



Christmas tree and Nativity scene at my German family's home (Germany, 2017)

Connect with me:

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I'd love to set up a time to talk with you!

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It's the end of another year. If you're like me, I can hardly believe 2020 has finally come to end. Most years, people take a moment to look back at what they've accomplished or what happened in their year. We receive Christmas cards with letters detailing our friends' and families' fondest memories of the year. But 2020 has been different. Back in December of 2019, I was still completing the application process of becoming a missionary. I looked forward to the coming year with great anticipation to see where God would lead me next. There was great excitement and hopefulness at the beginning of the year as I went to St. Louis for training. And then everything ground to a halt. Unexpected and seemingly unending waiting highlights the majority of this year. With Advent coming to a close, I am reminded of the many times God brought His people into times of seemingly unending waiting. What immediately comes to mind is the time of waiting for a Messiah. God's people had to wait so very long and when their Messiah eventually did come, He looked nothing like they expected. Noah had to wait inside an ark before God led them to dry ground (Genesis 7:1-8:19). Hannah prayed and waited for a son (1 Samuel 1:1-20). Simeon waited to see the Lord's Christ (Luke 2:25-32). New Testament Christians waited and continue to wait for the second coming of Christ. There are countless other times when God has made His people wait. Looking back through the Bible, there is a common thread among all these stories of waiting. God is there. He remembers His people and never forgets His promises. When God says He will do something, it happens! It may take some time for that promise to be fulfilled, the fulfilled promise may not look at all like we imagined it would look, but it is always what's best for us. God isn't sitting idly by while we all wait for this pandemic to end. God is always working to fulfill His promises, even when we can't see Him at work. They say hindsight is 20/20, I can't wait to look back later in life and see how God was using this time of waiting to prepare us for something great.



Christmas Glühwein and pieces of Stollen at a Christmas market (Germany, 2017)

Please Pray for:

- Those who may be struggling, mentally or physically, this holiday season
- Covid numbers to go down and borders to open soon so I may travel to Germany

Give Thanks for:

- A working Covid vaccine
- You and others who pray for and support me in serving the Lord

I was able to share about Germany's Christmas traditions with some second and third graders before they went on Christmas break. They were fascinated by the differences and similarities of the traditions!

Still no news yet of when borders might reopen, and I can finally head over to Germany. But there is some good news: the European Union recently agreed to accept a vaccine. Germany has already started vaccinating the elderly and healthcare workers! Praise God for the relatively quick development of this vaccine! I am hopeful that things will start moving forward as the vaccine is made available to more people.

Culture Reflection with Rachel:

Advent is celebrated mostly within churches here in America, but in Germany, Advent is a big part of the Christmas season. Just like in the US, Germany also has many Christmas and Advent songs. One Advent song, *Wir sagen euch an den lieben Advent*, I learned while previously living in Germany, and it soon became a favorite of mine. My German family would sing the appropriate verse as we lit the candles on the Advent wreath each week. The last stanza of each verse was always the same: "Rejoice, you Christians! Rejoice greatly. The Lord is already near." What a great reminder that our God is with us always.

Thank you for joining me on this journey of serving refugees in Germany. God has truly blessed me by placing you in my life!

Prayerfully consider partnering in sharing the Good News of Christ with refugees in Germany through a financial gift. Send Checks to:

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

OR

Mission Central
40718 Highway E - 16
Mapleton, IA 51034

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod and include Krause/Germany on the memo line.

Gifts can also be given securely online at www.lcms.org/Krause or <https://missioncentral.us/Krause/> or by phone by calling 1-888-930-4438