

# Embracing New Experiences

## LOVING & LEARNING IN A NEW COMMUNITY



*daily walk to work*



*confirmation retreat*



*Lillaáired, Hungary*

### A CONNECTED WORLD

Although being in a new place comes with challenges like navigating a new culture and language, my experience in Hungary has been overwhelmingly positive. Amazing people have welcomed me into their lives and offered caring support. My site mentor here in Nyíregyháza, Erzsébet, along with the members and staff of Kertvárosi Ágostai Hitvallású Evangélikus Egyház, the students and teachers at Túróczy Zoltán Primary School and Kossuth Lajos High School, and the clients and employees at my various site placements continue to bring such joy to each day. At the same time, I remain blessed by the steadfast care and love shared by my incredible host community back in Palestine. Twice a week I attend Arabic classes with the same people I was working with while I was living there and I communicate regularly with my host mom, Suzan. I feel grateful to remain connected to these remarkable and resilient people who continue to hold such a special place in my heart. And, of course, I depend on my family and friends back in the US who are always willing to listen to my stories and offer wisdom and encouragement. Not to mention my extended support system across the ELCA – my cohort members and coordinators here in Central Europe and Jerusalem & the West Bank, the full global YAGM cohort, and the ELCA staff who inspire me to embrace this year and all it brings. I am surrounded by a global community of diverse people who share gifts of true care and compassion, filling me and others with hope and love. I find my life so enriched by all the people I have crossed paths with this year, and I am so grateful for the unique ways that my story has been forever shaped by each person.

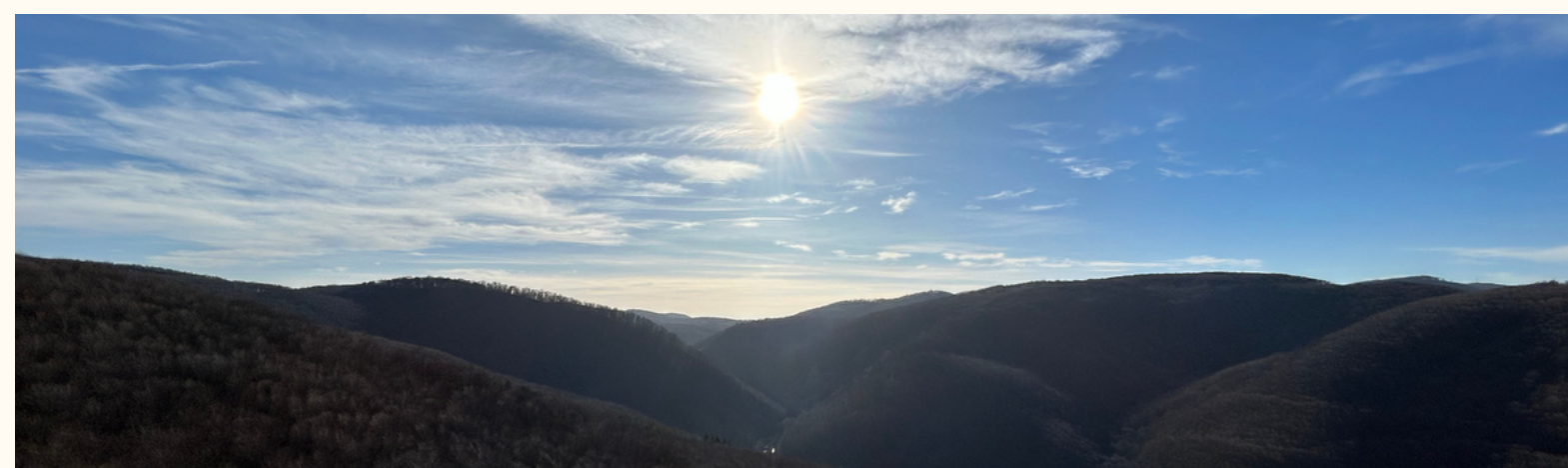
## Learning Hungarian

I have enjoyed the challenge of learning Hungarian. It has taken a lot of effort and I still have so much more to learn, but I have found so much joy in starting to understand and communicate more. Here are some of my most used words and phrases in Hungarian.

