



ELK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

November-December 2018

From the Pastor's Study...

Well, you've had a nice break from me, but...I'm back! I took a trip to Romania, a side trip to Sarajevo, and later led a group to Israel. But that's over for now. I would like to speak to you about that first trip, and what it could mean for the future.

First of all, I want to thank each of you, from the bottom of my heart, that supported my trip there. It was thrilling, informative, and fulfilling. I think it offers opportunities for the future, both for the association, with a lot of people willing to travel to fulfill their vision of mission, and for Elk Creek, too. Once again, in case I forget later—thank you.

Sighisoara is a medieval city pretty much in the middle of the country. When George and Sammy (the Romanian interns) came to visit us in early August, I mentioned they came from a “rough neighborhood.” The presence of Russia and Putin there is hard to miss. Gas, which has to come from Russia, is \$6-7 a gallon, a shock in a very poor country. The cars are held together with whatever they can find, as they are too poor for new models. Sighisoara itself still looks like an East-bloc, Cold War-era country, apart from the historic citadel. Look it up—the views are amazing.

Yet the Boruga brothers, Florin and Sabin, are running a ministry there that meets vital needs for the community. They run it out of a church on the south side of the city, but have mission churches in six different gypsy villages. (Nobody had mentioned to me that I would be dealing mostly with gypsies until I got there; talk about learning on the fly....) Eastern Transylvania, where Sighisoara is located, is home to the largest concentration of gypsies in the world, and just now they are beginning to find structure in their lives from the church that they have never had before.

In fact, the brothers have become victims of their own success. While on a shoestring budget they are still operating seven churches (counting Sighisoara), and are still able to feed themselves, somehow, mayors in other towns are begging them to open churches there because they have seen how the quality of life improves when the gypsies have that structure that's denied them anywhere else.

I saw large crowds in Archita (Ar-kita), in Soas (Sho-ash), and Danesh, my seminary talks were well-attended, and the sermons were well-received. People were eaten up with wanting to learn what they could about the gospel.

At the same time, they live in fear that their country will give in to corruption or be overwhelmed by the Russians once again. Romania is torn by religion. The dominant Orthodox church itself is torn between allegiance to Moscow, and the church headed by Patriarch Bartholomew in Constantinople (Istanbul). (I also spent so much time in the airport in Istanbul that I feel like a resident). As we speak, the rift is widening between these two ancient centers of the Eastern Orthodox faith, and the people in Sighisoara can feel it. It's like the pincers are closing.

I had communion with shut-ins, saw Bram's (as in Stoker, of *Dracula* fame) Castle and ancient sights like the "German" Lutheran church, its ancient tapestries and tombs, and entered the basement that contained the original church there, dated to 800 AD. I toured the citadel with a guide who's employed by the US Embassy to give tours to their foreign service officers. I witnessed over and over again their powerful singing about their struggle and about God. I spoke to the youth of the church about our first impulses and how mercy should temper everything we do. Tears were shed.

But the message of freedom is a strong one, and Baptists are having an impact there. I did my best to reassure people that America supports them, and they have friends throughout Europe, too.

For what it's worth, I gave a last sermon in Betania Baptist Church that echoed whatever reassurance I could offer. **(See attachment to newsletter e-mail).**

I mentioned opportunities. In the short term, they need a four-wheel-drive vehicle that will allow them to reach Archita during the winter months. The village is terribly isolated, and they have little help beyond the church. (Sabin told me the government does help—it gives them \$5-10 a month!) Otherwise they are isolated. In addition, they are praying for short-term mission trips from America that will provide Vacation Bible School-like opportunities to the villages.

In the future, someone in Texas has bought a lot for them on the other side of town that sits in the middle of apartment complexes, the nicest homes I saw in Sighisoara, and two modern-looking factories right across the street. Their dream is to build there; people will flock to it, as they have elsewhere. Even greater hope is sitting there, waiting to be built.

Just some things to keep in mind.

Mickey

DATES TO REMEMBER

November

Wed. 28th Mid week book study at Elk Creek Church Fellowship Hall 7:00 p.m to 8:30 p.m.

December

Sun. 2nd Advent Begins

Thurs. 6th Tree Trimming at Louisa Healthcare Center 9:30 a.m.

Fri. 7th Church Wreath making and decorating, 9:30 a.m.

Thurs. 13th Women's Card Ministry at the church 9:00 a.m.

Sun. 16th Gifts for Christmas families due

Sat. 22nd Delivery of Christmas Gifts, 9:30 a.m.

Sun.23rd Combined Christmas Services 11:00 a.m.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

November

Ballis, James	01
Bane, Lisa	03
Pittman, Mark	05
Webb, Joan	05
Robertson, Erin	11
Hale, Scott	13
Pitcher, Tom	15
Hayes, Susan	16
Jones, Anna	22

Chisholm, Claudia	25
Jenkins, Woody	25
Mason, Linda	28
Sharp, Sissie & Keith	28
Webb, Wayne & Joan	30

December

Faccone, Mary	04
Wilson, Tony & Sandra	04
Pittman, Karilyn	06
Rose, Jim	09
DiFranco, Michael	10
Weaver, Butch	11
Keene, Bobby	13
Mason, Phillip	18
Brown, Catherine	19
Brown, Phillip	19
Brown, Kim	21
Grecco, Grace	22
Hoffman, Grayson	23

Sunday School Class



Mindy and the Elk Creek Boys performing at the Goshen Annual Meeting at Mount Hope Church



Pastor Mickey sharing his Romanian experience at the Goshen Annual Meeting at Mount Hope Church



Wednesday Night Book Study



Women's Card Ministry

Please note: Rescheduled for December 13th @ 9:00 a.m.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me Debby Burt at debbyburt@gmail.com

Prayer Ministry

If you know someone who is in need of prayers or a visit from our Prayer Partners, please let me know. Alana 703-282-2393 wr.frazier@verizon.net

Elk Creek Book Study

We have started a new book study titled "Sinners in the hands of a loving God" by Brian Zahnd. Join us at 7:00 p.m. in the Reception Hall at the church as we continue this study on the 2nd Wednesday and 4th Wednesday of each month, one chapter each session. If you would like to join us and purchase a book, please contact Tony Wilson at 540-748-1159.

A special thanks to Debby and Chip for hosting our first study in November and for making our time together at the church a little more cozy.

As you sit around your table with family and friends this Thanksgiving and Christmas, please remember all those who have lost loved ones this past year. Pray God will comfort them and give them strength to carry on.

Together in Christ,

Alana Frazier