

Traveling with the Funck's 5/20/22

Greetings from 2 extremely tired people!

We are at the Helvetia Hotel near downtown Munich!

Yesterday afternoon our daughter Stephanie picked us up, took us to her house for supper (her husband Greg cooked), and then dropped us off at Dulles Airport for a 10:20 p.m. flight to Munich. We're guessing they decided we were old people because they pulled us aside and took us through a gate next to the scanner and we didn't have to be scanned.

The flight was completely full. We were on the runway and then were told to go elsewhere - the pilot said he didn't know what was going on. But eventually we flew away, for a 7 1/2 hour flight. We had to wear masks to board the flight and all the time (except for eating) on the flight and until we had left the plane.

At midnight they served supper - a vegetarian pasta, salad, roll, brownie. They had to stop serving because of the turbulence. We had turbulence several times on the way. Neither of us slept - between sitting up in a small seat and crying babies and other noises and turbulence, we didn't sleep. We flew over Paris but didn't see it. At 4:45 a.m. they served breakfast, a container of yogurt and a sweet piece of bread.

We arrived in Munich on time, despite the late start. Then it was up and down long escalators (at least 3-4 stories each!), through customs, waited for at least a half hour for the bag Steve checked.

Then we tried to find the subway. We had to backtrack quite a long way to get to the ticket machine, then one wouldn't work, they wouldn't accept our VISA credit cards (we have 2 different ones), find an ATM to get some euros, wait in line for a while to get tickets (which no one checked).

We made it to the subway. It was a 45 minute ride with numerous stops to the train station. We passed many individual houses with red tile roofs.

We came out the wrong door at the train station, had to rewalk our steps, until we found this hotel 2 blocks away. Our room is 202 but the first floor is actually our second story, so we are on the third floor over the reception (ground floor). Our windows are open (no screens) so lots of street noise (people talking, trams going by, traffic). It was at least 90 degrees so I was too hot in my jeans. I put on a skirt and sandals, instead of sneakers (I wear the heaviest shoes so they don't add weight to my suitcase).

We wanted to eat German food (hey, we're in Germany!), but turned right, into the Turkish section of Munich. We walked several blocks, finally found a German restaurant but it didn't open for another hour. It was 4 p.m. and we still hadn't had lunch. They did point us in the right direction - the next block was one German restaurant after another.

We chose one which had seating on the sidewalk so we could people watch as we ate. We split a Caprese salad (though it only had one basil leaf), a Bratwurst skillet (2 kinds of wursts, a potato salad, bacon, sauerkraut, bacon, with a sweet mustard), and beer, all was delicious.

There are bicycles everywhere, just parked along the street, no locks. We saw the motorized scooters which we have in Baltimore (even Lime, which is popular in Baltimore), a three wheel UPS bicycle with a large box on the back, trams, no large trucks. No one jay walks, all stand at the corner until the light turns green. There were fewer people smoking than I expected to see.

We are 6 hours ahead of you, so though it is 6:21 here, it's noon on the East coast of America. We are going to sleep early tonight!

We praise God for safe travel and for strength to walk more than 8700 steps today (3.8 miles). Please pray for good health and safety for us.

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve

5/21

Guten Tag!

Steve was asleep by 8 p.m. last night, I was in bed less than an hour later. We slept until 6:30 a.m., which is really good for us!

We went to a German bakery for breakfast, 2 blocks down the street. I had a sweet breakfast, yogurt with walnuts and honey and a butter croissant, plus orange juice. Steve had a sweet roll and coffee.

We came back to the hotel and rested a bit. Our adapter didn't work - even though it's supposed to connect our 2 prong American plug to the 220 two round plug. We got one from a store and also one from the front desk. Our laptops and phones were running out of juice!

Then we walked toward Marienplatz, the center of the city. At one point we took an escalator down to a large area under Karlsplatz, there were several stores there, then you could pick what street you wanted to take an escalator back up to - you can't walk across the streets there. We went up and walked under the Karlstor gate. Many of the buildings are very interesting to look at - there were small ships on top of one, paintings on others, figurines on the corners of others.

We went into St. Michael's Church where they were having the 11 a.m. mass. There is a statue of St. Michael killing the dragon in front. We walked on, turning down a street (all of these area are only for walkers, no cars or bikes allowed) toward Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady, Munich's most widely visible landmark, its onion domes tower more than 98 m above the city). It was built in 1466-1488, mostly destroyed during WW II, the towers survived, then rebuilt. Pope Benedict XVI was the archbishop of the Frauenkirche. We wandered around inside, it is said to hold a standing congregation of 20,000! Outside there was a metal model of the area, showing all of the buildings and streets. A man gave us directions to our next destination.

We walked past the Opera House to Residenz, Germany's largest in-city palace and former residence of Bavarian kings and rulers for 4 centuries, ending in 1918. The palace is considered to be one of Europe's most important decorative art museums. To me it didn't look like a palace, more like a large government building. But inside!!! We purchased tickets to the Treasury and the Residence. You must have a mask, similar to the KN95 to enter - fortunately they sold them at the ticket counter - we only had surgical masks.

The Treasury was interesting with thousands of years of jeweled crowns, delicately carved ivory and glass, the pearl-studded prayer book of Charlemagne's grandson Charles the Bald, reliquaries, knick-knacks. The reliquary of St. George included a dragon with a jade back.

Then we went in the Residenz Museum, I noticed that we could have audio tours for free, so we could hear more about each room. The opulent lifestyle of Bavaria's late, great royal family, the Wittelsbachs, the longest continuously ruling family in European history, is on display here. The Antiquarium is 220' long - it's the oldest room in the Residenz, built around 1550. It's a festival hall which can hold two hundred dignitaries for dinner. Most of the rooms are chandeliered, decorated with ceiling paintings, stucco work, tapestries, parquet floors, and period furniture. Most of the buildings were severely damaged in World War II and weren't reopened until 2003. Many of the rooms were very ornate. In the Music Room were 3 harps (one was smaller that could be carried) and a giraffe piano. The State Bedroom, though furnished with a canopy bed, was just for show - the king and queen slept upstairs in private rooms. There are about 70 rooms on the tour, and we went through most of them!

By then it was after 4 p.m. and we haven't had lunch yet. Steve figured out the route to Hofbrauhaus and we went to the German beer garden. It was the Wittelsbachs' personal brewery to make the "court brew" (Hof Brau). We passed the oompah band on our way through the hall and found picnic tables outside to use. I wouldn't be surprised if there were 1000 people in the garden and hall! It was crowded! We ordered the white asparagus plate with pork schnitzel and white potatoes and a liter of beer. (We passed many markets with white asparagus among the vegetables for sale.) It was delicious!

Then we walked to the church where we will worship in the morning. Unfortunately Steve hadn't marked our route on the GPS, so it picked a car route and we were walking. So we walked several extra blocks because we had to follow the roads, up one street, turn right, turn right at the next corner a few times. When we arrived there was a mass going on in English - several tour groups from the U.S. had requested a service, I guess.

Steve requested a walking route from there back to our hotel. When I saw the bakery where we had breakfast, I suggested that we stop there to get sweet rolls for morning. It was closing, all the leftover rolls were in a box to be thrown out. The guy let us each take a leftover roll for free, so we will have some breakfast. We returned to our hotel and are resting now.

9 p.m. We just returned from a walk to get a gelato (ice cream cone). The store was at Karlsplatz, on this side of where we went down the escalator to cross the street earlier. I got melon, he got fig caramel. We walked more than 14,800 steps today, 6.4 miles! My legs are tired!

It wasn't as warm today, maybe 75. Now it is closer to 65.

Having difficulty with photos, will try to send some soon!

We enjoyed hearing from some of you, thank you for joining us on our travels!

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Our first hotel room at Hotel Helvetia, Lynne



Steve at the sidewalk cafe



Karlsplatz Tor



Ship on top of building



St. Michael's Kirche (church)



St. Michael killing the dragon



Frauenkirche



Inside Frauenkirche, a “hall” church - the side aisles go all the way to the main roof



Model of the area. Frauenkirche is in the front, Residenz is in back corner (in front of trousers of man on right)



Crown of Kaiser Heinrichs II - notice the angels on it!



Sparkly crown, etc. of Queen Therese von Bayern
Above were in the Treasury

In the Residenz



Antiquarium - 200' long, dining hall



Giraffe piano in the Music Room



Lynne and fancy stove (to heat the room)



Dinner at the Hofbrauhaus - white asparagus pork schnitzel, white potatoes



Assam Kirche, Assam Brothers' home on left



Inside of Asasm Kirche - only 30' wide, very ornate



I thought this Risen Christ was interesting - in Assam Kirche



Better photo of Assam Kirche



Sendlungen Tor - one of old gates into the city of Munich

5/22

Guten Tag!

This morning we packed our suitcases and left them in the luggage room of the hotel. Then we walked to the Assam Church which we had seen yesterday. This time we came to the Mass. Unfortunately we sat in a pew - I have never sat in a more uncomfortable pew in my life! At the top of the back of the pew is a shelf (to put the Missal on) - it sticks over an inch over the pew so you can not lean back in the pew and it hurts your back! UGH! The church has signs "Sitzplatz" to social distance. There were about 60 in attendance.

The cardinal of Munich conducted the service and preached - a former cardinal of Munich who served at Assam Church is Pope Benedict. We don't speak German so could understand very little of what was said, but heard the names of some of the Apostles in the Bible readings. The church was built as their private chapel by the Assam brothers who owned the house next door. It is very ornate, a slice of heaven on earth if you like Baroque. It was built in 1740 to fit in the 30' between 2 houses. There is an illusion of a dome painted on the flat ceiling.

We walked back through the Sendlinger Gate. We picked up sandwiches at our favorite bakery. We picked up our suitcases and walked about 7 minutes to the Excelsior Hotel. It was too early to check in (it was noon), but they let us sit in the lobby and eat our sandwiches and relax. Finally about 2:50 we were taken to our room. We relaxed and I started organizing and sending photos to you - the wifi works here. I also did some hand laundry - I'm trying to do a bit each day since we only have 5 sets of clothes.

We took Covid tests at 3:30 so we could join the Rick Steves tour of Munich, Salzburg, and Vienna. Austria has been on my bucket list for a while, and with Covid and the war in Ukraine, we wanted someone else to be in charge of where it was safer to go. We've never taken a tour like this before - we took tours for two in China and Ethiopia and Kenya where we had a guide who spoke English and a driver who did not.

There are 15 on this tour plus a guide from Slovakia and a assistant who is learning the Rick Steves way of guiding - he's from England though because of Brexit is now a German citizen - he said that Brexit meant most people lost and a few people got rich. There are 2 couples from Florida (brothers and their wives), a mother/daughter from San Francisco, a grandmother/grandson from Wheaton IL (west of Chicago), a couple from St. Louis area, a woman from near Chicago, a couple from Seattle, and us. We are required to wear KN95 masks inside and to socially distance

First the guide talked about what is expected on a tour, a little about the tour, introductions. We received personal communication devices so the leader can talk with us as we tour. We had a short break, then met outside the hotel. After an introduction of what we were doing this afternoon, we walked across the street to the entrance to the subway. They gave us tickets for the subway and we rode 2 stops to Marienplatz. We walked around the area to gain a bit of understanding of the area - we will have a local guide show us around tomorrow. We walked into the Hofbrauhaus to see the steins which are locked on shelves, locals wait decades to be able to have their stein kept there. Eventually we started walking back towards the hotel.

