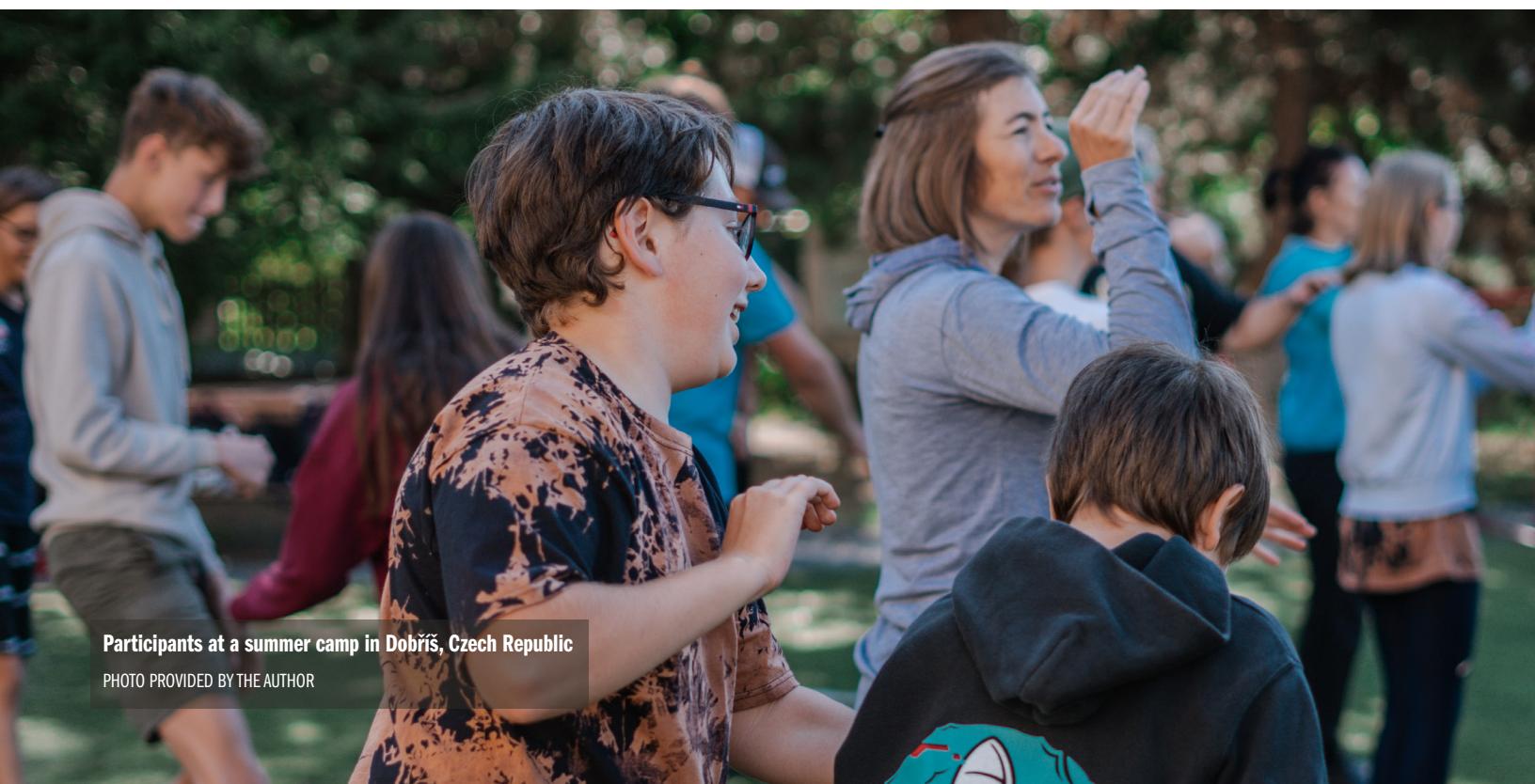


# MESSENGER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER &amp; PRAYER GUIDE



Participants at a summer camp in Dobříš, Czech Republic

PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE AUTHOR

## WHAT IS GOOD NEWS?

by Jan Heindel

What is the attraction of Jesus for people who don't "need" anything? What is the gospel — good news — in this culture? This has been the question on my mind over the past years as I have served in the Czech Republic, a context with challenges, as all contexts hold, but unique in its own way. For one, people are largely self-sufficient, able to provide for their physical needs, even with some excess, and on the surface, don't necessarily lack. In that way, not so far off from the U.S., right? Poverty or physical need creates a reliance on something outside of ourselves, an openness — or even desperation — to something outside of ourselves,

and this is not the case in the Czech Republic. It's a context that is very non-spiritual, unlike places like Africa or Asia, where people are much more attuned to the spiritual, where Jesus can reveal himself. Czechs are very logical people, rarely acknowledging a spiritual realm, and if they do, it has nothing whatsoever to do with them.

