



## Riga Luther Academy

This semester, I continue to work with students from Riga Luther Academy. This is an online seminary-level program for men who are studying to become pastors. I tutor these future pastors in English. This semester, I am working with students from Africa, Pakistan, Slovakia and Germany. The English levels of the student vary significantly. I work with some students with very low levels of English. Because of this, our lessons with one another are very structured and slower-paced. We work intensively on grammar and vocabulary. On the other hand, I also work with some men whose English levels are quite high, and thus our weekly lessons with one another are largely an opportunity for them to practice their conversational English.

Many of the students are in a Homiletics class this semester and are working on writing their first sermons in English. One of the future pastors I work with sends me his sermons for editing and review before he submits them. This is a great blessing and opportunity of enrichment for me. One sermon assignment, in particular, left one student pondering how we are to proclaim the Word to those who have absolutely no interest in hearing it. We rejoiced with one another that our whole lives are a proclamation of Christ. It is not up to us to plant faith in people's hearts. We can rejoice in our role as proclaimers. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:6, ESV). In the midst of strife and dissension, we can fearlessly keep proclaiming.

## Praise and Thanksgiving

### Religion as therapy

I am hosting two English clubs this semester. My Tuesday night English club has thus far been an all-girls group, and each week consistently brings the same students, with some new faces thrown in every now and then. My Wednesday night English club has been a bit more varied in regards to the participants who come each week. However, one man has been consistently coming since the beginning of October. Because the English club is held at a local congregation, one of the first things that this man asked me was if I was associated with the church in any way. He made it clear in our first conversation that he considers himself to be agnostic, and he does not want to talk about religious matters. For some reason though, each week he brings up the topic of faith in some way, sometimes in a questioning way, other times in a more contemptuous manner. The past couple of weeks, he has talked about how he views religions as a form of therapy for people. This man's willingness and desire to discuss religious topics comes and goes, but lately, he seems more open and less abrupt and defensive. May God open doors for more conversations with one another in the future. May this man's heart be opened to seeing that the purpose of the Gospel is not a therapeutic tool to make our lives easier and more comfortable. The Gospel is Christ and what He has done. And because of this, we, as Christians, are able to rejoice in the face of suffering and laugh without fear of the future as we await our coming redemption. Please keep Peter and our conversations with one another in your prayers.



**Left:** Tuesday night English Group in Nebory

**Below:** Some of my students whom I teach on Mondays in Havířov.



## PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- *Productive conversations*
- *My Czech-language learning*
- *Continued connections*
- *Students struggling with their identity*
- *Strengthened listening skills*
- *The courage to speak the truth*
- *Community*

## GIVE THANKS FOR:

- *Times of fellowship with fellow missionaries*
- *Continued health and safety*
- *Opportunities for conversations*
- *You! My faithful encouragers and supporters*

## GET IN TOUCH WITH ME!

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## Happy Thanksgiving!

This past week, it brought me joy to receive some messages and well wishes from friends and family in the States on Thanksgiving Day. Because Thanksgiving is an American holiday, November 24th was a normal day of teaching and tutoring for me here in the Czech Republic. However, I was able to have an early Thanksgiving celebration with the Rajek family, dear fellow missionaries based in Riga, Latvia. Living abroad, in my opinion, means that you have permission to celebrate both Czech and American holidays. The more reasons to celebrate God's goodness, the better. I am thankful for this time of fellowship with fellow missionaries I was able to have.

Right: Lexi Rajek, missionary kid and friend.



## Ještě jednou prosím

Language learning can often be frustrating, and it seems very slow-going at times. Something that inevitably helps me to remember certain words or phrases is how frequently I use the words or phrases in daily life. For instance, one phrase that I had down early on was “Dám si kávu”; this is what you say when ordering coffee at a cafe or coffee shop, which is something I do fairly consistently. Yet, without question, the phrase that I use the most often is “Ještě jednou prosím,” which translates to “One more time please” or “Again please.” As you might have guessed, this phrase is used when you want someone to repeat what they have said, which I often need people to do. Please repeat yourself. Tell me again. Remind me once more. This past month, I have felt at times especially prone to wandering, distractions, and doubt. The serpent's words to Eve in the Garden of Eden, “Did God really say?” sometimes seem to take precedence in my brain. Doubt is a hard thing to shake, especially when often the world seems to be screaming the exact opposite of God's Word. It is frustratingly easy to get jostled. This past month I have sought affirmation and encouragement from others. I have needed others to remind me of whose I am and affirm me in my understanding of the Truth. I am grateful to have people in my life who constantly repeat the Gospel to me over and over. I am grateful for pastors, congregations and fellow Christians who feed me with the Gospel over and over again. I want to be more mindful of my interactions with others. I have realized that I can never hear the Gospel “too much.” May our words to one another be seasoned with the Gospel. Repetitiveness is necessary. Ještě jednou prosím. Again please. One more time. Tell me who He is and who I am because of Him and what He has done. May we continually feed one another the message of the Cross.

May God continue to bless and keep you all in His gracious care.

- Hayden

*Prayerfully consider financially partnering with me as we work together to bring the Good News of the Gospel to those living in spiritual darkness in the Czech Republic. Thank you for your continued support!*

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