On the way we had a welcome dinner at the Augustiner-Brau Munchen which is the only brewery in the area which is still locally owned and producing beer (since 1328!). Large fat pretzels were on the table rather than bread. We received a glass of wine or beer, white asparagus soup (it's illegal to sell white asparagus after June 15 - it turns bad then?), pork in gravy, salad for the pork (somewhat like a very mild sauerkraut), a dumpling, and a strudel in warm lemon sauce (but it was more like a cake than the strudel we usually see in America). All was delicious, but too much to eat!

It had been sunny all day, about 75, but was starting to sprinkle as we walked back to our hotel. Only walked over 10,600 steps today, 4.7 miles - my legs feel it!

I wrote about yesterday's adventures but suspect that some of you did not receive it. If you did not receive "Munich 5/21", please let me know and I will resend it - the wifi at the other hotel wasn't the greatest.

Enjoy hearing your comments.

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Our room at the Excelsior Hotel



Lion, symbol of Munich, in Hofbrauhaus garden



Oompah band in Hofbrauhaus



Where we ate (inside) our Welcome Dinner



Dinner - salad for pork (very mild sauerkraut), pork, dumpling



Dessert - strudel



Inside the new Town Hall courtyard



Sister cities of Munich. Munich's coat of arms is a monk with a Bible in the right hand



Old Town Hall



Statue of Virgin Mary at the center of old city Munich on Marien Platz



Maypole in Viktualienmarkt - open air market in Old City

5/23

Greetings!

It's 1:00 p.m. and we're back in our room, two very tired people!

This morning we had the hotel breakfast (included in our room fee) - all kinds of breads, some cheeses, some cold cuts, scrambled eggs, radishes, tomatoes, yogurt, other foods I didn't try, fresh squeezed orange juice, etc. All very good, but we had to rush to finish.

We met in front of the hotel at 8:45. We walked towards the oldest section of Munich, going down the escalator, under the streets, past many stores down there, up the escalator to Karlsplatz where we met our Munich guide Girt, dressed in the traditional costume. She told us of some of the history of Munich, the Old City had a wall around it with a moat, new wall built outside the old wall as the city grew. It was the capitol of an independent Bavaria until 1871. Later Munich was Hitler's headquarters, thus the springboard for Nazism.

She pointed out different sites in the old city, many of which we saw yesterday on our orientation walk and that we had seen on Saturday when we walked independently. It was cloudy, soon the rain was dripping, the wind was getting stronger, it was chilly - glad I had grabbed my jacket before we left. The rain got a bit heavier and then stopped, the sky turned blue and the sun came out and it was warmer. Our Rick Steves guides bought fresh strawberries and sweet cherries for us as we walked, then the large pretzels (more like a bread, not the thin ones we get).

We ended up at Odeonsplatz. This square was laid out by the Wittelsbach kings in the 1800s - it's next to one end of Residenz. There is an arcaded loggia with several statues, a Hall of Heroes to honor Bavarian generals. Hitler replaced the statues with Nazi statues and had huge rallies there. The boulevard heading north from Odeonsplatz is Ludwigstrasse, built by King Ludwig's grandfather - it leads to modern Munich, Germany's third-largest city. It is the capital of the state of Bavaria.

Munich's Old City was bombed during World War II, actually 80% of the old city was bombed, since this was Hitler's headquarters. The people of Munich decided to rebuild the buildings the way they were before the war rather than build new ones, as Frankfurt did. Most of the roofs were gone and the interiors destroyed, though some outside walls stood. Fruenkirche was rebuilt in 20 years because it was built in brick, very few of its stained windows survived. Many of the interior furnishings, paintings, etc., in many of the buildings had been moved to safe places before the bombing, so they were returned after the rebuilding. Some of the buildings were finally restored by 2003.

The tour ended there. Steve and I stepped into Theatinerkirche to rest for a few minutes - we had been on our feet for 3 hours at that point - and to see the church. Then we walked to Marienplatz to the New Town Hall. At noon the glockenspiel in its tower tells the story of a noble wedding which took place on the market square in 1568 - after the wedding procession there is a joust between the groom's Bavarian family and the bride's French family. When that stops, the barrel makers dance a jig at the end of a deadly plague.

We walked to St. Peter's Church to sit and rest for many minutes. Then we took the subway (our tickets are good for 24 hours) back to the train station and found our way back to the hotel. Steve has been sleeping. I rested for a while, then started writing this to you 45 minutes ago.

It's now 8 p.m. Steve thought of a place to go where we could sit - the tram! Trams are trolley cars on tracks through the city. Our subway pass also allows us to take a tram or a bus for 24 hours within the city of Munich (not just the Old City). So we walked to the corner and got on a tram going north. Then we transferred to one going east. Next we headed south. We took at least 3 more trams, so that we could cross the Isar River. I was shocked that at our rush hour, there were many empty seats - only on one tram were there a number of people standing, and on some there were more empty seats than occupied ones! It rained lightly for much of the time we were on the trams - we would get off, go into the shelter, wait no longer than 3 minutes for a different tram and get on.

We finally ended up at Marienplatz. The rain had stopped. I wanted to eat at a Bavarian restaurant but couldn't remember where they were as we walked around. So we ate lunch after 6 p.m. at a restaurant which sold pigs knuckles. We split the pigs' knuckles and veal knuckles plate which came with sliced potatoes and salad (sauerkraut), and a dark beer - the restaurant even split the meals and the beer for us for no charge. All was very good. It was the fastest service we received at a restaurant so far. We had passed the restaurant several times and you could see the pigs' knuckles on the spit through the window. As we walked back we

met the grandmother/grandson from our group headed to that restaurant - it's pouring at the moment - hope they don't drown walking back! Just saw lightning and heard thunder.

Well, over 13,000 steps today (5.7 miles) - you can understand why our legs are tired! We're only eating 2 meals most days, wonder if we'll lose any pounds?

Tomorrow morning we take a private bus to Salzburg. More adventures to come!

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



The tale told by Grit, our Munich guide: a man on a white horse would come to town with his saddlebags full of large pretzels which he would give out for free. Since he didn't bring enough for everyone, the officials told him he could not come anymore.

Ceiling painting at Church of the Holy Ghost. Can you see the white horse on the left side, about 8 o'clock?



Another risen Christ, in Church of the Holy Ghost



Glockenspiel and characters on New Town Hall. The top ones show the wedding procession and jousting of a wedding here in 1568. The bottom ones are the barrel makers dancing a jig at the end of a deadly plague.



Lunch (at 6 p.m.) today - pigs' knuckles and veal knuckles and sliced potatoes, egg, and salad (sweet) sauerkraut and beer.

5/24

Greetings from ? Hotel in Salzburg!

I don't remember the name of it as we came in. We were dropped off a couple of blocks away, had to drag our suitcases a block, then turned on a very narrow winding street - our 44m bus would not be able to take the curve! We were almost run over by an electric scooter and then a bicycle.

Back to this morning; we packed, ate breakfast, checked out. We had to walk, dragging our suitcases for almost 3 blocks. It started raining lightly, but was coming down fairly heavily by the time we got to the right street, then we waited for the bus. We quickly stowed our suitcases in the bottom, then climbed in. I chose the seat behind the driver - we were way above the driver (our feet were about even with his head), so we could see where we were going.

We drove next to the train tracks of the first tram we took yesterday for a distance before getting on highways and then an autobahn (super highway), 120 km/hour was the speed limit. It rained on and off as we drove. As we drove, Matthew, our assistant leader, gave us a history of Hitler. He was a criminal, spent a year (1923?) in prison, wrote his book there, then laid low until 1933 when he was appointed chancellor. Hitler was a buffoon, not expected to be able to do anything. Only 37% supported Nazis, but that was the biggest percent of any party. We also heard about post-Nazism.

We drove into Austria - with the EEU, no one needs passports to go from country to country so it was like driving from one state to another. There was a sign "Austria". The Alps were in sight, though often cloud covered.

We drove past Salzburg to the private Trumer Brewery which is over 400 years old (1661). It has been family owned for the past 247 years. Josef Sign (spelling?) purchased it then, the first born son inherits it, the eighth Josef is now in charge! Yohanna gave us a tour, showing us the vats where the brew is made. Trumer manufactures 1% of Austria's beer. At the end of the tour we received a glass of Trumer Pils - the crown (foam) is supposed to rise at least a half inch above the glass! So we were drinking beer before noon! It was raining.

Then we walked across the street to the Trumer Restaurant where we had lunch: 2 weisswurst sausages, a large pretzel, a salad, and could have 2 more glasses of beer. I didn't see anyone getting their second glass! The 4 year old son of the waiter gave us our salad bowls and brought the pretzels - he was cute! You are not supposed to eat the skin of the sausages - they are supposedly too tough to chew. Before we got on the bus, our leaders gave us each a Lebkuchen (love cookie) - they are gingerbread, delicious. The lebkuchen I make for Steve are diamond shape and much smaller, these were about 4" radius, round.

We traveled on, going to Furstenhof, an organic dairy farm, subsidized by the state because they want to support small farms. Maria (owner) gave us a tour. Her house is built along Furstenhof Street (Princess Street) which was a road from Salzburg to Rome for the princess to use. The farm is 10 acres. She has 22 Guernsey cows which they milk twice a day. Her husband makes cheese from the milk - he has won international prizes for his cheese. She makes lotions and soaps from the whey from the cheese. She took us into the stable (which is attached to the house - many farms have the house and barn in one building) to see the 3 week old and 6 week old calves. 9 of the cows will go up to the Alpen meadow in a few weeks for the summer. She explained the process of making cheese, and we could see into the room where the cheese was made. She has tours of school children come to learn to make cheese. Again it rained on and off. The clouds broke finally so we could see the snow on the Alps across the fields from the farm. Germany is on the other side of the mountain.

On the way to the farm, the bus stopped at a corner and the driver got out and found the driver of a car parked on the corner and had him move his car so the bus could get around the corner - these were narrow roads with sharp turns!

Then we drove to Salzburg to near our family owned hotel, only 20 rooms. We could see the castle on the hill above the town as we drove through town. We have an orientation walk and welcome dinner in a half hour. The elevator barely holds 4 skinny people. We're on the first floor (one story up from ground floor).

I neglected to tell you that Munich was on the salt route. Salzburg means city of salt.

Munich originally had monasteries. During Lent and also during the 6 weeks before Christmas were times of fasting. But how do you get protein if you are fasting? Beer has protein in it. You can drink while you are fasting, so the monasteries started brewing beer. Therefore old city Munich had 6 breweries!

Hello, again!

We just came back from supper - it's almost 10 p.m. We met at 6:20 to take an orientation walk. We walked up the street, then down the pedestrian walkway (supposedly no cars, but one drove past us), across the river, into the old town section, to the restaurant. We had a mixed salad of the season, original "Viennese schnitzel" of veal with parsley potatoes, and "Rigo Jancis" for dessert (chocolate cake). We all chatted for quite a while, then walked back here. The hotel loaned me an umbrella so it didn't rain this time! It was rather chilly, maybe 62 tonight, earlier it was closer to 68.

The drapes don't close in our room, so guess we will wake up with the sun. It will be another cool day tomorrow, may rain in the morning. Only walked 3.5 miles today - a rest for our legs!

Don't know if photos will come tonight, not sure if wifi is good here. Hotel is TrumerStube on Bergstrasse.

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Alps under clouds!



Alps



Road shot for my brother-in-law Wayne



Restaurant we ate in across from Trumer Brewery



It was raining!