Furthermore, concepts like Jesus saving us from our sins don't have meaning. These are religious terms that we throw around in church settings, but put yourself in a place of never growing up with these terms: "Saved from what? I take care of myself. I'm a pretty good person."

And who is this Jesus? Many people I know might have a context for God as some sort of higher being, but even the context for Jesus is not present outside of a historical backstory for Christmas. Along with this, the impact of years of communism, where the only person you can trust is yourself, means that forming meaningful relationships can take years. All of these factors create an environment where it is challenging to convey Jesus as relevant and attractive.

So what is good news? It has to start with God, a creator who loves his creation, delights in the master-

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## ... CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT

piece, including us as humans, he has created, and desires wholeness for his world. The brokenness in the world, in relationships, in harm done to others and ourselves, and with the earth — environment — itself is something that undoubtedly everyone can relate to. Things are not as they should be. Very obviously. And that's where Jesus comes in. Jesus is the means — the person and relationship — by which God intended and intends to redeem the brokenness of the world.

In the past couple of years, I've been working with a church plant in the town of Dobříš, outside of Prague, and as I've considered what my involvement would be in this town, God impressed on my heart the need to pray. I was inspired by the start of the 24/7 prayer movement out of England and the verses from Isaiah 62:6—7:

*I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth.*

I started prayer-walking the streets of Dobříš every week, asking God to make Dobříš a place known for his praise. But what does this mean? As I considered this question, my prayers took on a broader form than asking for people to know Jesus as Savior. Instead, they were shaped by what felt like would be good news to the people of those neighborhoods: God's kingdom to cover those streets with its love, joy, and peace. Interceding for the brokenness that is so pervasive to be replaced with goodness and beauty. For God to work reconciliation in relationships and restoration of kindness and love. For comfort for the lonely and relief for the hurting. For people to recognize their con-

tribution to brokenness and choose another way. For the shalom which Jesus offers to spring up. Unlikely? It often seems so. Impossible? With God, no. But all of this feels like it could be good news to people longing for something more.

Good news for kids who joined the English camp in Dobříš over the past two years is a place to be seen and known. The isolation in an increasingly digital, independent world is evident. After English Camp this past summer, a number of girls came to our Sunday service and stayed for the hot dog party with the Americans who helped at camp. They expressed how they liked the songs, and most surprisingly, they hung around until the very end, even as most people had gone and the rest of us were cleaning up. It met some kind of need in them: a space where they felt welcomed and seen.

Similarly, while working with youth, I've often heard comments of "I really like it here — everyone seems to like each other and get along!" I've seen the impact that community in the life of believers has on the world around us. Good news for these students is community, harmony in relationships, and a place to belong. These settings are a place where the loving fellowship of Jesus-followers is meeting a desire — maybe one not even consciously recognized — for the type of relationships that the body of Christ expresses as we reflect the presence of Jesus.

Good news for a new friend whom I met at a coffee shop in Dobříš is something — or Someone — to fill the emptiness in her life. I recognize that she has numerous areas of disappointment and brokenness in her life and how she seeks something, often misguidedly, to fill those empty places. She grew up Catho-

lic, and I was pleasantly surprised to learn that she believes God is good, although I don't believe she has a context for a relationship with Jesus. And yet Jesus is the only one who can ultimately meet her in her emptiness and fill her with peace, and I know that he longs to be that good news for her.

For a friend who is suffering from a chronic illness that keeps her relatively bed-bound and isolated, living apart from her family, the good news is that she's not alone, that there is a God who grieves with her and relates intimately with the pain of suffering. And in the reflection of his image, he has created fellowship for his people to grieve with those who are grieving and come alongside in prayer and support. This good news does not always bring immediate comfort and hope to the one hurting, but is held within the body of Christ for this dear friend and her family.

Discipleship in the Czech Republic is a slow process, but each moment of reflecting the kingdom of God is good news. It is the fullness and goodness of life in relationships restored — relationship with God, with each other, and with creation. And that feels attractive to me. I pray that this expression of the kingdom draws people who may not be longing for so much on the surface and may not even be consciously aware of the extent of brokenness in their own lives, but awakens desire for something much more as they hear it and experience it through God's people.



**Jan Heindel** serves with EMM in the Czech Republic.

# FEBRUARY DAILY PRAYER

## CENTRAL ASIA

1 | Pray for the small but growing number of Uzbek believers to have courage and wisdom as they share their faith within their families. Pray that the Holy Spirit would use the Uzbek translation of the Bible to speak to the hearts of community leaders and influencers.

