



# Paul & Tanya Gericke

MISSIONARIES IN ROMANIA



FEBRUARY 2021

## THE THINGS THAT ENDURE

### *Prayer*

- Pray for the Bergman family as they continue to prepare to make the move to Romania in the spring and continue to raise funds for ministry.
- Pray for safety on the camp construction site as the crew continues to work throughout the winter.
- Pray for wisdom as the camp staff and board continue to discern how the camp should respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially with the vaccine campaign beginning.

### *Praises*

- Praise God for all of the opportunities for sharing the good news this past Christmas through church services and youth events.
- Praise God for the blessing to get to connect with people in our community after the season of isolation.
- Praise God for the healing Paul has experienced in his recovery and for the big steps he's been able to take this past month.

*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."*

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Happy New Year! Though the beginning of the year hasn't looked like most of us would have imagined, nor has 2021 brought the "redemption" many had hoped for, God continues to be faithfully present and active in our lives and in this world. At the beginning of each year, the Hungarian Baptist churches institute a week of nightly prayer services, and this year the theme for this week was "endurance." We pray that each of you would know in a deeper way that in all things God's love and promises endure even as the things of this world spiral and we grow weary.



Though for most of the world the pandemic meant that the Christmas holiday had to look different, we in Romania did not find ourselves restricted in the same way. In Romania, the government loosened the restrictions prior to Christmas, which made this Christmas season just as busy as any other year! Over the course of three weeks of nightly services and celebrations, Paul preached eleven times, and we hosted a number of youth events, allowing us to share the good news during a dark season.

We began the Christmas season with our annual Agape Dinner, which is an event where each of the youth bring over a dish to contribute to the feast.



What started out as every youth bringing over their mom's signature dish has turned into the youth actually making their own delicious entrees for the group. Even one of the boys showed off his skills and made us homemade bread using his outdoor stone oven! After the meal, we played the classic White-Elephant present-stealing game and almost had a mutiny on our hand when I (Tanya) and one of the teens were strategic in our steals and made an after-the-game trade. It resulted in a heated discussion about the rules of the game! But beyond the delicious food and the hilarious Christmas activities, we shared a time of worship and fellowship. Paul spoke a powerful word about finding hope and peace in Jesus even in the midst of dark seasons. He shared a beautiful testimony from his journey over the last few months of recovering from back surgery and the truth that our hope is not in "successes" but in a God who promises to be present with his creation.

After the many, many church services over Christmas, we had Vern and Gloria over to our house for a Canadian Christmas dinner. We bought a fifty-pound homegrown turkey from our neighbour to cook but ended up only being able to fit one quarter of it in my oven. We decided to freeze the rest of it and may have to have a monthly Christmas meal from now until spring! It was such a blessing to be able to spend this time with the Wagners and experience this community, especially during all of the isolation we have all had to face. It was even comforting getting to watch World Junior's hockey with them and get a taste of what used to be a "normal" tradition.

For New Year's Eve, typically we would be invited to another village along with a multitude of other youth groups to participate in an all-nighter program. However, with COVID we felt it would be wise to have just a smaller event at our house with the youth from our village. Unsurprisingly though, this did not mean the party ended early. The teens still stayed up until 5:30 a.m.! Paul and I, realizing our age, decided to tap out at 4:30 a.m. and sent them to our basement to continue the

celebration. This was another blessed night of games, laughter, and fellowship as we brought in 2021 together.

As I mentioned earlier, the New Year begins with a prayer week in our churches where each night we gather together. There is a sermon and then a long, corporate prayer time that follows. It is an encouraging and inspiring way to start the year off. Amidst all of the services, there is one significant moment that sticks out. Nearby our village we have a sister church in a small village that we visit from time to time. The church was planted about a decade ago and they have persevered with only a few members (two committed). The day Paul went to preach, there were five people in attendance, which is a huge turnout for that church. After speaking, Paul asked if there were any prayer requests, and every person took a turn to share. It was quite a beautiful moment of fellowship as Paul had the opportunity to pray for each of them individually as they sat together in a circle in this tiny, cold church building. Even though the church was so few in attendance, the presence of God was undeniable. After, one lady shared that she had recently given her life to the Lord and that this was the first time anyone had ever prayed for her publicly. She said the feeling was indescribable. We are praising the Lord for that small church and the faithful members who, though few in numbers, are mighty in faith.

As for the camp, construction is continuing on despite the heavy snowfall over the past few days. The main lodge development has been put on pause as it is too cold to continue with the concrete work. However, the crew is working on the root cellar renovation to turn it into a cabin for summer programs. They finished the roof and exterior landscaping just before winter hit, and now they are focusing on interior work. This building will provide us with space to host at least ten more campers each week for programs! Oh, how we look forward with hope to what this summer may bring!

We love you all and are grateful for each of you!

### *Paul & Tanya Gericke*

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