Farmhouse with stable connected as one building

Salzburg 5/25c



Buildings up the mountain (Alp)



Snow on the mountain



Farmland up to snow on mountain with clouds in-between



Icelandic pony on farm



Guernsey cows milked to make cheese

Salzburg 5/25c

Guten Tag!

After a rainy morning, the sky is blue in places and the sun is finally out. But it is only about 65.

We slept ok - Steve figured out how to close the curtains so it was dark in here until before 5 a.m. That's when I woke up. We went down to breakfast - soft boiled eggs and WASA crackers were added to what we had at the other hotel.

At 9 we met our local guide Sabrina outside the hotel in the rain - the hotel had new umbrellas for us. Sabrina talked very fast and there were often truck noises so it was hard to hear and understand her. Then my "whisperer" died - it's the device which lets everyone on the tour hear what the guide says. I did walk next to her after that.

She took us to Merabell Palace, where the prince archbishop lived. The church was the government for the Salzburg area. We walked up to the second floor to see the room where they now hold concerts. Then we went out in the Merabell Garden - some of "Sound of Music" was filmed here. The movie is mostly ignored here because it shows the Nazi side and it's inaccurate - most people here claim they don't know the movie at all. There are buses which give a 4 hour tour of the movie sites.

It was raining. We walked across the Salzach River to the old town. We passed Mozart's birthplace - the family rented a room here until he was seven. The guide showed us several other places and told stories about them. Our guides gave us "Mozart candy" (chocolate). We went in Franziskanerkirche, the cathedral. We walked through the cemetery. We walked through courtyards of the university - all higher education in Austria is free.

We left our guide and then walked several blocks to Edelweis School. We had a lesson in making apple strudel. The mother/daughter worked with us to make an apple strudel. The pastry was given to us and we were taught how to roll it out, stretch it out, put the apple mix on it, roll it together, place in a pan. The pans went in the oven. Then we were taught how to make the pastry - it must sit for 2 hours after you make it before it can be filled. We were served cheese, salami, bread, pumpkin oil to dip in as appetizer. Then we received goulash soup for lunch. It had real paprika, not just red color but also hot. After we ate, our strudel was finished baking, so we had it for dessert. Then we were offered 5 kinds of schnapps. The baker's assistant is a student at the university and she sang for us - an opera piece (she was really projecting), and we joined her in "Do, Re, Me", and "Edelweiss". I was surprised that our 2 college students did not know "Sound of Music".

The cliffs go upward from the street. Several buildings, including Edelweiss School are built against the cliffs. The school was built into a cave - the rocks weren't very far above our heads.

Steve and I left, stopped in St. Markus Church, which is orthodox - we were surprised you could see the main altar behind the icon screen. We stopped at a couple of souvenir shops - I got magnets and a commemorative spoon to add to my collections. We finally found an information booth. The woman gave us information about concerts. Half of our group are going to a dinner concert tonight at 7:30 (concert first, then dinner, I don't like to eat that late and it would be too much food for us - we usually split one dinner and are stuffed!).

We went to the Residence. Steve wanted to use the Toilette first - we were told it was on the second floor of the museum (it was on the fourth floor). After climbing 122 steps (yes, I counted them!), we discovered that only those who had paid for the museum could use it, so we walked down the steps - these were only about 3" high but twice as wide as normal steps so it wasn't too painful to climb. We found another Toilette, cost .50 euros to use (about 50 cents).

Then we got our tickets to a harpsichord concert - 3 pieces by Johann Haydn (1737-1806), one ("The Four Seasons") by Leopold Mozart (1719-87), and 3 by Wolfgang Mozart (1756-91). She was an excellent player. It was held in an L-shaped hall - wonder how cold it would be in winter since it opens to the outside?

We walked back to our hotel and are taking a rest now. My photos from today are not coming to the laptop, but I sent yesterday's photos.

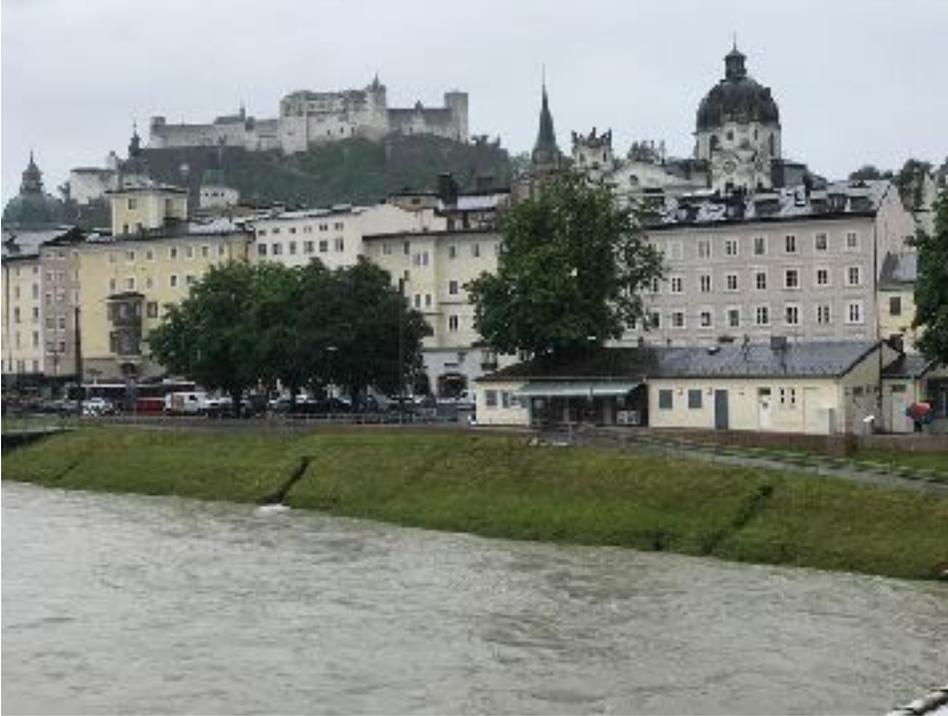
It's now after 8. We walked down to an ATM to get more euros. Then we walked around, looking for a place to eat inside. Most of the places only sold liquor or had no inside seating. After walking a couple of miles, we finally decided on waffles with ice cream on them as our supper - not real nutritious! He got coffee and I got tea from our breakfast room on the way back to our room. Well, after a relatively lazy day yesterday, we walked over 16,000 steps today (7.1 miles)!

Tomorrow we go to Hallstadt - I'm looking forward to it - the photos I've seen are beautiful.

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Mirabell Gardens - this fountain was in Sound of Music



View of Old Town Salzburg with castle on top of mountain



Mozart's birthplace



Fountain also in Sound of Music - it's a burial ground beneath the stones



Old houses in Old Town, one on left built in 1258, one on right in 1300



Making Viennese apple strudel at Edelweiss Cooking School



The finished product - yummy!



St. Markus Orthodox Church



Harpsichord and musician



River in Salzburg



For my knitting friends - how could we see our pattern with these brightly colored needles?



Mirabell Gardens - this fountain was in Sound of Music



View of Old Town Salzburg with castle on top of mountain



Mozart's birthplace



Fountain also in Sound of Music - it's a burial ground beneath the stones



Old houses in Old Town, one on left built in 1258, one on right in 1300

5/26 Salzburg to Hallstatt b

Greetings!

This morning we ate the hotel breakfast, packed up, met the group, and walked a couple of blocks to the bus. We were a few minutes early, so had to wait after we got on the bus because the bus isn't allowed to leave until a certain time nor go over a certain speed.

As we drove, we heard about the Hapsburg dynasty which took over much of Europe through smart marriages. We drove to Bad Ischl - bad means spa. We walked up the path to Kaiservilla. This was a wedding present from his parents to Franz Joseph I as he married Elizabeth (Wittlesbach), his cousin. We had a guided tour of 15 of the rooms. Elizabeth, also called Sisi, was very beautiful and vain - she refused to have her portrait painted after she was 36. She carried a mask to put over her face if she met someone while she was out walking. We saw the desk at which Franz Joseph signed the papers which started World War I.

We passed several Alpen lakes - some forbade boating on them.

We drove through a tunnel to Hallstatt. I had seen pictures of Hallstatt and thought you could only arrive by boat. We got off the bus, took our suitcases, and instead of walking 15 minutes to our hotel, pulling our suitcases, we got on a boat with our suitcases. We took a 45 minutes cruise around the lake (no one else was on the boat), arriving via boat nearer our hotel, so I got to arrive by boat! It's a beautiful lake with beautiful scenery and high alps all around. There was snow in places on the mountains. There are many swans on the lake.

We moved into our suite - we are over the front door of the hotel with a balcony overlooking the plaza - petunias are growing in the flower boxes. We have a large sitting room, and a large bedroom and a small bathroom.

We quickly headed for the funicular which took us up the mountain. We took the elevator up to the restaurant. We split 2 sausages with French fries and beer. We ate quickly, then headed up the 650 meters to the Salzwelten (salt mine tour). We thought the last tour was at 2:30 and it was 2:20 by then. We rushed up the steep path - I was breathing so heavily, was really huffing. We missed the 2:30 tour but there was a 2:45 tour which we took.

First you must cover your clothes with a white jacket and white pants. We walked up steps, down steps, then walked between the train tracks into the mine. We stopped at several exhibits, some were short movies, another was a light show, the last was an 8,000 year old staircase. There were 2 wooden slides, one was about 20 meters, the second was 65 meters. Steve went down the second one at 17.2 km/h, I went down it at 18.5 km/h - I felt like I was really moving! Then we had a "train" ride back to the starting point - you sat on a board with your feet on either side - it went fast enough to ruffle hair. It was 8 degrees celsius (about 54) in the mine. I glanced at my pedometer and it said I had walked up and then down 24 flights of steps! And it was all in climbing up to the salt mine and in it!

We walked down, stopped to look out at the view from the viewing platform, took the elevator down to the funicular. We then sauntered slowly back to town - we had met up with some of our group on the mountain. We walked into the Lutheran Church next to our hotel - we were surprised to find candles burning in the church.

We spent 10 minutes in our room relaxing, then went to the park behind the church to meet our group - we had wine and cheese. Then we went into the hotel dining room for dinner - salad, a

whole trout (head and tail included), potatoes, veggies, small pieces of cake (about 1"x 1/2") with applesauce. We visited for a while before coming up to our room.

It was sunny this morning, some clouds this afternoon, some blue sky, about 66.

