

June, 2009

Dear Friends, Family, and Partners in Mission Ministry in Slovakia,

It is hard to believe that almost five years have passed since fall 2004, when we traveled to Slovakia to begin mission service. Now this time of our life is coming to an end. In just a couple of days we will return to the United States to begin our next chapter. We are motivated to return by the desire to be closer to family members who need us (especially our mothers), but also by the feeling that we have been able to accomplish what we were sent here to do, and that we are leaving the work in Bratislava on a solid foundation.

Slovakia has been a challenging and wonderful setting to work in. The work has been profoundly rewarding.

We have never experienced such an exciting and diverse Christian community anywhere else in our travels. (This place will be a hard act to follow!) Many great things have happened. We feel we have been successful in “creating capacity” in this setting—that is enabling local people to have the tools they need to carry on the work of Christ in this place with greater energy and skill. During these couple of months as we have been preparing to leave, many people have told us that they have been greatly encouraged by our work, by the new ideas we have been able to put in place, and by our partnership with them here through these past years. We feel we have been successful in forging closer ties between Christians in America and Eastern Europe. The hours have been long and many unexpected challenges have arisen along the way. For five years we have labored far from home in a cultural setting vastly different from our own, and faced all of the uncertainty and insecurity that sometimes goes with that. However, time and again we have experienced God’s grace strengthening and leading us through each challenge. We are truly grateful for the opportunity to have served here.



And we are grateful also for your partnership. Thank you for your years of faithful support. Your prayers, emails, encouraging words, and financial gifts have given us strength and resources we needed to carry on these past five years.

Although we are now leaving the foreign mission field, needs continue in Slovakia and many other sites throughout the world. With the ongoing financial crisis, funds are short for many essential mission projects around the world. We hope you will consider continuing your support for ELCA Global Missions. Visit the Global Mission website to find out about exciting mission partnership opportunities here in Slovakia and around the world.

After returning to the US we will be working to identify our next step in ministry. David will have a number of interviews in the coming weeks and if all goes well, we hope to be settled in somewhere within a couple of months. (We just don’t know where yet!) We’ll keep you posted and let you know how things develop.

We would appreciate your prayers for us as we go through this transition. America is, of course, our home, but that doesn’t mean we won’t go

through a little “reverse culture shock” as we settle back in, especially after so many years away. And many questions about our future remain to be answered. We trust that God will lead us forward to the place we belong, and appreciate your ongoing prayer support.

Please know that you will also be in our prayers. We hope that you, your family, your congregation, and your community will be blessed with the love and presence of God.

Thanks again for your kind support and partnership!

*Blessings in Christ,
David and Carla*

P.S. The pictures are from our Farewell Sunday at Bratislava International Church.