



Thank you to all who sent Christmas greetings to me in Prague.

CHRISTMAS MAIL

Being away from family at Christmas is always challenging, so I am very, very grateful to many of you who sent cards, letters and pictures wishing me a Merry Christmas. The greetings brought great cheer to me in Prague, and I cherish all of them.

I also received a mysterious box that I wasn't expecting. It was filled with hundreds of handcrafted items. I'm not quite sure how they can be used in the mission field, but I will certainly look for ways to use them. Surprise packages in America are wonderful, but in a foreign country, they can generate suspicion with customs officials.

Please remember to contact me first before sending items that I am not expecting. This may save you a small fortune in international postage. And, more importantly, this will help me anticipate customs clearance with Czech officials and being able to answer questions about what is inside a mystery Christmas box.



To be added to or removed from this mailing list, send an email message to Cynthia.Wrucke@lcms.org with the word ADD or REMOVE in the subject line.

Cynthia.Wrucke@lcms.org

Christmas Outreach in Prague



Many visitors attended the Christmas concert held at St. Michael's Church in Prague.

Many churches in Prague host concerts throughout the year and some Czechs may even think this is the main purpose of beautiful, historic church buildings. On December 20, our Czech congregation hosted a Christmas concert to share music about Jesus' birth and to invite people to join us for weekly church services.

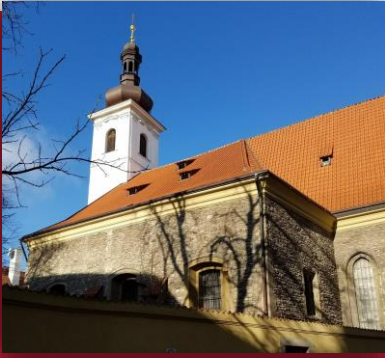
Pastor Dominik Žbanek organized the concert with the professional music group, Spektrum. The benefit of asking an outside group to perform instead of the church choir meant that they also promoted the concert with their network of people.

A few weeks before the concert, the Czech government announced a state of emergency due to rising Covid cases. Christmas markets were cancelled, and many new restrictions put in place. After reviewing the rules, which lasted until Christmas, we prepared to hold the concert. All guests had to show proof of being fully vaccinated and wear a facemask indoors. The performers had to be vaccinated but didn't need to wear masks during their performance.

As I greeted all the visitors on the night of the concert, I also had to ask for their vaccination papers before they could enter the church. I noticed that everyone was prepared with their documents, nobody complained, and about 95 percent of the attendees were not church members.

At the beginning of the concert, Pastor Žbanek welcomed everyone to our beautiful church, shared a few words about why we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with songs, and then invited each guest to return for Christmas services and regular Sunday worship.

The music performed by the choir included Czech Christmas carols, some artistic arrangements, and even a few Christmas songs in English, such as "Away in a Manger" and "Go Tell It on the Mountain." The musicians received a standing ovation at the end of the concert and joy filled the church. The message was clear: Jesus, our Savior, has come to save us all. And now we can share the Good News with people in all nations.



Missionary Christmas Dinner

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- The Christmas concert attendees to feel welcome and return for church worship services at St. Michael.
- Our Czech pastors, Dominik, Tomáš and Martin, for strength and perseverance as they serve in their respective parishes.
- All of the Eurasia missionaries and the communities in which they serve.

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- Fellowship with other LCMS missionaries over Christmas.
- Technology to connect with my family in America for Christmas and New Year's Eve.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.



LCMS missionaries and their spouses from the Czech Republic gathered with two of our German missionaries for dinner in Prague on December 27.

Our Eurasia region usually holds an annual summer retreat where we can reconnect with other missionaries. Unfortunately, the regional retreat has been cancelled the past two years due to Covid.

Thankfully, our regional management encouraged those of us who could gather in the Czech Republic and Germany to meet for a Christmas celebration over dinner. We chose Prague, which is closer to some of our German missionaries than it is for the missionaries based in the eastern part

of the Czech Republic, in Silesia. Since we all had busy schedules with Christmas services, we met on the third and fourth days of Christmas.

I was happy to host three of the ladies (and two dogs) at my flat in Prague. The dinner was wonderful and the fellowship fantastic.

Before departure back to their mission posts, everyone gathered in the morning at my flat for coffee and pastries. Our regional chaplain prepared a brief service of the Word and brought Holy Communion. We also sang Christmas hymns together in various languages, with my versions in Czech and English.

This month we remember the greatest gift:

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23 (NIV)

- Cindy Zirbel Wrucke



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

To support the LCMS through the work of Cindy Zirbel Wrucke, you may send a tax-deductible gift and make checks payable to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
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Mark checks "Wrucke-Czech Republic Support."

Or, you can make checks payable and send to:

Mission Central
40718 Highway E16
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Gifts can also be given securely online through my online giving page at lcms.org/wrucke or at <https://missioncentral.us/wrucke/>