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Alps



Ischl River - Alpen rivers are this color



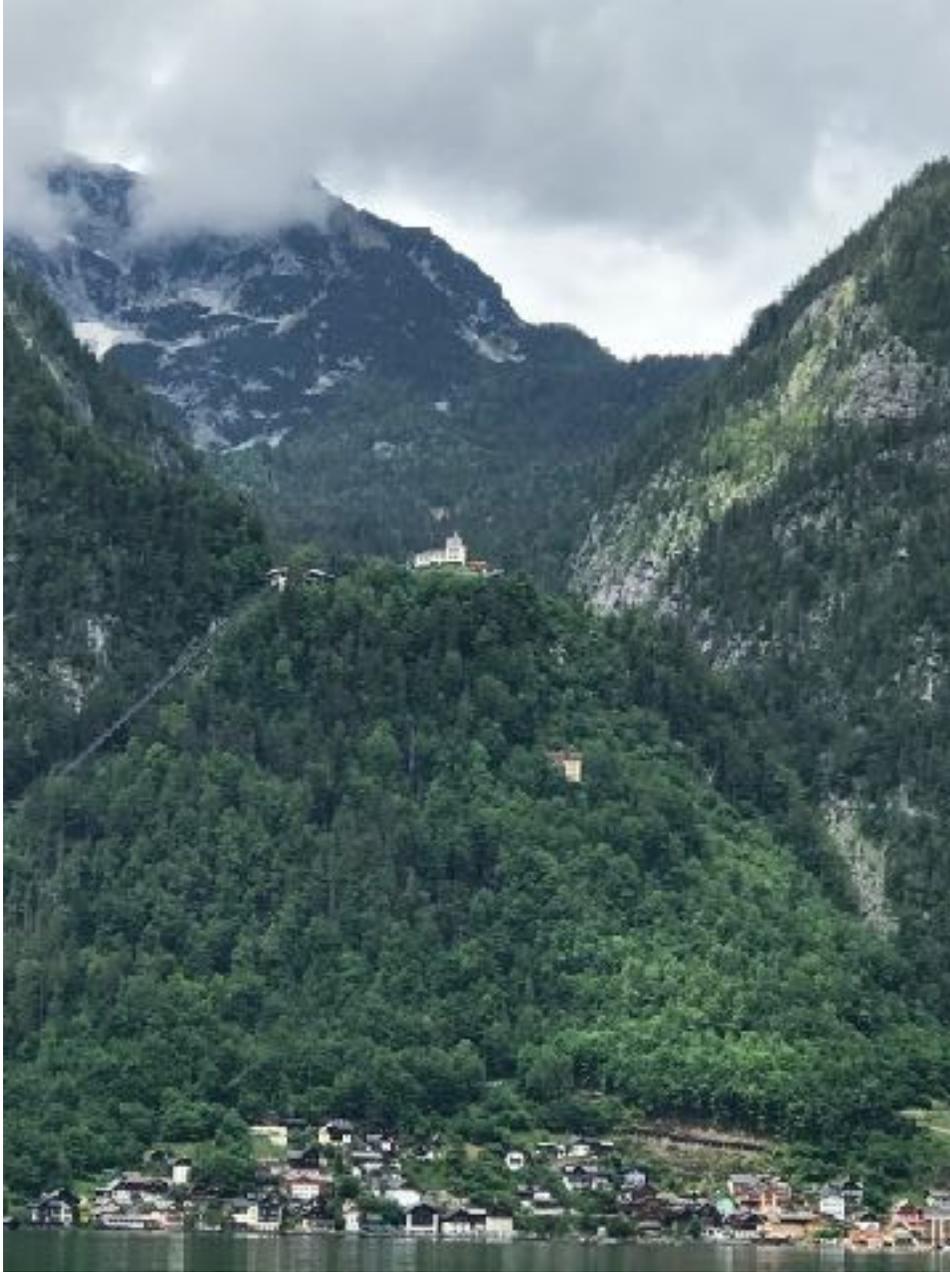
Bad Ischl



Snow in the Alps



Lake Hallstatt



Funicular going up to where we ate lunch. Salt mine was further up the mountain



Castle on Lake Hallstatt



Hallstatt - the yellow building is our hotel. The Lutheran Church is next to it. The Catholic Church is on the right edge of the photo



Hallstatt - Catholic Church on hill. The Bone Chapel is at right of it



Our sitting room at the hotel



Our bedroom



The lower balcony is out of our living room



Chinese couples go to different places to have their photos taken - we've seen them in other countries also



Ready for Salt Mine tour - Lynne is on the left



After the salt mine tour - the town is far below!



Hallstatt from up the mountain Yellow is our hotel



Lutheran Church



Very tired Lynne after climbing to the Salt mine, with whole trout for dinner



There are many swans on Lake Hallstatt

5/27

Guten Tag!

When I looked out our window this morning, it was really dark on the mountain - I realized it was covered with fog. We ate breakfast, packed, and pulled our suitcases away from the hotel at 8:15 (groan - we're all tired!). We dragged our suitcases for 15 minutes to the bus. The lake was totally fogged in.

We drove for a couple of hours to Stift Melk which is a Baroque monastery which is Benedictine order of about 30 monks now. Their motto is "Pray. Work. Read." It was the residence of the Babenbergers since 976. The monastery was founded in 1089. It has a high school also. "It is one of the biggest and most beautiful European Baroque ensembles. Its splendid architecture is famous worldwide and part of UNESCO's world cultural heritage."

We had a tour there and our first look at the brown Danube - it was not blue! The library is a dozen rooms with 100,000 books. We only could go in the first library room which had 10,000 of the oldest books. Leopold I gave the castle to the monks. Gradually they increased the size. The church is filled with flamboyant golden figures and decorations.

We drove about 10 minutes down the hill to the river and took a cruise on the Danube River - no, they didn't play the "Blue Danube" along with the announcements about places of interest along the river. There was surprisingly very little traffic on the river, a few work boats, some tiny sightseeing boats, one personal boat, some larger sightseeing boats, a couple of cruising boats. We rode from Melk to Krems where our bus met us. We passed a couple of castles high on the mountains - one was taken over by a robber baron who, according to legend, gave his prisoners the alternatives of voluntarily throwing themselves off the rock wall or dying of hunger. We also passed a couple of ruins - in Durnstein in 1193 King Richard the Lion-Heart was held captive and freed by the minstrel Blondel. We took the boat from Melk to Krems, one of Austria's oldest cities.

Then we drove about an hour to Vienna to Kaiserhof hotel. There is a small paper crown with a chocolate candy in it on our pillows. There is a sign on the glass water bottle "an imperial refreshment, "Viennese Water", supplied with fresh mountain spring water since 1873 when Emperor Joseph 1 opened the largest European aqueduct.

Guten Abend!

We met at 6 p.m. to take a walking tour of Vienna. First we walked to the subway, got our tickets stamped - they're good for 24 hours on the subway, tram, and bus. Our guide first took us to the wrong platform, but he realized his mistake before we got on the subway, so we took the escalator back up and found the right one. We only rode one stop, but it saved us some steps. We got off at Stephansplatz, saw St. Stephen's church from the outside, then started walking through the Old Town. I am totally confused as to where we were or went. My legs got too tired and I couldn't care less at that point. Besides, my "whisper" that I hear what the guide says has quit so I can't hear him unless I walk next to him. You can tell that I'm tired!!!

We took another subway - this one was very crowded - and then another one to Naschmarkt where there are many booths selling almost anything you want. June decided to go back there with us to look for food (it was probably 8 p.m. by then) while most of the rest went to the Irish pub next to our hotel. We finally found an empty table, we had a Viennese stew which we split. Meanwhile it was starting to rain. So June and I moved across the table next to Steve so we were under the awning (though sometimes the wind blew rain on us). It was good food. We walked back to the hotel, seeing the rest of our group sitting in the Irish pub.

We have used Rick Steve's guidebooks for years when we travel to Europe. I found his videos on Youtube. We've been watching Rick Steve's Monday Night Travel for over a year - he started it during Covid. We decided to take a Rick Steve's tour this time so someone else would keep an eye on the covid situation and on the war in Ukraine. All of his tours to Russia were cancelled when the war started so he wasn't supporting Russia with tourist dollars. We would definitely recommend taking a Rick Steve's tour - his expertise is Europe.

It was sunny most of the day, cloudy after 7, raining a bit, about 72.

Hopefully my legs will have recovered enough to take a walking tour tomorrow at 8:30! We walked over 14,000 steps yesterday, only 13,200 today (over 5.5 miles).

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



First view of the Danube River



Baroque church in Melk



Inside the church



Close-up of the altar area



Stilt Melk



Schonbuhel Castle along the Danube



Aggstein Castle ruins - According to legend, Georg Scheck of Wald restored the site in 1429 and used it as a robber baron's seat and gave his prisoners the alternatives of voluntarily throwing themselves off the rock or dying of hunger



Along the Danube



Durnstein castle ruin since 1645. In 1193 King Richard the Lion-Heart was held captive in the castle and freed by the minstrel Blondel.



Church in Durnstein

5/28

Hello!

This morning we had the hotel breakfast - each hotel has a fancier breakfast - this one included champagne which we did not indulge in.

We met our local guide, Gerhard, who walked us to his private Third Man Museum. The Third Man was a movie released in 1949 and voted one of the greatest films of all time by the British Film Institute. Gerhard has collected thousands of memorabilia about the movie - he has 3200 pieces on display. He talked about the movie, and then about Vienna during World War II, giving us much of the history of the time. He also showed us a 2 minute clip from the movie, showing Orson Wells running through the sewers. Later he took us to a piece of modern art along the street - it looks like the cover of a sewer. There is also a concrete full size model of a real sewer - it is about 4' high, so no one could actually run through a sewer.

Then he walked us to the Naschmarkt (where we ate last night) for a break. Steve wanted coffee and a sweet roll, but couldn't find a place to get one when we ran out of time. Two of our group did not show up at the meeting place so we waited a while. Then we walked to the Kunst Historisches Museum Wien which is an art museum. Gerald showed us many paintings and talked about them. Most of the rooms had couches so we sat as he spoke. Many were famous paintings. When the tour ended, we went into the museum cafe for raspberry/ poppyseed torte, and coffee (for him).

We were going to go to the Natural History Museum across the plaza but the line was long and not moving so we decided to go to the Leopold Museum which was across the street. It specializes in late 19th/20th century Austrian modernists, including Egon Schiele, Gustav Klimt,

and Oskar Kokoschka, and others. Modern painting is not my cup of tea, but we did look at 2 floors of paintings. We then walked back to the hotel and are resting now.

It's now 10:45 and we're beat! I spent more than 2 hours preparing to send you photos. After I sent them, I realized that the "On the way to Vienna" was really going to Hallstatt. Hopefully I will send you more photos tomorrow. I have some ready to send, but it's too late tonight. Our internet worked for sending photos to our laptop finally, so you get many at once.

We had our farewell dinner tonight. We arrived at the restaurant at 7 for an Austrian dinner, favorite of Franz Joseph. We received our drinks. It was probably closer to 7:45 when we received Fritattensuppe (beef broth with cup up crepes (not as thick as a noodle) as our entrees. Our second drinks came. After 8:30 we received our entrees: Tafelspritz (boiled beef with fried potatoes (like hash browns)). We had a hot chocolate soufflé with raspberry sauce and vanilla ice cream to dip the soufflé in. All was delicious. Then we came back to the hotel and had a final drink at the hotel bar (champagne) to say Auf Wiedersehen. One couple is leaving at 5 a.m. for the airport.

It was cloudy, sunny, light rain, sunny, cloudy, 65.

It's great to hear from you. Your encouragement and prayers are much appreciated.

Have a good Lord's Day!

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



35mm Movie house projector, our guide Gerard



Thomas putting his fingers in Jesus' side



Online dating hundreds of years ago. This painting was sent to princes in Italy and other countries to find a groom for the princess in the painting.