2 | Pray for God to send workers to the field to work in business for transformation and teaching English.

3 | Pray for the “Manas” culture of the Kyrgyz—which prizes bravery and epic storytelling—to find its ultimate fulfillment in the story of Christ. Pray for the training of indigenous Kyrgyz pastors and for the strengthening of rural house churches in the remote mountain regions.

4 | Pray for Tajik migrant workers throughout Central Asia and Russia, that they would encounter believers in the places they go for work. Pray for the provision of resources for the Tajik church and for the Gospel to bring hope and healing to families struggling with poverty.

5 | Pray for Christian professionals and students in cities like Almaty and Astana to be “salt and light” to their Kazakh peers. Pray that the “spiritual hunger” emerging among the youth would lead them to discover the person of Jesus through digital media and personal friendships.

## WEST AFRICA

6 | Join Nate and Krystle Thorne in prayer for openness among Muslims to know Jesus. Join them in praising God for what he is doing in their hearts. Pray for the discipleship of local believers to live on mission.

7 | Pray for Mandinka families, that the strong influence of traditional spiritualism would be replaced by the freedom found in Christ.

8 | Pray for the physical and spiritual survival of the Tuareg people amidst harsh desert conditions and political instability. Pray that God would call pioneer workers to endure the difficult climate to bring the Good News to these desert dwellers.

9 | Pray for a spiritual breakthrough among the Wolof. Ask God to use Christian media, such as radio broadcasts and the “Jesus Film”

in the Wolof language, to spark curiosity.

10 | Pray for the Fulani herdsmen who are often on the move, that they would encounter “peace-makers” who can share the Gospel in their heart language, Pular.

11 | Pray for individuals and families to be called to join the work of leadership development and church planting in West Africa.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA

12 | Join Mark and Sarah Schoenhals in prayer for the 48 people who were baptized by Life Enrichment Church in 2025. Pray that each one will grow strong in their faith and remain a committed Jesus-follower.

13 | Pray for workers to be called to Thailand, to work with displaced people from Myanmar.

14 | In the midst of the ongoing civil unrest in Myanmar, pray for the Burmese people to find ultimate peace and hope in Jesus.

15 | Pray for the healing of the Khmer people’s collective trauma in Cambodia through the restorative power of the gospel.

16 | Pray for a movement of the Holy Spirit across the Isaan region of Thailand. Ask God to send workers who can translate and share the gospel in the Isaan language.

## CENTRAL EUROPE

17 | Praise God for His provision of an apartment for Karen Hess that exceeded expectations. Also praise for the numerous ministry connections He has provided since she moved to Prague.

18 | Pray for God to call workers to join and strengthen the team in the Czech Republic.

19 | Pray for the healing of deep emotional and historical scars from the Bosnian War. Ask God to use the hospitality of local believers in Germany and Austria to soften hearts.

20 | Pray for the breaking of generational cycles of poverty and social exclusion. Ask God to raise up indigenous Romani leaders to plant churches that are culturally vibrant and focused on holistic transformation.

21 | Pray for a spiritual awakening that moves beyond historical tradition and intellectual atheism. Ask God to spark a “holy curiosity”

among Czech youth and university students, and pray that the small number of evangelical churches would be characterized by genuine love and community.

## LANCASTER, PA.

22 | Pray for the “Peace of Christ” to enter Somali homes in Lancaster. Ask God to reveal himself through dreams and visions, and pray for the few believers from this background in the U.S. to have the courage to connect with their community in Lancaster.

23 | Pray for a “God-given curiosity” to rise among the Hindu community in Lancaster. Pray that they would be drawn to the person of Jesus and that Christian professionals in Lancaster would be bold and kind in sharing their hope with South Asian colleagues and friends.

24 | Pray for the spiritual vitality of the Congolese community. Ask God to provide for their practical needs and to use the Congolese believers as a “light on a hill” within the city, empowered to share their faith across cultural lines with other immigrant groups.

25 | Pray for local believers and organizations as they build deep, genuine friendships with Arabic-speaking families. Pray that as they learn English and integrate, they would encounter the Good News through the hospitality and love of their Christian neighbors.

26 | Pray for the Nepali-speaking churches in Lancaster to be strengthened as they reach out to their neighbors. Ask God to bring healing to those still carrying the trauma of displacement, and that the peace of Christ would replace the fear of spiritual bondages.

## OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

27 | Pray for Alan and Carol Wert as they share their testimonies with the men’s and women’s ministries at City Church Gloucester, in the U.K.

28 | Join Michael and Nancy Hostetter in celebrating the generous financial gifts given towards the new building project with Promesa School. Pray for English teachers who love Jesus to be called to serve in both part-time and full-time positions.



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