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Mostly about the building...

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our first newsletter of the year!

It's been a while coming, but January and February have been extremely busy for us. It's when we finalise the accounts for the previous year. And when that's done, we have a number of "extremely-difficult-to-get-right" financial forms that have to be submitted through online portals using electronic signatures. Sometimes it works, but most of the time it doesn't. So, we spend days, sometimes weeks, trying to get the system to work. On the lighter side, we have to write a couple of written reports, in Polish, that have to be sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It's always a HUGE relief when it's done!

Cathy's the one who does all this. In the meantime, I've been getting on with building the Prayer House...

One thing I've learnt is that it's a lot easier to get contractors to work in the winter than in the summer. They have more time and are under less pressure. I've also found it's good to organise contracts in the winter for works that need to be carried out later in the year. Most contractors who are any good are booked up way in advance, and for something that is made to measure, like a wooden floor for example, the lead time is a lot shorter in the winter than it is in the summer. That's the main reason why I've been busy.

Here's a summary of what's been happening in the building over that past couple of months.

WALL AND CEILINGS

It's been a bit like running a marathon (not that I've actually run a marathon!), but after several months I've finished painting the walls and ceilings. So now all the rooms in the Prayer House have been painted.

DANCE FLOOR IN THE PRAYER ROOM

I don't know how many of you know, but a couple of years ago someone suggested we should have a dance floor in the Prayer Room. At the time I thought it was a crazy idea – totally unnecessary. But then I heard the Father whisper and say, "put one in" (!). So, of course we changed our plans and arranged to put one in.

A dance floor is simply a sprung floor. It's a permanent floor that is "springy". So, when you dance or jump up and down, the floor will move slightly to take your weight. You don't notice anything when you walk on it, but it's good for the knees when you jump, and it's safer if you fall.

I was looking to buy a professional dance floor, but the cost was enormous. So instead of buying one, I decided to make one. I imported special "foam blocks for dance floors" from the United States and had a Polish Company make the big wooden panels that we needed. The dance floor was installed in the Prayer Room last month and… well… you'll need to come and try it out!

OAK FLOOR

On top of the dance floor, there'll be a final layer of engineered wood that will be glued on top. It won't alter the springiness of the dance floor but will actually strengthen it. The engineered wood will have a natural oak finish, so that's what you'll see and walk on. We ordered the oak floor in January and it should be installed soon.

DOMESTIC WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

This has been one of the most difficult things to do! I tried many times last year and it NEVER worked out. There was ALWAYS a problem – it just got blocked again and again – every time over a period of 8 months. It was SOOO frustrating!

What I didn't know at the time was that I needed to get planning permission (!!!).

Looking back, if I had put in the wastewater treatment plant without getting planning permission, I would have been in BIG trouble, for sure. Perhaps God looks after us by NOT giving us what we ask for…

In January I decided to look for a different supplier and I found one in Warsaw. He told me about the need to get planning permission. Then he gave me advice, created a design for me and helped me generate a pack of information to give to the Chief Architect in the Planning Office – all without charge. We could feel the favour of the Lord all over this thing. Then I submitted the application and now we're waiting for the result…

The wastewater treatment plant is a very big deal indeed.

In our little village we don't have a sewerage system. All the houses have a cesspit that has to be emptied when it's full. We empty ours every month and we're just 2 people! So, even if we put in a large cesspit for the Prayer House, with 8 or 10 people living there plus a large number of visitors every day, we would probably need to empty it every 3-4 days!

The domestic wastewater treatment plant we've chosen is made in Sweden. It's zero maintenance, has no moving parts, it doesn't need any chemicals, and only needs to be emptied once a year.

Wow… as I'm writing this, I've just been interrupted by a telephone call from the Planning Office to say that my application has just got approved! That's fantastic - thank you Father!!!

TILES IN THE BASEMENT AND UPSTAIRS BATHROOMS

Our tiler is back. He's been busy laying tiles in the basement and has just started on the upstairs bathrooms. It's amazing how tiles can transform a room. Bare concrete floors and ugly walls are suddenly transformed into something beautiful.

It's difficult to make a dry subject like a Building Update sound interesting. So, congratulations if you've made it this far! More interesting for some will be the photos, which you can see if you click on the link at the bottom of the update.

AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU

Finally, here's a brief word on Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Auschwitz-Birkenau continues to enjoy its Sabbath rest. Although the museum opened its doors on 1st February, Coronavirus and everything that goes with it have kept the people away. The car parks are mostly empty and when I last looked, I only saw 2 cars in the car park.

So, the doors are open, but only half open. You're not allowed to wander in and out of Auschwitz-Birkenau as you used to. Instead, you have to get a ticket from the main museum and then they will let you in. Thankfully, it's still possible to go in as an individual and not be forced to be part of a group.



Thank you for journeying with us so far. I know that up to now it's mostly been about the building work, but we are already moving into a season when God is starting to do HIS building work.

He's building a spiritual house for the sons of God. I keep hearing over and over, **"Behold I make all things new"**. God is doing something completely new here. It is not like the old, what we've known before, or what we've walked in before. I think Isaiah sums it up pretty well:

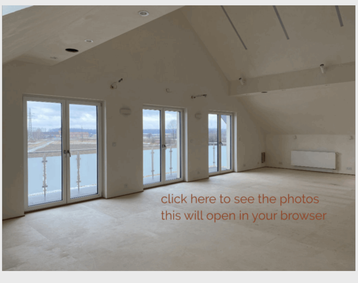
"Forget the former things! Do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! NOW it springs up; do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:18-19)

We often read this verse in the light of something bad that's happened in the past. But for us, it's not just the bad things we need to forget and leave behind, but the good things! God has given us so much that was good and right in the past, but now we're entering a new time. The struggle we face is to move where God is moving, because it's outside our current understanding and comfort zone. It's all too easy to stay in the familiar.

So, for all of us, let's cross over into the promised land. It's a new season!

Here is a small portfolio of photos of the work that's been done in the Prayer House this year. We hope you enjoy the photos. Please "click" on the picture below.

With love and blessings,
Mark & Cathy



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