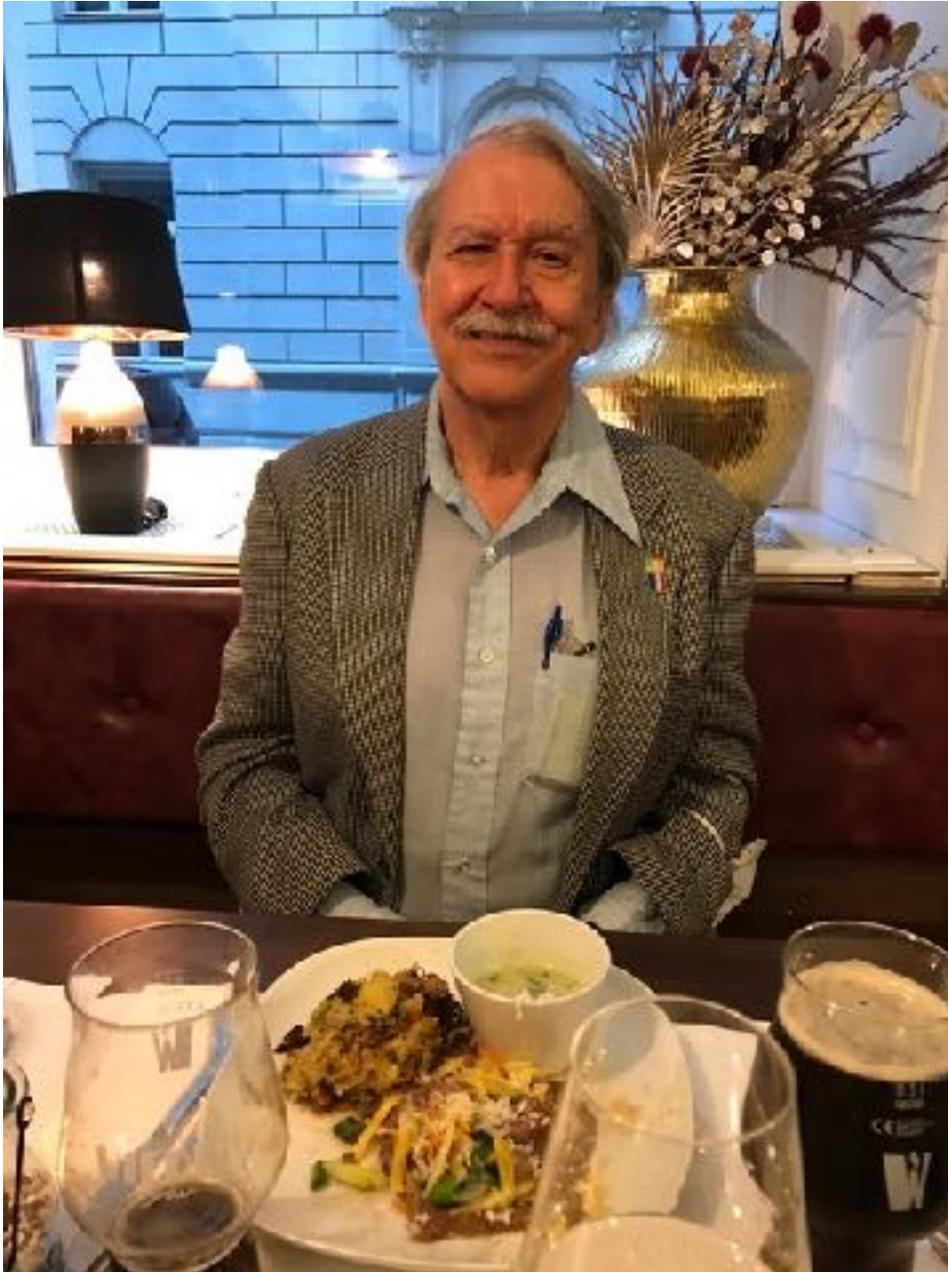
Lunch in art museum - raspberry and poppyseed cake



Keeping the children occupied outside the National History Museum



A Viennese ambulance - we had seen a smaller one.



Our dinner - Tafelspritz (boiled beef with fried potatoes (like hash browns))

5/29
Happy Lord's Day!

This morning we ate the hotel breakfast - I've had a husk yellow tomato each morning - had never seen them before. We said "Auf Wiederseh'n" ("till we meet again") to some of the Rick Steve's tour group - most left for the airport today. 3 more will leave tomorrow while we stay another 3 nights. Our guide left this morning by train for Munich where he will repeat our tour starting this afternoon. So we are on our own now.

We walked to the Imperial Music Chapel (Wiener Hofmusikkapelle) for the Vienna Boys' Choir to sing the Sunday Mass for the service. You can either see the altar or see the boys or see nothing, depending on your ticket. Steve chose to see the boys. We went up about 6 flights of steps, down a couple, finally found our seats - We could see the boys in the highest balcony which is at least 4 balconies up! There was also a tv monitor showing the altar when something was happening there. They sang Beethoven's Mass in C-major, Opus 86. In 1807 Prince Esterhazy commissioned Beethoven to compose that mass to celebrate his wife's name day.

There were about 22 boys in the choir and 11 men plus a full orchestra of over 20 and the pipe organ. There was also a men's chorus next to the altar. They did a good job.

Since we were almost next door (next plaza over), we then went to the Augustinian Church for their 11 a.m. Mass which is also a concert - Oboenmesse (Oboe Mass) by Haydn. It was also excellent. This is the church where the Hapsburgs got married, and where the hearts of 54 Hapsburg nobles are in a vault - we saw where the vault was, but did not see the urns. Their bones are at another church. This church is Gothic and Neo-Gothic in style.

It was raining lightly when we left there. The hotel room has an umbrella in it - free to use - 15 euros if you keep it. We had brought it today since it would possibly rain. We walked toward Stephansplatz, found a Nord See along the way which was open. Steve got fish and chips, I had a shrimp sandwich on a roll - all they sell is fish. We then walked a short distance to St. Peter's Church. Leopold I ordered this church to be built as a thank-you for surviving the 1679 plague. We walked in just after an organ concert began so we heard Vivaldi's Four Seasons and Bach's Toccata and Fuge. This is our church/concert day, I guess!

We walked on, to Stephansplaza, and went to St. Stephen's Cathedral. An oompah band was playing outside. The Gothic church is known for its 450' tower, its colorful, patterned roof, and its place in Viennese history. When it was built, it was a huge church for what was then a tiny town, and it helped put the fledgling city on the map. It is the exact center of Vienna. You can only see the foyer and north aisle for free, so we didn't pay for the rest.

We walked towards our hotel, meeting Kate, one of our tour group, on the way. We stopped at Karlsplatz to look at the St. Charles Church (Karlskirche) which was built in 1713 when an epidemic spared Vienna. There was a charge to go in, so we skipped it. We took back streets to our hotel and are now resting. I am working on cross stitch.

8:30 Greetings again!

In Vienna most stores and restaurants are closed on Sunday, so there isn't much choice for supper. We went looking for something that is open and close. We ended up at a "street" place - we each got a wurst in a roll - the wurst had cheese in it - can't remember the name. We brought it back to the hotel (2 blocks) and ate it in our room. Not a very exciting meal! Oh, well, it doesn't always work and you must adjust. It was still raining lightly, about 62.

I realized that we came back before 4 p.m. which is 10 a.m. in Baltimore. So we watched our church service in Baltimore at Holy Cross Lutheran Church live from Vienna! I also watched my younger's sister's service in Illinois live. So glad for technology and that so many services are now online! It was good to worship in English, didn't understand much of the German services! But we were praising God!

The question was asked, "What is a bone chapel?" A bone chapel is just that: a place for bones. Since the cemetery at Hallstatt is so small, after 12 years in the cemetery the body is dug up, the skull is marked with deceased's name and death date, then placed on a shelf, the

rest of the bones under the shelves. They now cremate, so no new bones are being added since 1960.

Have a good week!

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Our view of the Vienna Boy Choir



View on monitor of Vienna Boy Choir



The choir was on the top balcony. We were sitting behind the windows to the left of the balcony.



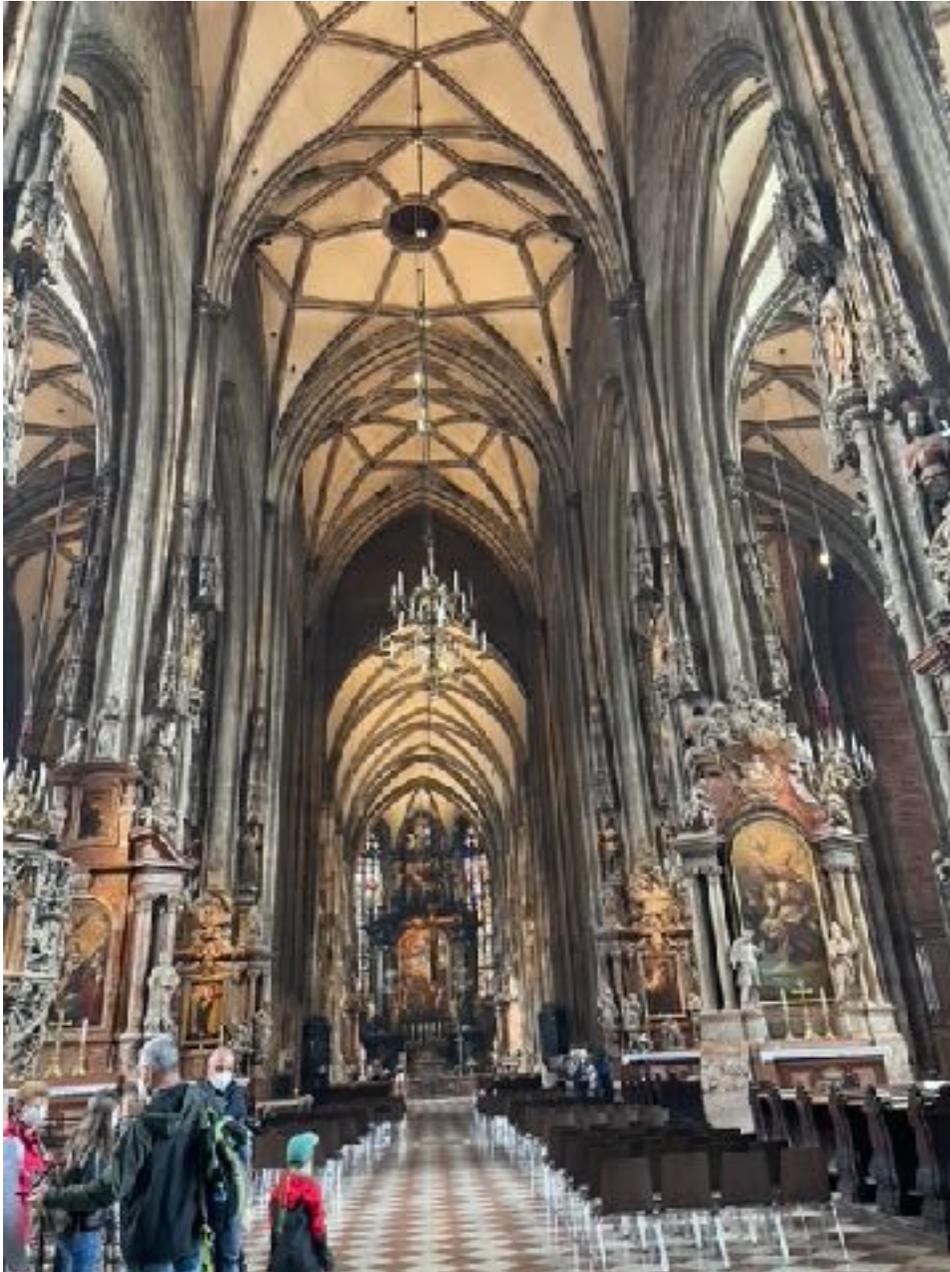
Altar of Augustine Church



St. Peter Church



Steve with "his" church - St. Stephen Church



Interior St. Stephen Church



St. Charles Church - note the columns are “replicas” of Trajan’s Column in Rome

5/30
Happy Memorial Day!

