



# TALPOS TODAY

NEWS OF TIMOTEI & SALLY (SEBO) IOVAN  
MISSIONARIES IN ROMANIA WITH HIM

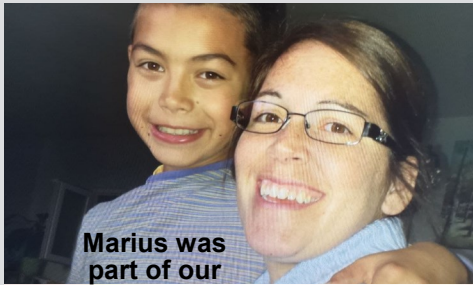


Dear friends and family,

WINTER/SPRING 2021

Hello from Romania! “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1). Read the verse again replacing the word *our* with *my* and putting the emphasis on *is*. “God *IS MY* refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” This verse and the emphasis on the present (*is*) and the personal (*my*) have been an encouragement and help to us in our ministry over the years—and even more so since my cancer diagnosis. In the midst of uncertainties, God continues to be our help in trouble. Praise His name!

We are so thankful God heard and answered prayer. After about five months of being in America for my medical needs, Tim and I were able to return to Romania. However, the week or so before we left the States, we had to navigate through several difficult things.



Marius was part of our family for 16 years.

The first was the departure of Marius from our home. Marius decided he was not interested in our house rules, did not want to continue his schooling, and wanted to be “free” to do his own thing. When we found out, Tim and I talked to Marius via video chat for several hours, but he was adamant in his decision. So with sad hearts we said goodbye. Because Marius was seventeen years old, he was taken back to his mother. It was very difficult to see him go. Marius has been part of our House of Hope family since he was eighteen months old and had been living with us for a little over a year. Tim did send Marius the passage of Scripture about the prodigal son and told him if he ever gets to that point of repentance to reach out to us. Sadly, that has not yet happened. We are praying for God to intervene and ask you to pray as well.



The second was regarding my health. My surgeon decided that before our return to Romania, a CT scan would be the best thing to monitor the effectiveness of my chemotherapy. I went for this test two days after Marius left and about a week before we were scheduled to fly out. Unfortunately, that scan showed some abnormal results.



Prepping for a PET scan

The next day I was sent for a PET scan which also showed an additional “suspicious” area. The next step was an MRI to clarify things. At this point we were very concerned because the doctor said we might need to consider staying in America for radiation treatment. But nothing would be decided until I had my MRI. Four days before we were to leave, I had my MRI. That morning as I was in the MRI scanner, I clearly heard the Lord speak to me: “Trust in me!” He repeated this three times, and I knew everything was going to be okay. On the drive home from the scan, I received my results which showed there was nothing in the suspicious area. The doctor gave us the green light to return to Romania as planned.



Yeah for my last treatment!

The third situation was regarding my parents’ health. The day after my MRI, my mother was hospitalized with sepsis, a complication from gallstones. Her condition was so serious, she was admitted directly to the ICU. During her time there, her fever persisted, and she

developed a severe cough. She requested a COVID test that came back positive. My father then also tested positive, though he did not need to be hospitalized. Sadly, because of this diagnosis, we were not able to say our goodbyes face to face with my mother. We stood outside on the hospital sidewalk, trying to get a glance of her when the nurses wheeled her to the window. As you can imagine, it was a tearful departure from America because we were not sure what the future would hold. But thank the Lord both my parents recovered and are feeling much better.



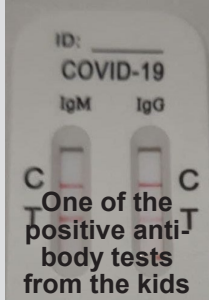
My parents are both feeling better



Saying goodbye to my mom, COVID style



The fourth situation was also connected with COVID but with our Romania family. Shortly before our return to Romania, all our kids and Tim's immediate family were exposed to the virus. We were concerned about the symptoms they would develop and if they would still be infectious when we arrived. Thankfully, they all had minimal symptoms and passed the infectious stage before our return. Later through home testing it was confirmed they all had had COVID.



One of the positive anti-body tests from the kids



Masked up for church



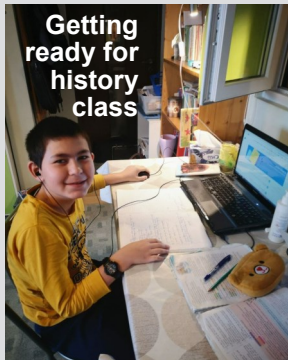
Though it was a challenging time, I can tell you that through it all, God was our refuge and strength, and we had a peace only God is able to give.

Romania is currently in a state of alert due to the number of COVID cases. ICUs are full, and many are suffering from this virus. Social distancing is required, and facemasks are mandatory in indoor and outdoor public and commercial spaces, as well as public transport and at work. Also it is forbidden to organize most public events and gatherings apart from church services. These restrictions have required us to put a hold on any gatherings with the children and youth at the Fellowship

Center. We have started English classes online and are thrilled to be able to "reconnect" with some of our students, even if it is remotely. We are praying we will have an eternal impact on the children we teach.