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>szia</b> - hello/goodbye                  | <b>igen</b> - yes           |
| <b>tökéletes</b> - perfect                   | <b>nem</b> - no             |
| <b>értem</b> - I understand                  | <b>iskola</b> - school      |
| <b>nem tudom</b> - I don't know              | <b>kérek</b> - I would like |
| <b>semmi baj</b> - no problem                | <b>tej</b> - milk           |
| <b>hogy vagy</b> - how are you               | <b>kávé</b> - coffee        |
| <b>jó napot kívánok</b> - good afternoon     |                             |
| <b>köszönöm szépen</b> - thank you very much |                             |

## LENTEN RETREAT

In February, the Central Europe cohort gathered in the Hungarian mountainside for a week of reflection, relaxation, and restoration. We stayed at Fehérkőlápa Turistaház in Lillafüred, Hungary where we experienced the beautiful landscapes of the Bükk Mountains. Our days were spent hiking and pausing to center ourselves in nature. During our retreat, we had the privilege of getting to know our hosts – Andrea and István. They were the epitome of warm hospitality – and patience. What started with me struggling to ask Istvan for a cup of coffee in Hungarian evolved into the two of us excitedly engaging in impromptu ‘English/Hungarian’ lessons each morning. I am happy to report that by the end of the retreat, my coffee ordering skills improved significantly. István and Andrea both demonstrated such generosity in the ways that they welcomed and cared for our group – from cooking delicious Hungarian meals to playing the guitar. The time we spent together, sharing meals and stories as we centered ourselves to begin the second half of our YAGM year was life-giving.



## GRACE & GRATITUDE

Admitting that I need help has never been a strength of mine. I worry about being a burden. I fear not only making mistakes, but also admitting my mistakes when they happen. Asking for help can seem like an impossible task. That being said, I have made my fair share of blunders over these last few months – things like booking train tickets for the wrong day, dropping and shattering my favorite (and only) coffee mug, losing my apartment key card, accidentally swearing in Hungarian, and getting lost on my run. These adventures amongst many other mishaps led me to wonder if I was really cut out for this whole global mission thing. How could I accompany others when all I did was mess things up and need their help? I found myself focused on the things that went wrong, the ways that I had not succeeded, and the areas in which I had failed. However, with the help of my host community and my global network of support, I have shifted my perspective and learned to embrace these mistakes for what they are – a reminder of my flawed humanness, a moment of humility, and an opportunity for growth. Through it all, I have been continually met with grace and patience. My community continues to remind me of God’s grace in the ways that they show up for me and one another, offering help and support in whatever way they can. God’s grace is at work in the beauty and the mess.

## Financial Support

If you feel called to financially support the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and its educational ministries (including the Evangelical Lutheran School of Beit Sahour), click [here](#).

If you feel called to financially support organizations that bring aid to civilians in Gaza, click [here](#).

If you feel called to financially support my year as a Young Adult in Global Mission, click [here](#).

# Joyful Moments

## EVANGÉLIKUS ÓVODA (KINDERGARTEN)

Learning together! The kindergarteners are always excited to help me with my Hungarian. Each time they learn a new word in English, they teach me the same word in Hungarian.

## TÚRÓCZY ZOLTÁN BILINGUAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

For the last few weeks, over 30 students in fifth through eighth grade prepared for an English Presentation Competition. Last week, I was honored to be one of the judges for this competition. The students put so much thought and effort into their presentations. It was incredible to see their final products.

## KOSSUTH LAJOS GIMNÁZIUM (HIGH SCHOOL)

Most of my time at the high school is spent leading discussions in English classes. I have loved getting to know the students more deeply as I learn about their families, interests, and dreams, as well as their perspectives on a variety of topics. Between classes, I practice my Hungarian with the teachers over a cup of coffee.

## EVANGÉLIKUS ROMA SZAKKOLLÉGIUM (COLLEGE)

The Roma students have shown such care in helping me and Braden settle in – showing us their favorite places to go, inviting us to events, and helping us learn their language. One of the student groups focuses on cooking and baking. I made American pancakes with the students one week, and the next they shared Hungarian pancakes 'palacsinta' with me.

## KONFIRMÁCIÓS & IFI (YOUTH GROUP)

In early March, Braden and I joined a confirmation class on a day trip around eastern Hungary to learn more about the history of Christianity and Lutheranism in Hungary. During this trip, we saw the first bible ever printed in Hungarian!

## ÉLIM EVANGÉLIKUS SZERETETOTTHON

I love the opportunity to work with the same clients each week. We play games, sing songs, and do crafts together. For International Women's Day, some clients gave me artwork they had made as a gift. I could feel the love in their creativity and care.

## OLTALOM - VARRODA

Every Friday, I meet with a group of women to work on sewing projects for ministries connected to the church. Ildikó, who runs the sewing room, has been patiently teaching me to sew. I had no experience with sewing before arriving to Hungary. Now, I have completed multiple tote bags and a backpack! Ildikó and the other women have been so welcoming. They generously offer treats and coffee to warmly welcome me into their space.



## LEARNING FROM THE BEST

Erzsébet is helping me expand my cooking repertoire, teaching me new Hungarian recipes each week. She has much patience with me as I learn new techniques and practice my Hungarian. Cooking and baking together is a delight! We have made:

- pogácsa (similar to a scone)
- nokedli (handmade pasta)
- krumpli paprikás (cooked potatoes with paprika)
- leves (soup)
- sütemény (desserts)
- ... and more!

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