

News from Petr

and the Czech Republic New Hope Team

February 2010



Dear friends,

In my last letter I told you about how we celebrate Christmas and what we usually do; however, I have to admit that this year almost everything was different than normal. For the first time, we held a special Christmas service where 35 non-believers came to a church service for the first time! Also for the first time, we had a booth at the Turnov Christmas Market (which took place 10 days before Christmas). Another new thing was that our new team member Maya fully joined the team after our worker Klara (married to Pastor Petr) gave birth to their daughter. After Christmas, I even got to have chemo on Dec. 28!

I will be very brief this time talking about my sickness. When you get this letter I will have had my final round of chemo and then a few more examinations will be done. When I know something, I will let you know! I thank you for all of your prayers for me and my family, which have been such an encouragement to us.

So, now some more December details. Every year there is a Christmas Market on the main town square in Turnov. Craftsmen from all over the region come to sell their ceramics, jewelry, glass, leather products and even live fish (remember our custom to eat fish during Christmas Eve?). For the first time, our New Hope team decided to go there not as visitors, but to have our own booth. We wanted to sell products from our Ministry (Family) Center, from the Mother's Club (painting on silk, hand-made soap and Christmas decorations), from Klara's parents (jewelry) and from Club 13 (Christmas cards). We also prepared hot chocolate and hot cranberry-apple juice. Since we were the only booth with non-alcoholic beverages, many parents with children came to us, attracted by the smell of hot chocolate (and child-friendly drinks!). Our goal was not to make a profit (though we covered expenses and had about \$88 left over)--but to meet new people, introduce them to our ministry and pray for them.



I also want to share Klara's story. But don't be confused – when she talks about Petr, she isn't talking about me, but rather her husband Petr -- my pastor, close friend and partner in ministry.

Klara writes: "It was three weeks before the expected childbirth and because the last weeks were tiring, I was impatient. But God told me that He would determine the right date for this child to come. Petr and I started to plan ministry activities like the Christmas Market and the Christmas service, so I had little time to think about the coming birth. On Dec. 14, Mirka, a pregnant friend, called me and told me that her labor had just started. I know Mirka from our Family Center and despite the fact that she is not a Christian, I could pray for her during the day a couple of times over the phone. That day Petr and I finished the preparations for the Christmas service

Petr Gruber



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and then with a sigh I thought ok, this baby can come because my work is done. I was resting in the Ministry Center in the afternoon, thinking about Mirka and waiting for mothers coming for our weekly club. Petr came to me and I told him about Mirka. Then he put his hand on my belly and said “Viktorka, come out.” (Viktorka is the name for our daughter) Only 10 minutes later my water broke!

At the hospital, I was in a room next to where Mirka was still delivering her baby. I didn't see her, but I could hear her, her husband, and finally even their baby and I prayed for them.

Meanwhile, my labor was not going anywhere. The doctors kept trying to give me different medicines, but I only had pain and no progress. Petr helped me in many ways, encouraging me and praying for me. Suddenly I felt the baby's head trying to come. I told the nurse, who didn't believe me, saying, “That would be a miracle!” But she examined me and realized that I was right. She called the doctor and other nurses and told them, “Don't tell me that miracles don't exist. I just saw one.” I have to say that I had bigger joy from this than from the fact that we were close to the birth! I knew that God was with us and that everything beginning from Mirka's childbirth to our daughter's birth was to His glory. I will never forget that moment. Our daughter's name, Viktorka Thea, means “God's Victory.”

After the birth, I shared the same room with Mirka and she told me that she prayed for me—despite the fact that she is not a believer (...yet!). During my five-day hospital stay, I met several other new mothers I had seen at the OB/GYN doctor's office. I could pray for two other mothers before their childbirth. Now I have a beautiful daughter, and new friends who said they will come to our club for mothers. God is really good! --Klara Boudny

So my dear, appreciated ministry partners, God is doing many things in our town to draw Czechs to His heart and to be open to Him. I would have chosen a different path this year, but my family and I trust God's greatness, goodness and love for us—and look forward to how He reveals our next steps.

Meanwhile, we are thrilled with the spiritual fruit that He continues to produce from our first years of cultivating the soil and sowing seeds in Turnov, out of obedience to Him. Thank you for your prayers, your faith in us, your faith in God's plan for Turnov and our hard-hearted country, and for your giving—all of it in true partnership for God's Kingdom.

In Christ,

Petr and Katka, and our team in Turnov