

**"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." – Ecclesiastes 4:12**

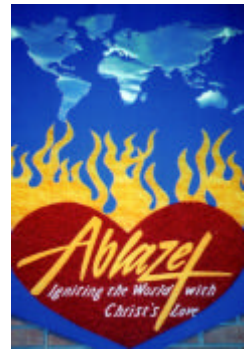


LCMS WORLD MISSION

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Dear Friends in Christ,

We pray that this letter finds you well and enjoying the fall colors and the day of Reformation which is quickly approaching. We have been busy with our work here and look forward to a retreat in Slovakia in a couple weeks with other missionaries in Europe. It will be nice to have some English worship and fellowship with some familiar faces.

The "Cheap Faith"

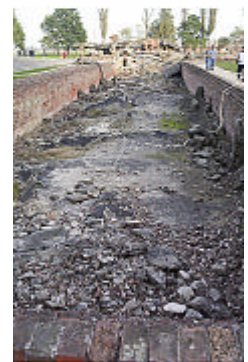
As we prepare to celebrate Reformation, we have been reading about and reflecting on that great event. Living in Poland has also allowed us to see it in a new light. A brochure we read recently states that "the news of the reform of the Church started by Martin Luther reached the Duchy of Cieszyn in the early 1520's. Reformation was received here quite willingly as its tenets fit well with the expectations and mentality of the people...and thus aroused the interest of the nobility, townsfolk and peasantry in the cheap faith." That just gets me. I think that's great. I like how simply and directly the new direction of faith was distinguished. Like Ephesians 2:8, it reminds us that "By grace you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." There is nothing we have to do or can do to earn heaven. It is a gift. As a Christian, this simple principle is sometimes one of the hardest to trust. As sinners we often do not feel good enough to be loved, or we think that there is more that we have to do in order to get closer to God. God says and Luther reminds us that there is nothing we can do. Our salvation is a gift by the grace of God. Being a gift, it is free to us . . . and you can't get cheaper than free.

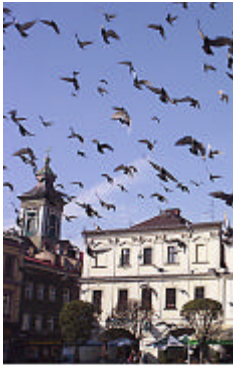
Goings On

We have been able to see some of the surrounding areas in Poland and in the Czech Republic. These ventures have been a great way to unwind and also to educate ourselves about the history of this region and its people. The most moving and disturbing visit was to the Auschwitz concentration camp. It was overwhelming to see the vast systems that the Nazis had in place to kill millions of people. What also amazed and encouraged us were the signs and stories of those who were still able to look to the Lord for strength and help their fellow prisoners even in their darkest times. They still had prayer and worship services.

For us, a lack of English worship has been one of the biggest challenges we have faced so far. Well, we are happy to report an improvement in that area. A group from the local Lutheran Bible school has started leading English worship services once a month. This is such a blessing for us, and we really enjoyed the first service which included lots of songs ("Our God Is an Awesome God") and a clear message. We are eager to attend the next service. We enjoyed meeting and talking to other fellow Americans and English speakers.

Through the Ablaze! initiative, LCMS seeks to share the Good News of Jesus with 100 million unreached or uncommitted people by 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. No matter where we are, each of us has opportunities to share God's love with those around us. What opportunities do you see in your church, workplace, or neighborhood? LCMS also lists opportunities at www.lcmsworldmission.org. Check it out!





His Work

We have started teaching several new classes that may serve to reach out to the Cieszyn community. The high school in which we work has begun offering beginning, intermediate, and advanced English classes to church and community members for a nominal fee. This is a good opportunity for us to build relationships with a group of people we have not been in contact with before. Pray for us to teach well and to allow Christ to shine through us and our lessons.

Jon has also started teaching a weekly English class at the Bible school run by Tim and Renata Hinrich. The school aims to build up and educate lay people while also preparing graduates to go on to seminary to pursue leadership positions in the church. They strive to bring spiritual growth and renewal to an area they feel is in great need of revival. This is a rewarding and refreshing opportunity for Jon to work with some older people who are focused on working for the Lord. The students come from Poland and surrounding countries.

Another highlight of the past month was being invited to a local youth group meeting on a Friday night. We played Polish Uno and met some young adults who see Christ as being important to them. We were also able to talk a little about ourselves and hopefully give some words of encouragement to them. We focused on the message at the beginning of this letter, the basis of our belief in Christ – that God's love, forgiveness and salvation is truly a gift. Let us all keep this foremost in our lives as we remember the Reformation. Also, pray for us that we may be a support and encouragement to this youth group and to other ones that invite us to participate.



Request

This is the first year that volunteers have served the elementary school, and – as with any new program – there are a couple of kinks that need to be worked out. Primarily, we find that we are short on resources to use with such young learners who are new to English. Some of you have expressed a willingness to do more for the children here, and this is an area of need. Children's books that could be used in class during story time and/or given as gifts would be incredibly appreciated. These books can be gently used or new and preferably with a Christian message. You might even want to write notes of encouragement inside the covers. Sending these books through our families or directly to us in Poland would be a great opportunity to help our students succeed in acquiring new English skills and encouraging their faith.



Prayers and Praises

- * For the continued support from friends, family, and co-workers
- * For family and friends who have recently lost loved ones
- * For Paul and Jess, Jon's brother and sister-in-law, who are expecting their first child

- * That we allow God to lead us in new outreach efforts
- * For encouragement in the face of homesickness and cultural adjustments
- * For diligence and encouragement as we attempt to learn Polish



Thank you again for generously supporting us and our mission work. It is an honor and privilege to work for you and our Lord here in Poland.

Jonathan and Jordan Benning

Photos: (page 1) train tracks at Birkenau, Birkenau, gas chamber remains, Birkenau facilities (page 2) our town square, Ostrava Zoo, Ostrava market square, ossuary in Kutna Hora, St. Vitus Cathedral (Prague)



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