

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please partner with us in prayer (see prayer needs below). Please also participate with your financial contributions, in the following ways (see methods through which to contribute below right):



- **Become a monthly financial partner.** Earlier this year, due to the changing financial situations of several financial supporters, I lost about 1/3 of my regular, monthly support, or about \$1,200 monthly. This goes not only toward my personal support, but also helps cover various ministry expenses: camps; spiritual magazine for youth; supplies for youth meetings; etc.
- **Make a one-time donation.** We are hoping to raise \$20,000 for the purchase of a late model, used van for our ministry with young people.

## HOUSE UPDATE

After delays because of an almost two month Coronavirus lockdown in Croatia, I *finally* moved into my house in June! I then spent the rest of the summer with three truckloads of stone; about 40 truckloads of soil; and several young friends; building stone walls around the yard, and then building up the yard. Much thanks to many of you who helped with this project. My new address is in the side bar at right. Your guest room is ready for your visit. Come see me! Pray that this home will be a place of personal rest and refuge, as well as ministry. A place where people feel the presence of God's Spirit and are drawn to Jesus.



## PRAYER POINTS — 2021

- Pray for the fellowship of Jesus and counsel of the Holy Spirit; the life God wants me to live, and the work He wants me to do; that it is done in and through me.
- Pray for grace, mercy, peace, and joy.
- Pray for friendships and close fellowship for me here.
- Pray that this generation of young people in Croatia are raised up to follow Jesus.
- Pray for confidence and increased leadership ability as I lead these ministries.
- Pray for my work and interactions with Mateja and Igor; that we will grow strong personal and working relationships.
- Pray for favor toward us and our ministry from government offices and officials.
- Pray for new financial support, to replace what was lost in 2020.
- Pray for continued support for Mateja and Igor, as well as for the funding needed for our camps, youth choir, youth magazine, and other ministry initiatives.
- Pray for normalcy, so we can have camps, youth choir, and other group activities.
- Praise and thank God along with me for my house. Pray that it will be a place of both refuge and ministry, for me and for others. Pray that the house will be a place where people feel the presence of God's Spirit and are drawn to Jesus.
- Pray for unity and cooperation, instead of competition and jealousy, among the various churches and mission groups in Croatia. Pray for healthy relationships.
- Pray God's protection over the missionaries and other servants of God in Croatia. Pray for health and strength in our bodies, hearts, souls, marriages, and homes; and for the protection of relationships.
- Pray for a greater hunger and thirst for Jesus in Croatia.
- Pray for natural, everyday opportunities to share Jesus with people.
- Pray that in all things the Kingdom of God is advanced in this place.

## TO SEND DONATIONS

On the Venmo mobile app, find "Pond Springs Church" as the payee. Note that it is for the Steve Taliaferro Croatia Mission.

To donate online, click "give" on my website (address below).

Make physical checks payable to *Pond Springs Church* and mail to this address:

Pond Springs Church  
Steve Taliaferro Croatia Mission  
c/o Jan Swinney  
621 S Baker Cr  
Leander, TX 78641

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# Steve Taliaferro

## 2020 Ministry Report



Zagreb, Croatia

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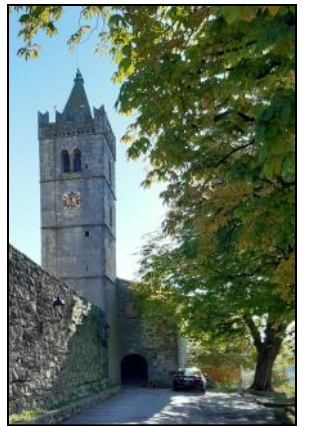
## GREETINGS FROM CROATIA

Dear Friends,

I hope you will enjoy reading here about my life and work in Croatia during 2020. You can also always catch up with what is happening with me and my work on my personal website at [steveincroatia.com](http://steveincroatia.com). One highlight of this year has been the development of new personal discipling relationships with several young men. Read on for other important happenings.



Blessings  
to you,



## INTERESTING CROATIA FACTS

- The town of **Hum** (photo above) was first mentioned in the year 1102 A.D. The self-described "smallest city in the world" has a population of 30 and is 100 meters long and 30 meters wide.
- One of the oldest cities in the world, the city of **Vinkovci** has been inhabited ever since around the year 6200 B.C.
- Evangelical Christians make up **less than 1/2 of 1%** of the population of Croatia.

## HOPE THROUGH A TOUGH YEAR

It has been an unusual year, hard in many ways. Early in the year my father passed from this life. I have felt fairly intense grief after this. Then we had a powerful earthquake in Zagreb that literally shook me awake and caused considerable damage. Then came the Coronavirus pandemic, with its related challenges and restrictions. Because of this, we had to cancel camps in the summer, as well as other ministry activities with young people, that we had begun just this year. There have been plenty of reasons to be discouraged. But we have seen that, in the absence of usual group activities, God has brought to us individual young people who need him. As we make ourselves available to them, individually and personally, God is using us to minister to them, and he is meeting them in amazing ways. The two scriptures below have become personal themes for me through these strange times.

*Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:  
Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed,  
for his compassions never fail.  
Lamentations 3:21-22*

*We wait in hope for the Lord;  
he is our help and our shield.  
Psalm 33:20*



## NEŠTO VIŠE (SOMETHING MORE)

This is the name of the Croatian non-profit organization we registered this year for our ministry. This allows several benefits, such as: It allows us to acquire official permits to use public spaces for group gatherings, or to rent city facilities. It also gives us greater credibility with the public and with parents. Our motto is: *Together through life, created for more.* We want to come alongside young people through their lifetimes, and we want to instill in them the belief that we are created for more than just right here, right now.

**Vision:** To help young people and their families discover and experience the purpose, love, direction, and potential God intends for their lives.

**Mission:** We do this by providing meaningful experiences and activities, such as youth meetings, camps, music programs, mentoring relationships, and opportunities to enrich knowledge and friendship.

View a video we created this fall at this link: [bit.ly/something-more-2020-long](https://bit.ly/something-more-2020-long)  
See our website at this address: (Croatian only for now): [www.nestovise.hr](http://www.nestovise.hr)



## SUMMER EXCURSIONS

Because of the Coronavirus pandemic, we were not able to have camps as usual this summer. Instead, we took the teens on a series of excursions throughout the summer, in small groups. The highlight of these excursions was a trip to the island of Krk (photos left), where we swam in the sea and had Bible lessons out by the water at sunset. Krk is usually where we take all the American and Croatian teens together after Champs Camp is over, so the teens enjoyed this. We slept overnight in a youth hostel with no air conditioning, and it was very hot. So sleep was hard to come by, but this allowed for some great informal conversations with the teens late into the night. Out of these experiences developed mentoring and discipling relationships with individual teenagers. We did not have to seek out these relationships. It was as if God was serving them up to us, as you serve someone a meal. This was a reminder to me that our ministry programs are valuable, but it is these individual relationships that come out of those programs that are the most important. Most of these teens are eager to spend time with us and learn to follow Jesus. Please pray especially for the discipling relationships between me and Leon, David, Maks, and Jan.

## YOUTH MEETINGS

Part of our regular work with young people is weekly meetings. We worship, have a Discovery Bible Study, and enjoy snacks and fellowship. We rented an affordable city facility for Saturday activities. We also started our youth choir. Plans were to use the space all day, with a Bible workshop for children; youth choir rehearsal; and worship evening with teens. Because of increasing Coronavirus infections, we had to suspend these activities after just one choir rehearsal. We are now doing weekly meetings on Zoom (all together, and boys and girls separately). We hope we can continue in-person activities in the spring.



## LEON, DAVID

**Leon** (photo left) is 15. He came to us through Champs Camp. He was at first a camper, and then he was a teen volunteer. As a camper he was often a problem. After one extra year as a camper, to see how he would mature, we let him be a volunteer. He did well. Leon is a kid who needs encouraging people investing in his life. He is responding to this kind of attention given to him and

he participates in almost everything we do. Leon meets with me often for mentoring and Bible study. **David** (not shown) is 18. I have known him since he was a young boy. Up until now it was not apparent that he was really interested in spiritual matters. Even now, he says he wants to be together with God, but that he has a good life and so doesn't really see his need for Jesus. He has recently agreed to meet with me regularly, to discuss life and study the Bible. Pray for the hearts of these young men to further open to Jesus.



## WINTER CAMP

Our only usual camp experience this year was our winter camp, which we held during the school break in January. Little did we know that we would not be back together again for summer camps. For winter camp, we met with about 15 teenagers for two days in the small town of Samobor, just west of Zagreb. We enjoyed worship, Bible study, games (photo right), and fellowship. We also prepared to serve children the next day in a one-day version of our Champs Camp, which is usually held in the summer. For this camp we paired each teenager with one or two of the children, to be their "big brother" or "big sister" for the day. The children enjoyed usual camp activities: Bible lesson, crafts, games, snacks, and lots of fun. It was a great time for everyone. The teens did a great job in their roles. This was also a great way of building relationships with the teens. My co-worker, Mateja, made an especially good connection with one young lady, Paula. She is one of the teens that has come up through Champs Camp, and is now a teen volunteer. In a quiet and unguarded moment, Paula confided in Mateja about some very difficult circumstances in her life. God used Mateja to encourage her and reassure her of God's love and care for her.



I think he will be a vital part of the choir when we are able to restart it. I recently invited Jan to join Maks and I for Bible study each week, and he accepted. I now meet with both of them an hour before church starts on Sundays. After we met at McDonald's recently, I took Jan home and he wanted to talk more. Pray for an increasing hunger for Jesus in these two.

## MAKS, JAN

**Maks** (photo left) and **Jan** (not shown) are both 14. Their parents are part of our church congregation, so I have known them for several years. I also taught them a couple of years ago in our church Sunday school. At that time they didn't seem very interested in the things of God. **Maks** has participated in most all of our activities this year, whether in person or online. He is developing into a fine young man and is fun and a joy to be around. He is also developing a hunger for Jesus. When I asked him if he would like to meet with me each week for mentoring and Bible study, he was eager to accept. He is responsive when we talk and study together. For his age, he has good insight into the scriptures. **Jan** is also a fine young man who needs some input from encouraging adults in his life. Jan has been involved in some of our activities, and seems especially interested in our youth choir. He plays guitar, and was with us playing guitar at the youth choir rehearsal we had before the Coronavirus temporarily shut that down.