Of course there is no celebration here, but last Thursday was Ascension Day and most of the businesses in Austria were closed then.

We walked until we found Der Man which sold breakfast sweets and sandwiches. We each ordered one and Steve had coffee. After we ate them there, we continued to the Natural History Museum Vienna, one of the largest natural history museums in the world. It was built to show off the Habsburgs’ vast collection of plant, animal, and mineral specimens and artifacts.

It is an exceptionally well-organized and enjoyable catalogue of the natural world with 20 million objects. It is located across the plaza from the Art Museum we visited on Saturday.

After waiting a long time for the one elevator, we viewed the microcosms, protozoans, corals, mollusks, crabs, arachnids, insects, and vertebrates. I especially enjoyed the birds - God must have been having fun when he made the birds so many different colors and sizes. We climbed down the 75 steps and up 15 steps to the next lower floor. We next viewed minerals, rocks, meteorites geology, and fossils.

By then it was after 2 p.m. so we went to the coffee shop. I had a panini with ham, cottage cheese, and tomato chutney. Steve had a croissant with turkey ham and cheese.

We then viewed the dinosaurs, most were skeletons but there was an animated one which moved and roared to the delight (or fright) of the young children. We then went to prehistory. They have the Venus of Willendorf, a four-inch-tall, chubby stone statuette, found in the Danube Valley in 1908. She is a generic female (no face or feet), resting her hands on her ample breasts. The statute's purpose is unknown (at 25,000 years old, the world's oldest sex symbol).

They had an entire room dedicated to the salt mine in Hallstatt - men have been mining salt there for over 7000 years. Hallstatt is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There were a couple of rooms about anthropology. Most of the explanations were in German, with some English on major displays. I spent a lot of time sitting on benches while Steve looked at the exhibits - my feet and legs are still very tired.

We walked back to our hotel and are resting. The maid made up our room but took away our glasses and didn't refill the coffee packets, so Steve went down to the front desk to get them.

9 p.m. We walked to Naschmarkt and chatted with 2 of our group who are staying until Thursday (and hoping that the airline problems will be solved by then - they fly Delta to St. Louis). We decided on a restaurant - chose to eat inside (though there are many more tables outside) to avoid the cigarette smoke. The smoke isn't as bad as it has been in previous years, but I still get sick from being exposed to smoke. We had lamnkotelett which is lamb chops, rice, Mediterranean vegetables, salad and tzatziki. There were 4 lamb chops plus enough that we easily shared the meal and were full. It was delicious.

A couple of observations: no one jaywalks here, all stand at the corner and wait for the traffic light to turn, traffic stops, no one tries to beat the red light. There are bike lanes everywhere, one must watch out for bikes (especially when they occasionally share the sidewalk), but cars are not a problem. Very few wear helmets. We have occasionally seen helmets on scooter riders. Vienna is a flat city so easy to ride bikes and scooters here.

It was sunny, about 66.

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Grosstrappe



Colorfull birds



More colorful birds



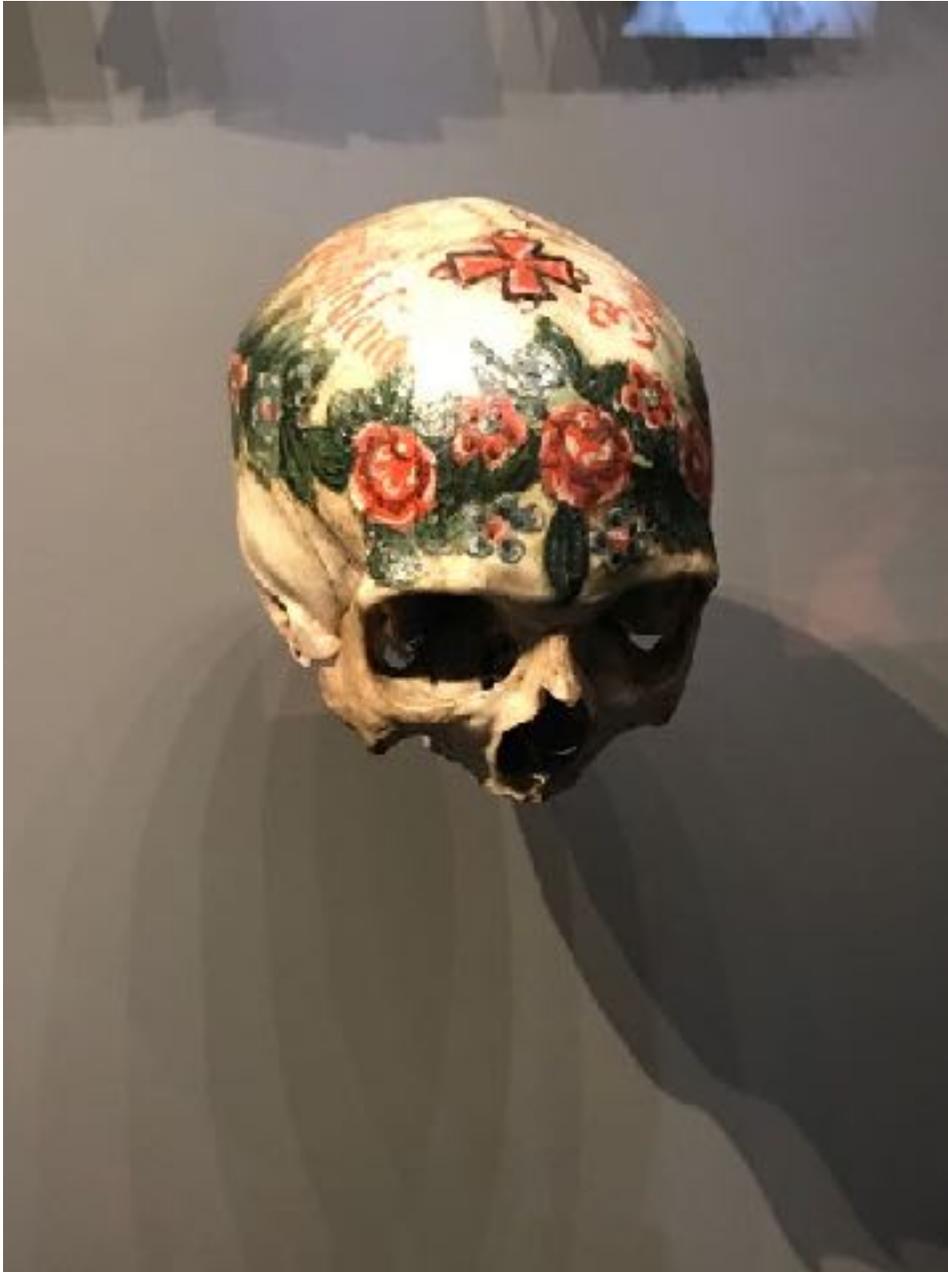
Early version of a jacquard loom



Venus of Willendorf, fist sized, 25,000 years old, the world's oldest sex symbol



Dome of Natural History Museum - the cafe is under the dome



Skull similar to what might have been in the Bone Chapel

Vienna 5/30-31
Greetings!

We took it easy this morning, then walked to Karlsplatz to take a subway to Schonbrunn. I was surprised that the subway was so crowded at 10:30 a.m. We saw groups of students taking field trips, riding the subway.

The Schonbrunn Palace, the Habsburgs' former summer residence, is second only to Versailles among Europe's grand palaces. It was originally built as a small hunting lodge in the 1500s and grew over the next 300 years. Habsburg nobles (including Maria Theresa and her 16

children, and Franz Josef and Sisi) lived in the Imperial Apartments. We took the Grand Tour, which included a free audio guide, and covered 40 rooms.

We visited the guards' room, the Billiard Room where visitors played while waiting to see Franz Josef, his study, his bedchamber where he died in 1916 or 18. We also saw his toilet. He would get up at 4 a.m., use cold water to wake himself, then pray at his pre du, before going to his office at 5 a.m. Empress Sisi's study and dressing room were next - she was obsessed with her looks, spent several hours a day working with her ankle-length hair. She stayed away most of the time, her mother-in-law checked in on her frequently during the day to criticize her. We went through Franz Josef's and Sisi's bedroom, her salon, the family dining room. When they had visitors they ate French food. When it was just the family, they had their favorite Viennese food. We walked through the Hall of Mirrors in which 6 year old Mozart played his first big gig and then leaped into Empress Maria Theresa's lap. The Great Gallery (40 m x about 10 m) was the ballroom in which President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Khrushchev met in 1961. The Hall of Ceremonies was just that, a room where ceremonies took place.

Then we went into the Imperial rooms. The Blue Chinese Salon is where in 1918 the last Habsburg emperor made the decision to relinquish power, marking the end of more than six centuries of Habsburg rule. The Vieux-Laque Room was remodeled by Maria Theresa as a memorial to her beloved husband who died unexpectedly at age 35. When Napoleon conquered Austria, he took over Schonbrunn and made the next room his bedroom (now called the Napoleon Room). The Porcelain Room had porcelain decorations on the wall. The Millions Room had very expensive rosewood paneling. The Rich Bedchamber has what may have been Maria Theresa's wedding bed, where she and Franz produced 16 children. That ended our tour.

We walked around the outside of the palace to the Palace Gardens. The gardens were opened to the public in 1779 for free while the monarchy was still going on. We entered through some rose gardens - most were tall rose bushes with many blooms and sweet smell. We walked along the Grosses parterre, enjoying the flowers. We passed the Neptune fountain, one of many fountains. We stopped for an ice cream cone to fortify us for the climb up to the Gloriette. It was a steep climb, mostly in the sun. We ate our lunch in the Gloriette, a purely decorative monument celebrating an obscure Austrian military victory. We sat right next to the window so we had a view down to the castle. He had 2 sausages with horseradish and mustard, I had a panini with tomatoes and mozzarella. I climbed down the 40 steps to the W.C. (water closet or toilet), and then had to climb back up them.

We walked down a steep path, mostly in the shade, to the Neptune Fountain, then took a couple of side paths to the Rosario, the rose garden. Many of the roses were tree roses. We then walked back to the subway and headed for our hotel. We stopped at the grocery store and bought bread for breakfast, I got a salad for supper and he got bread with ham and cheese in it. The "silverware" is made of wood. It was sunny, about 80.

I find the old buildings interesting, with fancy decorations on the sides and on the edges of the roofs. However most new buildings are concrete boxes (apartments) with little interest to them. Many of the newer buildings replaced ones bombed in World War II.

Ten out of the last eleven days we have walked over 10,000 steps! Ranging from 4.7 to 7.1 miles. The only day we didn't walk over 10,000 steps was the day we drove from Munich to Salzburg and spent most of the day in the bus. Thus every afternoon we have come back to the hotel to rest!

Tomorrow we take a ferry boat to Bratislava. Please continue to pray for traveling mercies and continued good health (and energy!).

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Our dinner last night: salad, tzatziki, lamb chops, Mediterranean vegetables under the lamb chops



It was windy at Schonbrunn Castle!



The Palace Garden, roses smell sweet!



Neptune's Fountain, ducks in water



Gloriette on top of hill over Neptune's Fountain



Other side of Schonbrunn Castle, in the garden

June 1

Greetings from Bratislava!

This morning we packed up, relaxed, then checked out of our hotel and headed to the Karlsplatz where we got tickets to ride the tram. We took it to our boat. We split 3 eggs, bacon, and a slice of bread at the cafe on the waterfront.

