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Light and Dark in the Arctic



This doorway in my Prague neighborhood has the chalk marking of “K+M+B 2019.”

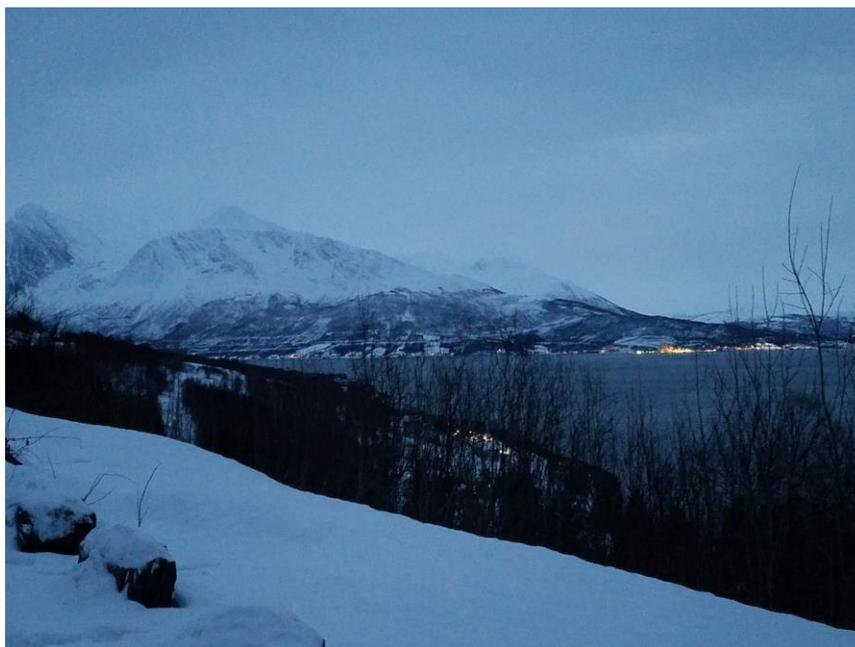
WHAT'S NEW IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD

Though few Christians live in Prague, I was intrigued to see chalked letters and a date on a few doorways around town after Epiphany. Epiphany marks the end of the Christmas season here in Prague. The door pictured above actually is just a few blocks from where I live in Nebušice, right on the main street between the grocery store and pharmacy. The letters represent the Czech names of the three Magi—Kaspar, Melichar and Balthazar—and the date marks the new year.

The day after Epiphany, I also noticed some school children wearing crowns and singing Czech songs at some of the metro stations near Old Town in Prague. One group even included a nun playing an accordion.



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Three hours of arctic twilight each day still looks like darkness.

The Eurasia region includes the Arctic, and I recently attended a Corpus Christi conference in the third largest city in the arctic circle, Tromsø, Norway. Corpus Christi is a vibrant organization that hosts the largest gathering of young, confessional Lutherans in all of Europe each summer. They now host regional meetings throughout the year to engage even more young people in the region. The conference I attended was titled, “Light and Dark.”

The timing of the conference encompassed the darkest time of the year in the Arctic, with less than three hours of twilight each day. The sun will not rise above the horizon there until March. But, in this darkness, the conference focus was on the one true light, Jesus Christ. The attendees from Norway and Finland were predominantly under the age of 35 and quite eager to share their faith with other like-minded brothers and sisters in Christ. In this part of the world, isolation and

loneliness can be a struggle. Fellowship and continuing education are crucial to sustain and support these young Lutherans in their faith.

The conference theme looked at many types of darkness that we encounter in today’s world. Topics included the darkness of our soul, the darkness of contemporary society, and even the darkness of many churches that do not proclaim the truth of the Gospel, or even embrace popular cultural norms for fear of offending non-Christians.

Amidst the darkness each day, we celebrated the light of Christ, and the joy and hope He brings to all mankind, even in the far reaches and darkest corners of the earth. I saw the light of Christ in each of the young people attending the conference and pray for their support as they return to their homes, so they can share that light with those around them who still live in darkness without Christ.



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Several Persian refugees who are waiting to hear about asylum status in Germany.
- Expedient processing of visa applications for a number of missionaries in Eurasia.
- Relief from isolation and loneliness for those who serve alone in the mission field.

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- The safe arrival of new LCMS missionaries to Eurasia, Peter and Lucy Hoffmann in the Czech Republic, and Pastor Gary Schuschke in Germany.
- The approval of my two-year resident visa in the Czech Republic.
- Safe travels in January, as I missed several major winter storms and airport delays.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The light of Jesus Christ that shines in the darkness of this world.



My first home service visit

Though it is only January, I am already starting to plan for my first home service visit this fall. Many of you who are reading this newsletter are among my supporters, both through prayer and financial gifts. I am so incredibly grateful that God has raised you up to walk alongside me in this mission. Thank you for your support and encouragement!

After two years of service, each LCMS missionary returns to America to provide mission updates to supporters, as well as to take time for reconnecting with family and friends. This visit requires much planning and preparation, since I do not have a car or home in

Planning for the New Year

America. I must rely on family, friends and supporters to host me and provide transportation. It can be difficult to make all these arrangements while living and working abroad. Yet, I trust that God will provide everything that I need while I am in the states, through all of you.

I do not have specific travel dates yet, but I plan to be available September and October for congregation visits, perhaps even part of November. How can you help? Please let me know as early as possible if you have specific dates that you want me to visit, and if you have people in mind who can help with housing or transportation. The best way to reach me is through email (Cynthia.Wrucke@lcms.org). Thanks again for walking with me on this mission journey!



This month we remember the light in our dark world:

Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 8:12 (ESV)

- 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."

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