague

Several European nations are either closing or planning to close their borders. Right now, the Czech Republic is not one of them. However, travel within the country should be limited to only absolutely necessary trips. The vaccine distribution here has been limited to those who have EU biometric cards, so far. We are still in the process of receiving our cards, so we will have to wait until they arrive. Until then, we are striving to stay healthy and maintain social distancing when able.

New Online Bible Study

In keeping with the social-distancing guidelines, we have begun a new Bible study that takes place online. It is on our Facebook page—St. Michael Lutheran Church in Prague (English.) Currently, we have been studying the topic "Living as a Sinful Person in a Sinful World." If you would like to join us, simply go to our page and join the group. Then, go to "Rooms," and join the Bible study. We meet on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. local/1:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. The class is taught in English, so you will have no problem participating. (You will have to use a browser other than Firefox, because it does not support this function.)

Online Catechesis

In spite of other teaching falling off because of individuals' concerns with their health, we are striving to keep our teaching of the faith in spite of the pandemic. Dale is teaching one young gentleman online, and we have long, fruitful discussions about theology. It may be going slowly, but it is definitely thorough.

One of our missionary team members was afflicted with COVID-19, but he has since healed. We thank God that He brought him safely through it. In fact, we recently had a visit from him in Prague. One of our church members also contracted the virus and has likewise recovered.

We pray you all stay well and commend you to the care of Christ,
Rev. Dale and Suzanne Kaster

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

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

Mission Central
40718 Hwy E16
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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.