



What's Happening

Serving US military is a huge part of the Bombaro family and an essential dynamic of our Christian ministry. John is the fifth generation of his family to serve in the Navy and/or Marine Corps. (Below 2012)



His six-month activation for service to the Chaplaincy School in Newport, RI, (next semester) will provide opportunity to partner with with LCMS chaplain and Chaplaincy School Commanding Officer, CAPT Charles Varsogea. Together we look to influence the next generation of chaplains, and recruit additional LCMS men for the Ministry to the Armed Forces to provide Word and Sacrament ministry, but also strengthen the moral and patriotic fibre of our country. (Below 2022, with members of the 14 Marine Regiment.)



Serving the Lord for souls in Eurasia

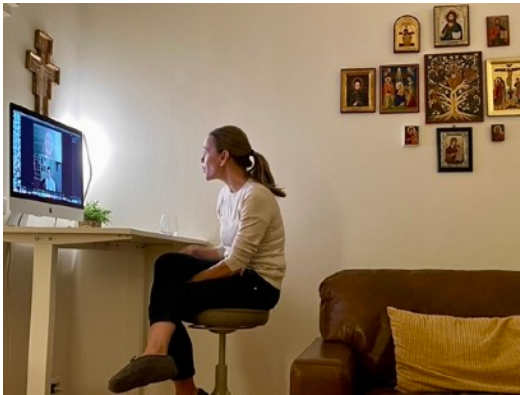


Drs. Veronika & Patrick Lu during the rite of First Holy Communion.

Serving in Two Kingdoms

This is an exciting time to be serving the Lord. Among the myriad of problems the covid phenomenon engendered, one consequence has been a sustained decrease in church attendance. Reports vary, but on the whole, church attendance fell 10%. What goes underreported, however, is the number of young, urban professionals considering the Christianity for the first time. Those entering the Church now tend to be younger, well-educated, and more intentional about marriage and children. We are experiencing this precise phenomenon in Prague. Students and twenty/thirty-something professionals that we meet, teach, and host are revisiting the faith of their grandparents. There's something about modernity that has failed them, something in the promises of prosperity that ring hollow, and they are looking for the truth humanity and reality, and its just not there in the naive optimism promulgated by progressive ideologies, and they just don't see it in a world awash in Marxism recast. Instead, as Melinda, our kids and I find them at Charles University, at YoCafe, and at our Logos & Lager events, the words of Jesus and His followers make far better sense of the world with its realistic anthropology and true-to-life hope for humanity found in Jesus's reign of grace and peace.

This, then, is what our life looks like in Central Europe: Conversations with those disappointed by the promises of consumerism and socialism and so-called “freedom of choice” which, given surveillance capitalism doesn’t seem like freedom at all, when we yield every right of privacy for access to websites, locations, and events. No, it doesn’t seem like freedom at all. But Christ can and does set us free — free and forgiven. In this domain, each member of the family has a role. Melinda ministers to several women through visitation, coffee counseling, and copious amounts of hospitality — women of all ages, from collegians to newlyweds to professionals. Marie, too, has developed a sphere of influence, as she distinguishes herself as an intentional Christian and serious student in Athens. Of her own accord, she launched a Greek New Testament reading group, currently consisting of six students, who study together John’s Gospel. Through this group, her cohort has been introduced to faith in Christ Jesus. Just last week she gave Ethan a Lutheran Study Bible and Small Catechism. Anna, too, loves to have friends over. One friend, Clara, with whom she has encouraged in the faith, was given a *Treasury of Daily Prayer* for daily devotions by Melinda (see photo below). They’ll study *Simply Jesus* by N.T. Wright in the coming semester. These are but some snippets into our gospel encounters.



(Above left) Melinda ‘zooms’ with a mother, while (center) John visits Marie to bring Holy Communion, and (right) Melinda visits pregnancy homebound Veronika in Prague to bring her cheer and share in devotions together.

The other domain into which the Lord has given us access is that of the US Armed Forces. Having served in the USMC, where at age 18 my failing faith was revived through a Navy Chaplain at MCRD, ministry in San Diego beckoned revisiting the military to extend and expand our ministerial influence. That sphere as been an inexhaustible opportunity for Lutheran pastoral care and faithful Christian chaplaincy. Presently serving with the 14 Marine Regiment, headquartered in Fort Worth, TX, my quarterly “drill periods” are filled with biblical counseling, invitations to explain the gospel, teach Christian values, and serve LCMS members with the Divine Service. As recently as October I had the opportunity to baptize two Marines, plus the daughter of a Sailor. Such service as a reservist, however, means that on occasion I will be activated for definite period, as just happened, albeit without family accompaniment. From December through May, I’ll make a contribution to train present and future chaplains and, hopefully, recruit more faithful LCMS seminarians to this noble work, while Melinda and the kids continue mission happenings in Prague. We pray that the time passes productively but quickly. There will be for me (when off duty) preaching, teaching, and presentations on Mission Eurasia, throughout New England. For the family, there is this sacrifice, which we also count as a privilege.



With Grace Barcott, art student living in France; Melinda with Clara; hosting former parishioner Frau Menze.

LCMS policy requires suspending my john.bombaro@lcms.org address, so please use jbombaro@gmail.com until I return from duty and it's reactivated. As always, my US cell number remains active: +1.619.987.5865.

Pray for Patrick and Veronika with child, along with Simo & Emmi. **Pray** for the people of Dhangahdi, Nepal, where earthquakes and floods continue. **Pray** for the Luther Academy faculty, filling the gap for John next semester. **Pray** for Sophia, Marie, Claire at college; and Anna & Luca who *need* a visit from friends. **Pray** for our family as this activation will be trying and difficult on two different continents. Pray for the success of my activation, that I make a lasting contribution. Lastly, **Give Thanks** for the preliminary accreditation report for the Luther Academy — we scored the higher-level needed for the full accreditation of the English Program degrees! This is a huge accomplishment! Thank you to my Luther Academy colleagues for a great semester!

We thank each of you for your encouragement through Mission Central and Mission Advancement in St Louis, *especially during the Thanksgiving drive of Mission Central*. Many thanks to those who recently visited us or provided hospitality to us amidst travel. We are so thankful for you, we are so thankful to you.

- **We are proudly supported by YOU!** Please send tax-deductible contributions to: **Mission Central, 40718 Highway E 16, Mapleton, Iowa** (memo-line: Bombaro/Latvia) or <https://missioncentral.us/bombaro/>. Give securely from any device www.lcms.org/bombaro.



Left: Hosting three recent graduates from Hillsdale College, along with Finnish Lutherans met at the Corpus Christi conference in Liepaja, Latvia; (center) a wonderful rendezvous at St. Timothy Lutheran Church with first-year CTSFW seminarian, Sergiu Trifa of Romania, along with his fellow seminarian classmate and chaplain candidate, Peter; Simo and Emmi brought lots of spiritual conversation and the delight of doing evening devotions together during their visit to us in Prague. The couple resides in Helsinki, Finland, and are faithful members of the confessional Lutheran church.



Speaking on witnessing to the LGBTQ community at the Biblical Worldview Conference in Chicago. (L) Pictures with keynote speakers, including Bryan Wolfmueller; (center) strong attendance, especially by Christians ranging from 20-40; (R) the conference attracted accomplished missionary, friend, and now Chicagoland pastor, Rev. Edward Naumann, along with Ministry to the Armed Forces director and friend, Rev. Craig Muehler, from the IC.

A blessed Advent and Merry Christmas to you and yours!