Our ferry took us along the Danube Canal to a wide spot where the boat could turn around. Then we headed down the canal and into the Danube River. While in the canal we could only sit in our seats, after we got in the river we could walk around.

Along the river were small cabins. In front of almost everyone was a net on a stand, the net was at least a 6' square. Not sure how they got it in the river to catch fish. All the cabins were raised, so I assume the river floods. The cabins were not close together. None of them had docks. I did see a couple of double kayaks on the river. I saw some nude sunbathers along the shore. The banks of the river were sparsely populated.

There were at least 2 bridges carrying pipes over the river. Any time there was a barge or a cruise ship on the river we slowed down until we passed it. One bank of the river had maybe 6" square rocks on it, the other appeared to be sandy.

We passed Hainburg, Austria's most eastern city. It has a well-preserved city wall and 15 towers. There is a fortress on the top of the hill.

We arrived in Bratislava, capitol of Slovakia, after just an hour's ride. This is the 32nd country we have visited. We found a tram that was going in our direction, took it, then walked a couple of blocks to Petit Pension. We are on the fourth floor, overlooking the intersection of the busiest streets in town, Stevanikova and Staromestska. It was stuffy in our room, so I

opened the windows, they have no screens here, so I'm guessing there are no bugs. The traffic is very noisy.

We relaxed for a couple of hours and I cross stitched, then went out looking for something to eat for supper. We looked in the Trinitarian Church which was having a mass then. We looked in the Capuchin Church. We continued into Old Town, down 3 flights of steps to the walkway. Many of the sidewalks and streets are small rectangular flat stones - my feet don't like to step on them.

We stopped at Grandmother's Original Slovak Restaurant to eat. We ordered cheese pasty, and beef with dill sauce and dumplings and a half liter of beer - it came in a wide, short, heavy glass mug, very heavy to lift when it was full! The dumplings were like sponge bread. None of it was like what we would have expected. All was very good - we ate outside - most of the restaurants have tables outside.

Then we wandered further in Old Town, through the main square, past a Gelato with a line of maybe 50 people - it must have been special ice cream because none of the other Gelatos had a line. We continued past the Slovak National Theater and then down a long plaza with fountains. We saw 3 dogs wandering without leashes. Most of the dogs we've seen in Europe have been small size (think dachshund) though we saw 2 Scottish terriers with raincoats on, a couple of days ago.

We ended up near St. Martin's Cathedral. There was a display in the square next to it - a Jewish synagogue had been there - there were many boards about it. Dr. Samuel Funk blessed the crown prince and his wife in front of the synagogue in April, 1918. A few months later he abdicated and the Austria-Hungary empire was no more. The synagog was destroyed to make room for the New Bridge.

We then walked up the steps to St. Martin's Cathedral. There were many people inside, many seminarians and some nuns came in while we there. The cardinal was standing outside - I'm guessing that he was going to conduct mass in a few minutes. We walked back to our hotel. Only 8500 steps today, but we did travel by 2 trams and a boat.

Okay, history lesson: (I only learned this when we decided to come here.) Slovakia was ruled for centuries from Budapest and known as "Upper Hungary". At other times it was an important part of the Habsburg Empire, ruled from Vienna. After World War I, it was part of Czechoslovakia for 75 years. But this union was troubled, the Czechs and the Slovaks are two different people groups. In 1992 they peacefully separated as the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Today multiple foreign automakers have plants here, and Slovakia produces one million cars a year, making it the world's biggest car producer per capita. (Notes from Rick Steves Vienna) The name Bratislava was invented in 1918. It is one of the youngest capitals in Europe, with a rich history that dates back even before the first settlements of the Celts and Romans in this area.

It was a beautiful day, about 75, sunny.

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Lynne at the cafe next to Danube Canal, Vienna



Hainburg an der Donau - the river water splashed on the window so it is blurry - fortress on top of hill



Ruined castle at Devin



Devin



Bratislava Castle



New Bridge, also called the UFO Bridge - there's a cafe in the top



Pretty flowers to greet us



Our room in Petit Pension - so much plainer than rooms on the Rick Steves tour. The bathroom is one step up, the toilet another step up - going to be dangerous to go in the middle of the night!



The long plaza, Slovak National Theater at the end



St. Martin's Cathedral, displays about the Jewish synagogue which was there before it was destroyed to make the New Bridge (wall on left is along the bridge)



The display about Samuel Funk and blessing the Austro-Hungarian royal couple



Inside St. Martin's Cathedral - Nineteen Hungarian kings and queens were crowned here, more than anywhere else in Hungary

6/2 Bratislava

Hello!

I ate breakfast at the Petit Cafe - Steve doesn't usually eat breakfast, so I had the buffet - not a great selection for \$10. He had a cup of coffee and I snuck him a couple of pieces of bread.

We walked from our hotel to the castle - up many, many inclines - remember the photo of the castle on top of the hill? Steve thinks his blood pressure and pulse rate is low since he doesn't have much energy or endurance so it was a slow climb. When we finally got to the castle, it was closed - some big political event going on today and tomorrow, our only 2 days we could have gone. It has been inhabited since the late Stone Age, the first written record is from 907 A.D. We wandered around the free parts. There was a bride (not even Chinese!) having photos taken - after a while the groom joined her - she had her wedding bouquet with her, so I'm guessing the wedding was yesterday. We didn't think that the photographer used the most photogenic backdrops for the photos - usually they were bland walls.

We stopped for Steve to have an espresso, then continued back toward Old Town. We stopped at the city wall and read the displays. The Jews were allowed, then not allowed, then allowed again, then not allowed, repeat, to live in the city over its history. We walked to St. Michael's Gate, part of the town's medieval wall. The gate is wrapped in scaffolding so we couldn't see it. We crossed St. Michael's Bridge (formerly over a moat around the walls). We continued to the Primate's Palace. We waited for the Information center to reopen after their lunch. Steve wanted a map of the tram system.

We went to Old Town Hall which was built as a private home with a tower. The tower was constructed prior to 1374 as part of the burgher house of Mayor Jacobus. It became the town hall eventually. Now it is the City History Museum, as of 1868. First we saw ecclesiastical art, including wood-carved statues. Then we climbed the 87 step spiral staircase to where we could go outside and walk around the cupola. There were displays on each floor. Then it was down 87 spiral steps - the railing was a rope. I don't do well on spiral steps, but did better than I expected going down. (I fell down steps and broke my wrist many moons ago, since then I have a healthy respect for walking down carefully.)

An exhibit about the theater stated that a theater hall with the first permanent stage was established in 1656 in the Evangelical-Lutheran lyceum. Catholic girls from Notre Dame performed there. Maria Theresa attended performances there in 1754 and 1764. There were exhibits about the town council, their courthouse, council hall, chapel. The museum is a look at Habsburg rule and a slice-of-life Bratislava in the early 20th century. Bratislava was formerly called Pozsony (Hungarian) and then Pressburg (German).

We then went to find a cafe to eat lunch - it was almost 4 p.m. by then. We ended up on the Promenade Square (which I called the long square in yesterday's e-mail). We ate at Verne, had duck breast, red cabbage, and potato pancakes (they were more like thick crepes), half liter of beer, all very good. We walked to the Blue Church of St. Elisabeth. To me it looked like it belonged in Enchanted Forest or a fairytale. It was closed, but we could peak through the iron gate into the church.

We decided to take a tram back to our hotel. I said that if we could get seats, we could just ride for a while. The first tram we took went across the Danube River on the Star Bridge. The man sitting across from us chatted with us - his English was very good, he lives in Bratislava. We rode to the end of the line (3 stops), then walked across the tram tracks and got on the tram going the opposite way, got off where we got on, got the tram which took us close (a block away) to our hotel. At the tram stops, subways, bus stops are signs telling you what vehicle stops there and how long until it will come. There's very little trash around the cities.

I realized that all the people out for an evening stroll don't have large homes or yards, so strolling gets them out of their small apartments and is also a social outlet. Many of the women wear dresses or skirts, a few men are in suits all day.

The elevator in our Petit Pension looks like it could have been put in when the building was built, probably over a hundred years ago. You have to close 2 half doors before it will move. The electric panel appears newer. The capacity of the elevator is 3 people - the 2 of us plus our luggage barely fit, and we have small carry-on suitcases.

Well, it's now after 9 p.m. and the sky is turning grey - it's still not dark, and it gets light before 5 a.m. We had a nice rest, then walked to Old Town. We ate at a different cafe, had potato pancakes stuffed with meat with cheese on top with a sauce, a small salad (no dressing) and chips (fried potatoes). Then we wandered a bit around, took a couple of streets we hadn't walked. We ended up in a park with 3 large metal statues, maybe the resistance movement?

It was sunny and 78, glad we didn't have Baltimore's 100 degree temps for the last few days and storms were predicted there today. We walked over 16,000 steps today, but the part of the pedometer on my phone which measures flights of steps has to be defective - it says we only did 2 flights of steps! I know we walked more flights of steps at the castle than that and then 87 spiral steps should amount to a few flights!

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve





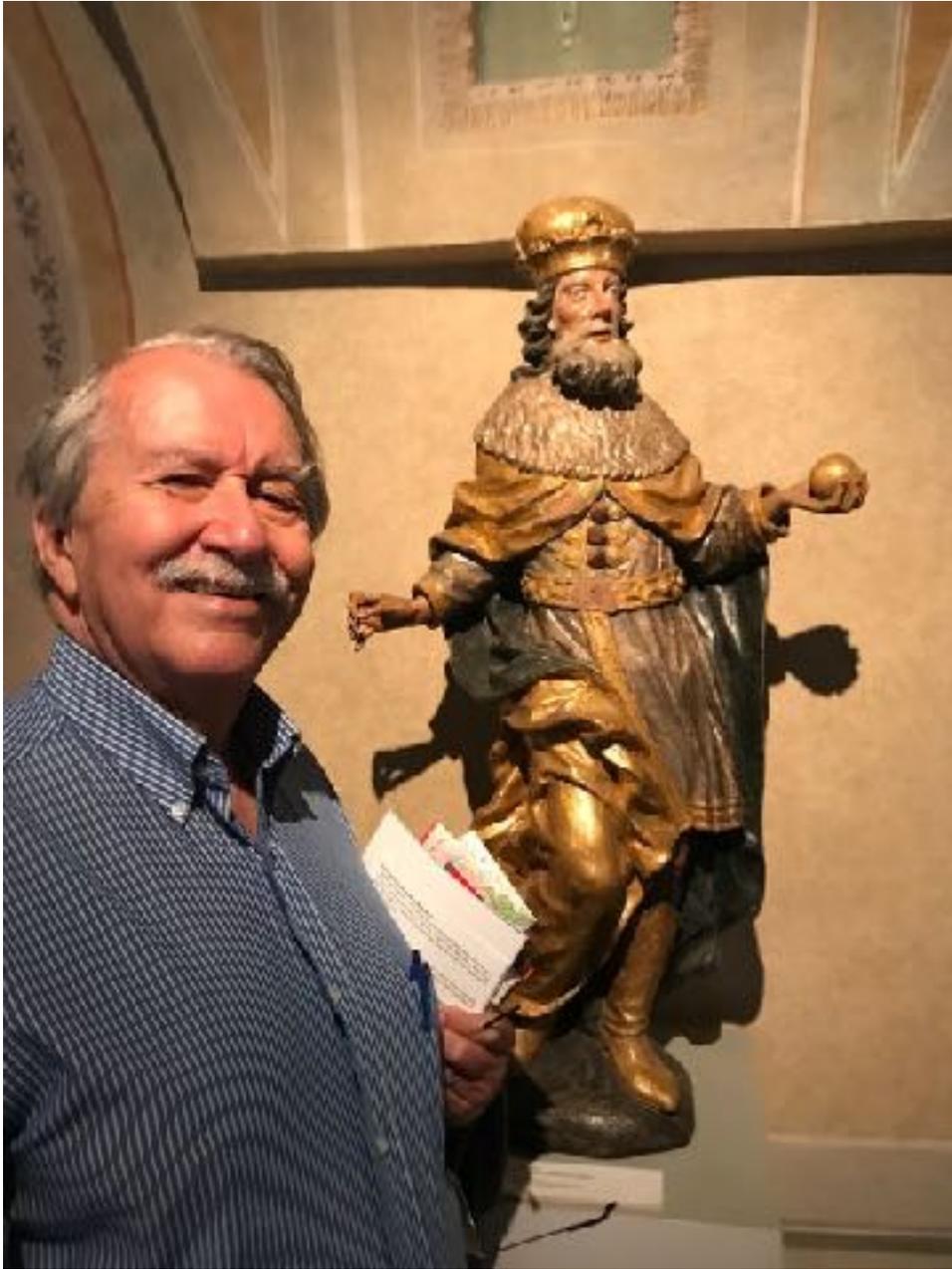
Looking down at the main square from the tower