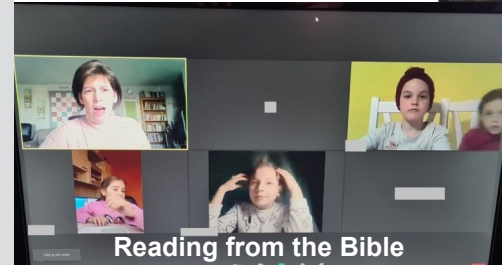


I was able to share the Easter story with our English students



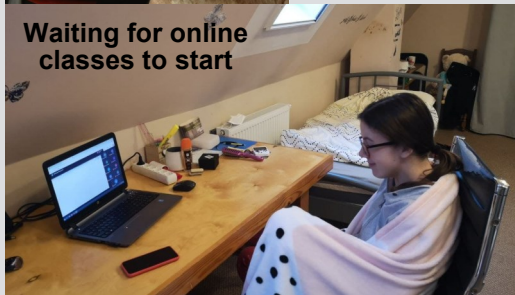
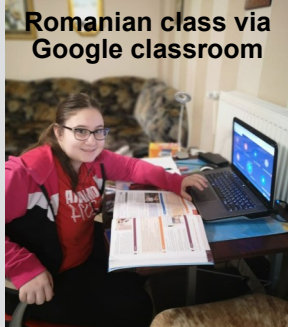
Due to the increased COVID infections, our kids have been switched back to online learning. It is not clear if they will return physically to school this year. We are so proud of the way they have dealt with all the ups and downs of these past few months. How blessed we are to have these children as part of our family.

Cristi and Raul are both working full-time and living in our transitional home, just one house down from the Fellowship Center. This allows them to be somewhat independent with supervision and still be part of our family. According to the humanitarian and social research center *INSAMER*, children who age out of orphan care often struggle with transitioning. Some little-known facts about these kids are: 10 percent commit suicide, 40 percent become homeless, 70 percent commit a crime, and 60 percent are forced into prostitution. We hope and pray these boys will not become a statistic. Honestly, they may never be able to be on their own 100 percent. But we are thankful they are accepting our direction and advice in their lives and desire to serve God. We want to help them reach the potential God has for them as adults.



LUKE 23:53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a **tomb** cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid.

LUCA 23:53 L-a dat jos de pe cruce, L-a înfășurat într-o pânză de in și L-a pus într-un mormânt nou, săpat în piatră, în care nu mai fusese pus nimeni.

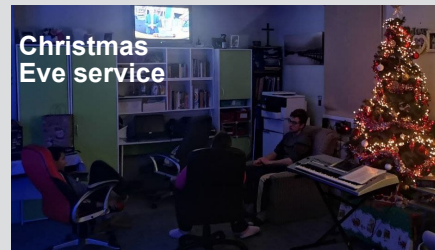




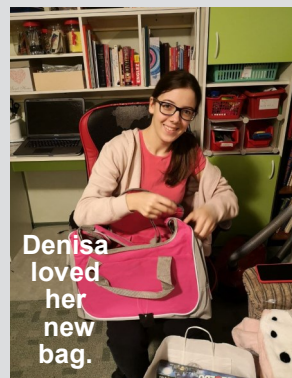


On the way home

God graciously allowed us to make it home right before Christmas. Since we were in quarantine during the holidays, we attended all the Christmas and New Year's services virtually—but we loved worshipping together as a family. The kids also enjoyed their Christmas gifts. Thank you to Pastor Alan Walter and the Lebanon God's Missionary Church family for their generosity again this year. It was greatly appreciated!



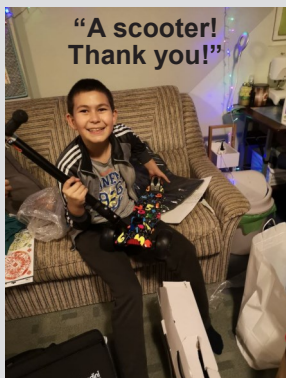
Christmas Eve service



Denisa loved her new bag.



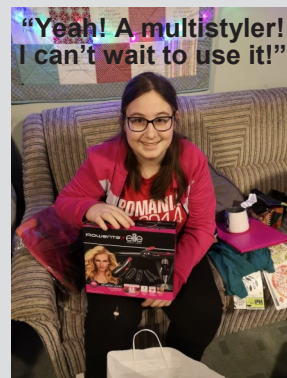
Cristi was so happy with his gifts.



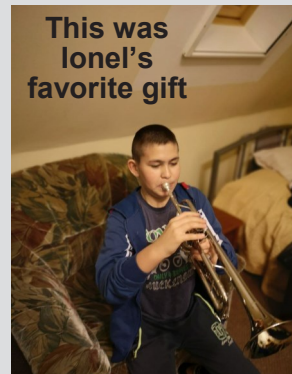
"A scooter! Thank you!"



Raul got just what he wanted—books.



"Yeah! A multistyle! I can't wait to use it!"



This was lonel's favorite gift



Sledding



Being pulled (slowly) through the village



Snow!

We were also blessed with some beautiful winter weather. The kids were thrilled with the most snow we have had in several years and they took advantage of the opportunity to enjoy it.

Lord willing, we will back in the States the end of May for about three weeks for my medical follow-ups. Your prayers would be appreciated that our travels will be uneventful and that all my tests will come back clear.

Thank you so much for your ongoing prayers and support, especially since my cancer diagnosis. You have helped us carry this burden by providing encouragement, praying, supporting, and loving us through the deepest valley we have ever faced so far. These past ten months were the most difficult time in our lives, but God brought us through and blessed us in unmeasurable ways. We cannot praise Him enough.

We pray that "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn His face toward you and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

In His Service,

*Tim, Sally, & the kids*



I received a beautiful bouquet of flowers to celebrate my last treatment.