

Winckles Family Update - Thanksgiving 2023

Praise the Lord, O my soul. Do not forget all his kind deeds. - Psalm 103:2 (NET)

Dear friends in ministry, please join us in thanking God for all the things He is doing! Here is just a sampling:

Our Ministry Team: In addition to the two of us, our small ministry team includes Pastor **Péter Tóth** and associate missionary **Erin Kingsley**. Together we help coordinate weekly and monthly meetings, worship services, and outreach events connected to the Budapest church and the Bread of Life Foundation, such as prayer meetings, ladies' tea and craft afternoons, English conversation groups, board game afternoons, excursions, pre-school programs for moms and their children, the community Christmas program, etc. Managing these, along with our other mission responsibilities, often cause us to feel stretched quite thin. *Your prayers are needed and appreciated.*



Set Free Ministries: **Zsuzsa Mecséri-McNamara** returned to work part-time in September, following her 2-year maternity leave. She serves as the coordinator of Set Free ministries in Hungary. In addition to the regular outreach ministries to **children's homes and shelters** in Budapest, Győr, and Pécs, a **summer day camp** was held at the children's home in Győr and a **summer creative day camp** was held at the ministry center in Budapest. Also, the annual **Walk for Freedom** took place in October in Pécs, Hungary. Katie, Erin, and Zsuzsa were able to participate in the event. We were also able to provide much-needed dietary staples on a monthly basis to the shelter for women and children in Budapest and vitamins to the children's home in Győr, *thanks to* special donations from a partner church.

In the spring Larry was asked to join the Operations Team of the **European Freedom Network** (EFN). His initial task is to plan and implement a transition of the EFN database to a more robust and full-featured platform. He is also involved in the planning for the upcoming EFN Bridge Conference, which will take place in March in Portugal.

Dinner Sandwich Church: Last winter we started preparations for hosting a "dinner" church. In our context, we felt that it would be more appropriately called a **"sandwich" church**. Once a month people from the Budapest fellowship gather to prepare sandwiches to be served to all who come to the Sunday afternoon gathering. Following the light meal, a short message about Jesus is given and discussion questions are put forward. Conversation, fellowship, and prayer take place around the tables. Many who attend are people who do not regularly attend church or have a church home.

General Conference: A highlight of the year was our trip to Florida for the Free Methodist General Conference, held in Orlando. For *General Conference* Larry served on the Life-Giving Holiness focus group and, in addition, created a print and play game commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the birth of the principal founder of the Free Methodist Church, B. T. Roberts. (You can download the game, along with other resources, using this link: <https://historical.fmcusa.org/>) We were blessed to be able to reconnect with many friends, colleagues, and ministry partners during this time.

Missionary Retreat: Almost every Free Methodist missionary family was able to attend the *missionary retreat* that followed General Conference. This was the first time that many people were able to meet and get to know missionaries serving in other areas of the world. *We are thankful* for the anonymous donor who made the retreat possible.



Other Travels: Larry and Erin traveled to Bulgaria in March to take part in **Europe Without Orphans** conference. Following the conference Larry met with leaders of the **Balkans Provisional Annual Conference** to help them prepare for their upcoming annual conference meeting.

In *May* we traveled to Ireland to follow-up on a promise to visit the **Hope Christian Fellowship** in Monaghan, Ireland. (We had scheduled a visit in 2020 for the fellowship's 5th anniversary celebration, but because of Covid that visit was

cancelled.) Free Methodist leaders from around Europe gathered in the Canary Islands in *September* for the **European Leadership Summit** meetings. In *October* several Free Methodist leaders from Europe, including Larry, attended the **Exponential Europe** conference that was held in Berlin, Germany.

Our Partners: While in the States we were able to visit several partner churches, as well as visiting a few congregations for the first time. *We are thankful* for the many people who pray regularly for us and for the ministries in Hungary. Prayer is essential! *We are also thankful* for those who partner with us financially, and for those who come and help serve. We look forward to our partnership with you continuing in the coming year. **Our support page** is <https://give.fmcusa.org/winckles>.

Our family: Our oldest son **Andrew** and his wife, **Christy**, continue with their careers at Sienna Heights University and at Adrian College, respectively, in Adrian, Michigan. Their daughter, **Gold'Ann**, graduated from Adrian High School and is now a freshman at the University of Michigan. Her brother, **William**, is a junior at Adrian High School and has discovered that he excels in pole vault. Their little brother, **Harvey**, continues to do well at a Montessori pre-school in Adrian. Our second son **Peter** and his wife, **Rachel**, welcomed their first child and our second granddaughter, **Nora**, into the world at the end of May. We were able to spend some time with Nora (and her parents) when she was about three weeks old. *We are blessed by and thankful for* our children, their spouses, and our grandchildren.

Visitors: Throughout the year we were happy to welcome numerous visitors, including Lara Vanderhoof, Kevin Austin, Jerry and Nancy Malone, Linda and Joel Piehl, Tyler Piehl, and Loren and Kristi Washburn.

Prayer Opportunities

Family: **Katie's parents** are coming to the point where they need extra care. In addition, other members of our extended family are facing very difficult situations. *Pray that* we might have wisdom as we try to encourage, counsel, and support them from afar.

Ministry: The **church fellowship** is slowly recovering from the impact that COVID-19 had on people's willingness to congregate. Several have found "other things" to do on Sundays, while others are still fearful of gathering in close company indoors. *Pray that* our team might be able to find successful means of not only gathering people back together but also in reaching new people.

To keep current on prayer requests, write to kwinckles@gmail.com and ask to be added to our weekly prayer email list.

Ministry Finances

The **Hungary Church Planting and Development account** (Hungary CPD) is what funds the Budapest Ministry Center, the Set Free Hungary ministries (including Zsuzsa's salary), and allows Péter to be employed as pastor of the Budapest church and as administrator of the Bread of Life Foundation. This year we were able to complete a renovation of the kitchen and bathroom of the apartment that is provided for Pastor Péter and his family. *Pray that* funds would come in to allow continued ministries in 2024. Donations to this fund may be made at <https://give.fmcusa.org/hungary>.

We continue to administer the remaining **Bishops' Crisis Response Funds** that were donated to assist with the **Ukraine crisis**. For those who wish to continue to support relief efforts and ministries in Ukraine, we suggest that you know direct your donations to the **Ukraine Church Planting and Development Fund**, using this link: <https://give.fmcusa.org/page.aspx?pid=815>. *Pray for* the end of the war and for the restoration of all that is broken.

We are thankful for God's faithfulness

This year on December 9 we will celebrate our **45th wedding anniversary** and nearly 27 ½ years of missionary service (in the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, and Hungary). We are thankful for God's faithfulness to us and to our family throughout all of these years, and for your continued interest and support. May you have a blessed Thanksgiving, a hope-filled Advent season, and a joyous Christmas! May you sense God's presence and guidance each day!

Larry and Katie Winckles

Serving in Europe with Free Methodist World Missions

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