

Dear Friends,

We hope that you are taking the time during this season of Advent to reflect on the love our Savior has for you. Here in Prague the dark comes early, along with the cold. It's nice to be in our warm apartment with candles and an Advent wreath. It's a time when we are snuggled in and spend time tracing the story of Jesus through Scripture – anticipating His arrival!

Our time of settling in continues. As time passes, we feel more and more at home. I have to say though that being in Prague where we're home and not yet home, has been harder than I anticipated. In the US, we were immersed in American culture and English. When I was in Trnava, I was immersed in Slovak culture and Slovak language. When we were in Zlin, we were immersed in Czech culture and Czech language. Now that we're in Prague, we're neither fully American, nor fully Slovak, nor fully Czech. Prague is a big, multicultural, multilingual city. It's a strange place to be. The longer I have lived in this part of the world, the basic questions of where I'm from becomes harder and harder to answer.

Evan is doing better than I am at the transition. He loves his school and is making friends. He doesn't mind the 40-minute commute to and from school. Last week I was at his school, and we traveled home together. The tram was crowded, so we weren't sitting next to each other. I look back to see what he's doing – he has his book out and is reading. This is such an incredibly Prague-ish thing to do. Many people have long commutes, and it's very common to see Czechs reading (actual books). It made my heart happy to see him being part of this culture.

I'm gradually taking on some responsibility for children's ministry and administration at DoSlova (our church). There are several young women too, and I have been slowly pursuing relationships with them. It has been really rewarding. That transition has been very good and natural. The plan is for me to spend time in the spring studying Czech language before jumping more fully into ministry.

Some updates and prayer and praises:

Visas?? Please keep praying. We submitted our paperwork officially on October 21. The powers that be have 90 days to give us an answer. Normally, missionaries get approved. But times are not normal. An American family with our mother church had their visas denied as did a teacher's family from Evan's school. Our teammates (the Perkins) should find out about their visas some time in the next week or so. Our own 90 days are up toward the end of January. It is a little nerve wracking, but just like in everything else, we trust that the Lord Jesus has it all in His hands.

Praise for Evan's adjustment. He's 14 now, and while we have some downs, it's really mostly ups. He is on top of his school work and has good grades. He is making friends at school and with the sons (Sam and Foard) of our teammates. He enjoys going to church and helping out. This past Sunday we started on the welcome team and is playing the piano for our kids' choir (all 8 of them).

Pray for us to **meet more non-Christians and people** in general, particularly outside of church. Our apartment complex is large and oddly quiet. We don't see many people. Evan is taking piano lessons again with Mrs. Hnatova. She is one that we pray for and see on a regular basis. But we want to meet people. Pray for the Lord to open doors – literally and spiritually.

Thank you for your love and prayers! The honeymoon is over and the digging in has really begun. We love you and think and pray for you often. Thank you for sacrificially loving the people here – many of whom we don't yet know.

God is good all the time.

With great love,
Miriam and Evan Grady

