

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." – 2 Corinthians 5:20

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Pancake Day

"How many people come to your church? And all those people actually

follow the stuff you teach here?"

The man Catalina was talking to during our Pancake Day event couldn't wrap his mind around this idea that being a part of a church community was in any way tied to the way one might live his day to day life. Church is just another box on the checklist in order to fit into the traditional community. You go to the church to get baptized, you go there for funerals, and maybe you go for Easter and Christmas. But to be clear, the church is something you use to your advantage; it's not something that really has any hold on your daily life.

Many of those who receive our newsletter are from the Bible Belt in the States. Those of us who are familiar with the Bible Belt understand this sort of traditionalism. While being steeped in a culture saturated with Christianity can be a huge blessing, there is also the danger that overexposure and repetitive tradition can have a negative impact. Familiarity does breed contempt, after all.

This year our church decided to spice things up a bit. We wanted to acknowledge and utilize the structure of tradition which is so familiar to Romanians, but we also wanted to breathe life into tradition. How does God breathe life into us but through community? When Adam was alone, he was incomplete, so God breathed a second breath into him through the creation of Eve. When we were dead in our trespasses and sins, God breathed life into us through the Holy Spirit, drawing us into communion with him. And as we travel through this difficult life, God breathes life into us through the gathering together of the saints in the community of the church.

So everyone in the church reached out to friends and acquaintances and invited them to our pre-Lent celebration. We made American style pancakes and bacon for Shrove Tuesday and just got to know others from our community. Our prayer is that through seeing a vibrant church community who actually gets together, loves each other, has fun, and takes God seriously - those who entered our community will get a glimpse of the true life they're missing out on by not being a part of a gospel-centered church. That they will get a glimpse of people whose lives are actually affected by what they learn on Sunday.

But beyond the communal nature of the event, we also wanted to expose our friends and acquaintances to the purpose around which our community is centered. Nearly everyone here celebrates "Post" (literally, "Fasting") for the

forty days by adhering to strict fasting guidelines, but very few could tell you why they do this or how it in any way relates to Jesus. So we prepared a paper chain craft for families to make at the event to count down the forty days until Easter - all for the purpose of helping prepare people's hearts for the celebration of Jesus's resurrection, rather than merely following dietary rules for some unknown reasons. A few of the chains had Bible passages to read and discuss; some had specific people to pray for that day; some suggested a few activities to help the community or someone around them. We were encouraged by how many children at the event wanted to make the craft and how many paper chains we saw go home that evening. But even more encouraging are the few conversations we've had with people afterward, where they've asked questions about some of the paper chain suggestions, demonstrating that they are using them and truly thinking about it. Questions such as "If Jesus is God, why is he called the 'Son of Man?'" or "Why should we pray for our enemies?"

Over the next month, please pray for our church community. Pray for our unity, our gospel orientation, and our vibrant love. Also pray for our surrounding community, that they would be drawn into the uniqueness of the gospel-centered church, and that God would draw them into community with himself. Specifically pray for our "Walk Through Holy Week" event coming up the Saturday before Palm Sunday, where we are going to invite the community back to participate in hands-on activities aimed at making the events of Holy Week come alive. Pray that this would help prepare the hearts in our community for Easter in a brand new way this year - that they would truly be moved by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.



We were shocked by how many people attended the event - about 75! But

within the first 15 minutes, both of our griddles shorted out. Thankfully, our friend Mark knew how to fix them!

PLEASE PRAY...

We're trying to keep our email newsletters shorter. So below you'll find quick bullet points for prayer, but we'd love for you [to read more details about each prayer request](#).

- upcoming Walk Through Holy Week event
 - church unity and the trials that our church members are experiencing
 - Atticus's continual battle with ear infections
-



Top Left: We are so grateful for the change in weather. It's getting so much warmer! Also, at 15 months, Denton is finally walking and destroying everything within reach!

Top Right: The kids had ski lessons this year. Though she started with tears,

Elin ended up getting third place for the fastest skier on their last day!

Bottom Left: We have a book study for young moms in our church that meets every other Tuesday. We took a break to go get coffee this past week and Catalina really enjoyed getting to hear their testimonies.

Bottom Right: We're so grateful for our covenant church, where everyone accepts and helps with the children. Here, Derek Ebbers rocked Denton to sleep before service began and was kind enough to continue holding him even though he had to lead part of the service.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

3/30/19 - [March Prayer Requests](#) by Catalina

3/24/19 - [Spiritual Warfare](#) by Catalina and Derek

3/13/19 - [The Impossibility of Creating Your Own Purpose](#) by Derek

3/1/19 - [Mummy Breath: Objective Permanence and Death](#) by Derek

Check us out on Facebook! We post on Catalina's ["From Dacula to Transylvania"](#) album so that you can stay up to date with us. You can also follow [our photos on instagram](#) or check out our [video archive](#). But best, of all, you should let us know if you want to join our secret Facebook Group to get more updates!

Support Account Reminders:

- Our teammates, Derek and Shannon Ebbers, have been faithful missionaries to Romania for 11 years now and are seriously the best team leaders God could have possibly provided for us! As is normal for all long-term missionaries, they have recently lost some financial supporters and are looking to make up the loss in their monthly account. Supporting our teammates is a direct way you can be in support of us; if they have to go back to the States for support-raising, that affects the team dynamic and ministry. We would love for you to consider joining our support team by literally supporting our whole team! If you would be interested in reaching out to them, supporting them, or

passing their names along to individuals and churches who may have interest in what we're doing in Romania, we would greatly appreciate this. You can [find them here](#).

- If you're interested in one-time giving and would rather support projects, we have a project account for the Romanian church which goes towards things like the youth program, elder trainings, etc. The account is **#94978** for the Romania church plant.



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