



The Incarnation

“There were thus two things which the Savior did for us by becoming Man. He banished death from us and made us anew; and, invisible and imperceptible as in Himself He is, He became visible through His works and revealed Himself as the Word of the Father, the Ruler and King of the whole creation.

For indeed, everything about it is marvelous, and wherever a man turns his gaze he sees the Godhead of the Word and is smitten with awe.”

- St Athanasius ‘On the Incarnation’

In the midst of waiting and watching during this season of Advent, I have been blessed to have time to reflect on Christ’s incarnation. As I continue to form deeper relationships with the youth with whom I work, it is sometimes hard to shut out worry and not cling too tightly to wanting to control their reception of the Word and the eternal outcome of their lives.

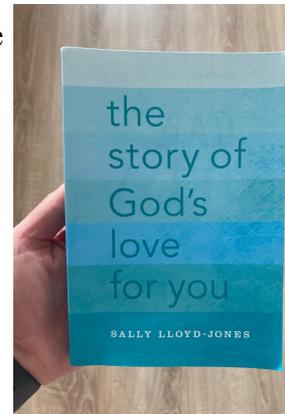
One student commented to me this month, “I don’t understand your religion. It doesn’t make sense.” Indeed, the Gospel story seems incredibly incomprehensible.

Thanks be to God for sending His Son into the muck and mire of our world. He was born in our very midst and He remains in our very midst. What an incredible and trustworthy Father. In His care I remain. In His care you remain. In His care my students remain.

The Story of God’s Love for You

This past month has brought with it many little opportunities to commemorate and celebrate the Christmas season. The pre-Christmas advent season brought with it Christmas parties, markets, a night of Czech carols and special celebrations. The week before Christmas, I was asked to speak to my students at school about how Christmas is celebrated in America. I have a book (pictured below) that is the text-only edition of a storybook Bible that my parents used to read to my younger siblings. I purchased this text-only version in advance of English Bible Camps this past summer as I pondered the Bible stories we would teach. This tool has helped me reign in my tendency towards using English language that is confusing to my students and hard for them to understand and communicate simplistically and directly from Scripture when communicating Bible stories to students. I brought this book to school with me last week as I shared with students the Christian Christmas story. A story that surprised many of the students and that many labeled as ‘odd’ and ‘unusual.’ I am grateful that I had the opportunity to share this ‘American Christmas’ story with my dear students. I pray that you perhaps also had the opportunity this season to share this story of God’s love with someone who has not yet heard it and to be reminded that it is a story for you, too.

The story about our infant King and mighty Savior.



Bottom left: I took advantage of the large amounts of snow we have been receiving and taught my Tuesday/Thursday students, as well as my Tuesday English Club students, the art of making snow ice cream.



Right: I was blessed to be able to spend Christmas weekend with the Rajek family, LCMS missionaries serving in Riga, Latvia.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

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

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- *The opportunity to celebrate Christmas with fellow missionaries*
- *One year in the Czech Republic*
- *Deepened relationships*
- *You! My faithful encouragers and supporters*

GET IN TOUCH WITH ME!

Facebook/Instagram:
@rensnerontherun

WhatsApp: +420-731-679-308

Email:

hayden.rensner@lcms.org

One Year

This month, I observed my one-year anniversary of being here in the Czech Republic. Leading up to the anniversary date, I spent time reflecting on all that the past year has held, the different people I have met, and the plethora of experiences I have had. What an incredible year it has been. I remain extremely thankful and honored to be able to serve in this capacity.

“Please God, keep me reliant on your sustenance” is a prayer I found myself praying at times this past year.

I have had many opportunities to practice dependence this year: dependence on others, on translators, on sometimes-faulty public transportation, etc. In the midst of all this, I have ultimately been challenged in various ways to practice dependence on God. I love independence and self-reliance, like the born and raised American I am. Being in a new culture, surrounded by a foreign language, and having to learn many new things has taken my independence from me in many ways.

The new culture, foreign language and need to depend have carried some loneliness with it at times.

One resource that has become a daily source of sustenance for me this year is the liturgy of ‘Morning Prayer’ found in the Lutheran Service Book.

“For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods. In His hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are His also. The sea is His, for He made it; and His hand formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.”

What an essential reminder of who our Lord is and who we are in relation to Him. The people of His pasture. Sheep held securely in the palm of His hand.

In the midst of changing seasons, days of joy and celebration, in a world full of distractions, I pray that God keeps teaching me how to depend.

Perhaps you are also finding yourself in a season where you are practicing dependence rather than spreading your wings of independence. May He give you strength. As you seek Christ, may you find that He was right by your side all along.

For all the ways you have walked alongside me this past year, I thank you.

I am eager for year two!

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!

Send checks with ‘Rensner-Czech’ in the memo line 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

