



Bountiful backyard peaches

IN THE GARDEN

This August has been wonderful for the backyard garden. The apricot tree didn't have a bumper crop like last year, but they were still sweet and delicious.

The peaches, however, were abundant and just as amazing. Two different varieties of trees produced peaches for almost three full weeks. I made peach cobbler several times to share with friends and colleagues.

We also had a few fresh cucumbers and lots of tomatoes—red, orange and yellow—in both cherry tomato size and regular size. I started running out of ideas on what to do with all of them, until I found some “English” bacon at the meat market one day. The bacon here is not like American bacon, but this was the closest that I've seen, and it worked well for BLT sandwiches.

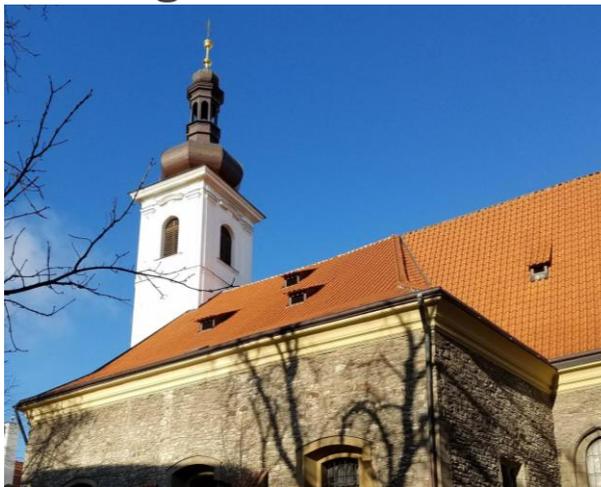
Now it's apple season, with at least five varieties of apple trees producing fruit. They are delicious just plain or in baked dishes. I also made some applesauce for the freezer, so I can enjoy them throughout the winter.



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Calling a Pastor



St. Michael Lutheran Church in Prague.

“One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles.” Luke 6:12-13 (NIV)

Our Czech congregation in Prague has been without a permanent pastor for two years. As our congregation prepares to call a pastor, one of the vacancy pastors used this text for a recent sermon. He noted that Jesus spent time in prayer before he called his disciples. Seeking God's will, guidance and discernment through prayer is also important for us—as individuals and for our congregation—to prepare for such an important decision.

The call process here is a bit different from many American churches. I met with our church council president to better understand how a pastor is called and to discuss my role in working with the new pastor. He explained that the church council meets, reviews the candidates, and selects a pastor with a three-fifths majority vote. After the council successfully votes on a candidate, they invite the pastor to consider the call. Most pastors here are not full-time pastors. They have regular jobs and serve as pastors in addition to

their normal occupations, so the candidate needs time to deliberate and pray about the decision, as well.

If the pastor agrees that he is willing to serve, then the entire congregation is invited to a voters' meeting. The pastoral candidate is presented to the voters where 66 percent must agree to move forward with the selection. If the two-thirds majority is not reached, the council reconvenes to consider other pastors. If the vote is affirmed by the congregation, the pastor is then installed and serves for a 10-year term.

The new pastor will be responsible, of course, for providing Word and Sacrament to our congregation. But the church council president also explained how critical the next few years will be to grow the congregation through mission outreach, which my work will support.

We now have three Czech pastors that could serve our congregation. The council recently voted to invite one of them, a pastor who currently serves in a smaller parish outside of Prague. He has accepted the invitation and the congregation will vote at a special meeting on October 17. In the meantime, we will pray for guidance. Please keep us in your prayers too.



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- *Discernment about calling a mission-minded pastor to serve the Czech congregation in Prague.*
- *My English students to continue in their fluency, so they can connect with other Lutheran pastors in Eurasia.*
- *Protection as I travel throughout Prague distributing Bibles.*

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- *The abundant, healthy fruit and vegetables that grow in my backyard.*
- *Safety and enjoyment during my early morning walks with Róza, the dog, and conversing with local residents.*
- *A continued decline in Covid cases in the Czech Republic.*

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- *His guidance and direction in our lives.*

A walking companion



Róza, an 11-month-old Scottish Terrier, walked with me every morning in August

When I found out that my elderly landlords planned to watch a puppy for a month while the owners went on vacation, I offered to help. I walk almost every morning, and I thought it would be a nice change to have a furry companion with me. Of course, they were thrilled since they are in their mid- to late eighties.

So, each morning, they had Róza ready for me to walk. She was very excited and learned to be a good walker in a very short time. Of course, she only responds to Czech commands. I live near a forest with paved and unpaved trails. We typically walked about an hour and covered five to six kilometers on the cobblestone streets and in the woods.

I have lived here for more than three years and like to greet people on the streets in my village; sometimes they return the greeting and sometimes they don't. But when I had a dog with me, everyone wanted to chat. They wanted to know if the puppy was a boy or girl, her name, her breed, how old she was and so on. When they saw me later in the day without the dog, they were still more friendly. I also got to know many of the other dogs in the neighborhood, their names and how old they were.

The Czechs love their dogs. In Prague, the city provides dog "waste" stations with free supplies of bright green bags and green garbage bins. They are located on city streets, throughout the many parks and along the walking trails. It's also common to see businesses and restaurants provide watering stations for dogs.

I am so thankful that God provided a dog for me to walk that initiated conversations with people in my neighborhood. Hopefully, this will open the door for future conversations about my ever-present walking companion, Jesus.

This month we remember the importance of prayer:

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Matthew 7:7 (ESV)

- Cindy Zirbel Wrucke



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