



This is not Evan. We've never done this, but I love the expression on this boy's face!

Veselé Vánoce a Šťastný Nový Rok *Merry Christmas & Happy New Year*

At Christmas time in Czech Republic (and Slovakia), it's typical to have carp for Christmas Eve dinner. Pop-up large vats – think small swimming pools – appear filled with live carp. Families go and choose the carp they want. The carp can either be killed on the spot or it can be taken home to live in the bathtub until it's time to cook it.

Dear Friends,

2020 was quite a year! As we left Czech Republic on December 18, 2019, we never ever imagined that over a year later, we still would be in the United States. While it has been an incredible blessing to be here for this time, it has been hard.

Most of our belongings are in storage in Zlín. We miss our friends and our life there so much! This week I got out some Czech tea that I had been hoarding and as I looked at the package and smelled it, I cried. Tea is something that, especially in Czech Republic, I drink every day. I longingly look at pictures of Prague and can't wait to physically be there. Not surprisingly, Evan is having more mixed feelings. Four of his cousins live next door, and we're living with my parents. But even he is looking forward to going back. Thanks to our living in the digital age, both of us are able to keep in touch with friends in Czech.

Thank you for praying about our contacting the Czech embassy. There wasn't any conversation – just a hard “no”. They are only processing visa applications for a very few, primarily those in healthcare or who have family in Czech Republic. Please continue to pray for open doors to go back as soon as possible. But even though we have been in-between; neither fully here nor there, God is faithful!

For Evan's 13th birthday, a long-time family friend (the Pastor when my parents were teenagers) sent him a lovely card filled with Bible verses. Those verses were so applicable to Evan and his new stage of life, but they also have been a wonderful encouragement to us as we wait on the Lord. (They have been on the bathroom mirror ever since!)

- *“the LORD himself will guide you.” Micah 2:13 NLT*
- *“Not to us, LORD, not to us but to Your name be the glory, because of Your love and faithfulness.” Psalm 115:1 NIV*
- *“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.” Psalm 32:8 NIV*

When we came, we thought we would only be here for six months. Then we thought, it will only be another six months. Now we aren't even projecting when we might go back – although we are hoping and praying for spring 2021. Czech Republic is still in lockdown. They recently had another record day

of positive coronavirus tests. Staying and leaving is completely out of our hands and in the Lord's. Some days that's easier to trust than others, but we continue to do the next thing. We know there is no better place than to be in the Lord's hands!

Significant events of 2020 (in no particular order):

- Opening of a Christian school (1st and 2nd grade) in Trnava, Slovakia
- COVID-19
- Marek being installed as the pastor in Trnava, Slovakia
- Maki being called home to Heaven
- Evan becoming a teenager
- Being able to be in the US for another Thanksgiving, Christmas, and my parents' 50th anniversary.
- Cousins Camp
- Lots of swimming and time outside over the summer months
- Spending time visiting with some of you in January and February
- Not being able to see and spend time with so many of you
- Being able to spend a lot of time with my preteen and teenage son, and for him to be strengthened in his knowledge and relationship with the Lord.
- Spending extra time with family in the Chattanooga area
- Having Evan able to practice his Czech week in and week out – in person with a Czech!
- Being able to participate in a women's Bible study
- Time to rest and practicing being still
- Experiencing God's love and faithfulness in so many ways. One of those main ways has been through your prayer and financial support. Over the past year, more of you have joined in faithful giving and some of you have even increased!

We are looking forward to what's next for us – even in the waiting of going to Prague.

Thank you for participating in the journey with us! The Lord is using you in our lives, in the lives of those around us in North Georgia, and in the lives of people in Slovakia and Czech Republic.

In the love of our Lord and Savior,