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Missionaries to Europe/Middle East

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## COVID AND VIRTUAL LIFE

### Spring 2021

Since our last newsletter was sent in February, new Covid variants sent Hungary into a tailspin. These past two months have been more challenging in many ways than the previous year. Elementary schools joined high schools in doing distance-only learning. All shops except grocery stores were closed March 4 until after Easter weekend. Our churches are still unable to meet in person. And to top it off, many in our churches here and Sofie's school community contracted Covid. Several were on ventilators in the maxed-out hospitals. One week, we knew 35 staff, students or parents in Sofie's small school that had tested positive. Worst of all, on Good Friday, her beloved elementary school principal, Mrs. Bishop, passed away in the hospital from Covid.

These long months seem to go on and on and are wearing on all of us. We know that cases of depression and self-harm have increased. Please pray for everyone's physical and emotional needs during these trying times!

In the midst of all the despair around us, we know that it is our jobs as believers to reflect the love and light of Christ. We were thrilled when the Budakalász church, seeing that the hospitals and medical staff were at full capacity, tired and overworked, decided to organize a donation drive where people could drop off items to bless the doctors, nurses, and staff. This Facebook post was viewed over 10,000 times and the story was picked up by the news! This past Saturday, people could drop off their donations of children's artwork, coffee, snacks, etc at the church.

We've been attending services at the church in Rákospalota and in Budakalász virtually. Dan is preaching about twice a month at the two churches. We are so proud of Pastor László and Pastor Peti and their families as they have been through so much this year, yet still are ministering to those around them. Please pray for these dear families and lift them up to the Lord.



**Picture captions clockwise:** We took Sofie to the school where they had a memorial space for students to remember Mrs. Bishop. Sofie took flowers and lit a candle. Christy and Sofie dropped off some donations of snack bars and energy drinks during the Budakalász donation drive for local doctors offices and hospitals. It's always great to see our friends there, including Pastor Peti's wife Rita and daughter Eszter (Anna was napping) **Bottom left:** Pastor László and his wife Deti leading worship for the Rákospalota church via YouTube.



# What's been happening this spring

\*Our new regional coordinators, Nate and Stacy Tatman, have landed in Madrid! We're glad they are settled into their new apartment, attending services at En Mi Lugar, which Carmen and Alejandro De Francisco planted! Remember the Tatmans in your prayers as they weather all these cross-cultural transitions.

\*Dan's knee cap recovery has been going well, albeit very slowly. He still is spending all his time in our ground floor living room, while diligently doing his physical therapy exercises at least twice daily. He has started adding in a couple stairs to his exercise routine and is working on building his quadriceps back up from basically zero. He's really grateful for his therapist, Bogi, who is patient and kind and also is pushing him. We all hope that he will be able to walk more easily by June or July!



\*Two Europe X (the church planting and multiplication sub-network of 3WLN that we coordinate) families had a baby arrive on the same day! Our Three Worlds colleagues, Zach and Audrey Langford (3W-United Kingdom), welcomed Baby Leo into the world on April 17. Just a few hours later, Samir and Joanna Salibi, of the At Home church in Paris, welcomed Baby Thia! We are thrilled for both of these amazing families!



\*Christy was grateful to be able to be the assistant basketball coach for the middle school girls team at Sofie's school. Because of the pandemic, they didn't have games this year, but we still were glad to have weekly practices and build on their skills. She also values this time to encourage these girls!



Dan has had regular visits with his surgeon, so this view of St. Janos Korhaz (hospital) has become very familiar to Sofie and Christy.



Above: Dan enjoyed catching up with Pastor Kenneth in Bulgaria and Zach Langford for an Agape Faith United Board meeting last week via Zoom. Left: Our 3W team tries to connect via Zoom once a quarter and has a blast together when we do! Keep the Nachtigalls in your prayers as Marco graduates high school, starts college in the fall, and they prepare for a year in America!

## Sofie's Space

We recently found this stuffy in a grocery store and realized it was a perfect tool to help show the complexities of missionary life! In missions training and prep programs, they talk about the paradox of serving cross-culturally, or "pair-of-ducks". For example, it's exciting and makes me happy to learn a new language, but it makes me really sad to live so far away from family. "Coba" is Sofie's new favorite stuffy and has been helpful as we process both/and emotions! Sofie was very sad that Mrs. Bishop wasn't healed and died. She also was happy that she knows that Mrs. Bishop is in heaven because of her relationship with Christ.



Left: Meet Coba! Top right: Online school has occupied much of our days these past couple months. Bottom right: Sofie and Honey during our thrice daily walks!