St. Michael's Cathedral and the Castle from the top of the tower



Look how sharp the roof incline is! From the tower



Steve and St. Stephen



Stove with city seal, 1872



Old Town Hall - we were just below the clock



“Cumil”, the “peeper” - one of whimsical statues in Old Town - he’s coming out of a manhole



Duck breast, red cabbage, potato pancakes at restaurant along the Promenade Square - do I look tired?



Back of Blue Church of St. Elisabeth



Front of Blue Church - doesn't it look like it belongs in a fairytale?



Inside of Blue Church



School across the street from Blue Church - don't the old buildings look interesting/



Another interesting building across from the tram stop

Bratislava 6/3

Hi!

This morning we relaxed until going to Old Town for breakfast. We ate at Kaffee Mayer, each getting a sweet roll. Then we went to Primate's Palace for a tour, no photos allowed. The French-Neoclassic mansion (1781) was formerly the residence of the archbishop (or "primate"). In the courtyard is a fountain with St. George slaying a 3-headed dragon. There are portraits of German-speaking royals who ruled Hungary and lived in this part of the vast Habsburg empire. In the Hall of Mirrors in 1805, the "Peace of Pressburg" treaty was signed here, sorting out logistics after Napoleon beat the Austrians and Russians at the Battle of Austerlitz. This victory marked the peak of Napoleon's power. We looked through a bay window to look down on St. Stanislaus' Chapel - the window was built so the archbishop could look into the chapel when he was too ill to walk down to Mass.

There are 6 English tapestries illustrating the Ancient Greek myth of the tragic love between Hero and Leander. The tapestries are worth more than the price of the building! The tapestries were woven in England by Flemish weavers for the court of King Charles I in the 1630s. They were kept in London's Hampton Court Palace until Charles was deposed and beheaded in 1649. Cromwell sold them to France to help fund his civil war, but after 1650 they disappeared for centuries. In 1903 restorers broke through a false wall and discovered them perfectly preserved. We had audio-tours which explained much of what we saw.

We needed sustenance so went to Arthur Gelato for ice cream cones - mine was salted caramel with peanuts in it. This is the gelato which had so many people in line our first night.

We then went to Apponyi House, a restored mansion of a Hungarian aristocrat. The first floor had exhibits about vineyards and wine growing. The second and third floors had the Museum of Period Rooms. The second floor had 18th century Rococo-style rooms of the nobility with decorative ceramic stoves. The next floor illustrated the 19th century bourgeois/middle-class lifestyles.

We decided to have lunch, went back to Kaffee Mayer and split a piece of raspberry torte. Obviously this is not the best well-rounded food choices today! We went to a few souvenir shops so I could buy a couple of souvenirs (magnets and commemorative spoons for my collections).

We walked back toward our room, found an escalator down, walked under the roads, many shops are under there, and up the stairs to the Grassalkovich Palace, a Rococo summer palace from the 18th century. Joseph Haydn performed here. Since 1996 it serves as the seat of the President of the Slovak Republic.. it is about a block from

our hotel. Yesterday and today we've heard police whistles and sirens - we saw several motorcycle police, police cars, 3 black cars, followed by a police car go through the intersection - we're guessing that important political figures were being transported to the palace.

It's now almost 9:30. We relaxed for a while. Then I had a Zoom meeting with my Moms in Prayer group - I started the group at our daughter's middle school more than 25 years ago and we are still praying for the school. They were all in Baltimore area. We really appreciate the gift of technology which has kept us praying together for the last couple of years.

We walked back to Old Town, wandered around until we found a restaurant which sounded good. We were going to eat outside, but the cigarette smoke got to me, so we moved inside. We split beef stroganoff, fried potatoes, and a mixed salad with feta cheese and olives, and had crepes with walnuts for dessert. At least this was a better meal than earlier in the day! All was delicious. We strolled back to our hotel. We walked more than 10,000 steps again - I am weary!

It was 76 and sunny, but clouded over around 5 p.m.

There were a lot of school trips today. I was surprised to see one teacher following her class of about 33 maybe fourth graders. I would have had at least 5 adults with me for a class trip. There were also more tour groups.

Tomorrow we take a train to Prague.

Have a good weekend!

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Breakfast



Interesting stove in Apponyi House



Beds in Apponyi House



Pretty fireplace, interesting shaped mirror in bedroom



I was greeted by Schoner Naci at Kaffee Mayer. He was an eccentric old man, a poor carpet cleaner, who would dress up in his one black suit and top hat and go strolling through the city, often whispering “pretty” to the women. This was his favorite cafe.



Grassalkovich Palace serves as the seat of the President of the Slovak Republic.

6/4 Prague
Greetings from Hotel Harmony!

This morning we packed, checked out, rode a trolley bus to the train station. Steve had tried yesterday to get tickets online but they said they were sold out. We wanted to take the 10:06

a.m. train, the fast train with only reserved seats, but when we got to the station an hour before that, it was sold out. So we got tickets for the 12:06 p.m. train (the next one). A slightly slower train, with standing room and less than half price. We got a little breakfast (a filled doughnut, 2 long bread sticks) at a cafe in the train station. Then we waited for our train.

At 12:08 the track number was still missing. A couple of minutes later track #1 was listed and hordes of people rushed out to the train track. Then we waited at least another 5 minutes before the train showed up. We had assigned seats but we weren't sure which was our car - we did fortunately get on the right one. But our seats were 95 and 97 and we started at #1. By the time we got to our seats someone else was sitting there. A woman moved across the aisle so we could have seats 85 and 87 together. After a couple of stops, a woman got on with the assigned seat that Steve was in so he moved up to an empty seat. Eventually the people across the aisle got off so I moved across the aisle and he sat with me.

Unfortunately we were by a bulkhead so could barely see out. Besides, a lot of the time we were in a trough and couldn't see anything. When we could see, the land looked very rich with many crops growing.

The train started late, got later and later. At one point it stopped, the announcement came "we are stopped for track construction, do not get off the train (we weren't at a platform), it will be a 5 to 10 minute delay." In moments we were moving again! We were about 30 minutes late in arriving.

We got our gps on the phone to start, and it gave us directions to the hotel, 3 different routes, we took the recommended one - 18 minute walk. The small tiles that make up the sidewalk make pulling a suitcase more difficult. My arms ache from pulling my suitcase. But we hadn't walked much today (only 9,300 steps). We are on the seventh floor with a 2 room suite, a single bed in the entrance room along with a desk and 2 beds pushed together in the other room.

It's now after 9:30 and the sky is still light. I can see the crescent moon! We talked with the receptionist and she gave us guidance for taking a tram to church tomorrow. Trams and buses are free for those over 65!!! So we can take many tram rides here!

We walked down the street, looking for somewhere to eat supper. A couple of the restaurants had no space, no reservation accepted until Monday! We stopped at the Beer Restaurant and it had space for us. We split smoked pork ribs (like thick pieces of ham) with mustard and horseradish and pearl onions and hot peppers. We were expecting bone, but there was none. 5 pieces of bread came with it. As we were eating, a three piece jazz band was setting up upstairs -sax, piano, bass. They started playing while we waited for our dessert - we tried their apple strudel with raisins and walnuts (though very few raisins and walnuts) to see what it was like - the one we made was better! There were at least 10 servers and they were scurrying the whole time. Several private rooms were upstairs, open to the restaurant, at least 3 parties were up there. When we paid for our dinner, the waitress put a "reserved" sign on our table - there was only one empty table, and that included the ones on the sidewalk outside. It was a treat to have the jazz band play.

We then walked further, saw some interesting buildings, including the Municipal Building and the Powder Gate. There was a tent stage with singers on the plaza. These old buildings have such character to them! We stopped in a souvenir shop to browse, will go back there in a couple of days. Also went in a grocery store, looking for something for breakfast, but they didn't have any sweet rolls. We came back to the hotel, it was stuffy in our room so I opened some windows, discovered a door behind the desk that led to the balcony, so we went out and

looked around - we have the only room on our hall, and it is the “penthouse” since the seventh floor is the top one.

Cars stop for pedestrians near the crosswalk in Bratislava. But you do not jaywalk, you wait for the green light that says you may cross the street. It may take 3 or 4 different lights to cross one street, depending on where the traffic is coming from (very fast!), especially when there are many lanes to the street. In Prague we only saw one traffic light, you just cross the street wherever you want to.

It was sunny for most of the day, turned cloudy about 4:30, it was dripping when we left the train station and also when we left the hotel for supper, but stopped raining by the time we were finished supper, about 72.

Have a good Lord's Day!

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Our train compartment



Our "penthouse" suite



Our dinner - smoked pork ribs, hot peppers, pearl onions, bread, beer



Apple strudel



Interesting old buildings



Street musicians



Powder Gate - I'm guessing it was part of the city wall



Close up - see the angels golden wings!

6/5 Pentecost
Happy Pentecost!

We wore our red today since that is what we do at our church, Holy Cross Lutheran, on Pentecost, the birthday of the Christian Church.

We ate breakfast at the bakery across the street. Then we walked to the tram stop a couple of blocks away, and waited for tram 8. We rode the tram (free for those over 65) across the river and for a while. Then we got off, took tram 20 to close to the castle. Then we took tram 22 which goes very close to the castle (and you don't have to walk up the hill to it). We waited in the security line until my bag was checked and we walked through the scanner.

We quickly walked to St. Vitus, the cathedral in the castle. The procession had just started when we were allowed in (no visitors, only those going to worship were allowed in). We found seats near the rear - it was full. They had 5 tv screens showing the front altar area. I could see the incense rising, didn't think to take a photo of it until it was too late - it reminded me of the verse, "Let my praise rise before You, Lord, like incense". The cardinal conducted the service, so this is the third cardinal we have seen in 15 days! I had never seen one in person before! We assume that it was confirmation day because about 60 people and their sponsor came to the cardinal for him to put oil on their foreheads. Of course, we don't understand the Czech language, so we didn't understand much of the Mass. This is the 24th language we have worshipped in.

After the mass we walked around the cathedral - wished we had audioguides so we could learn more about the altars. Some of them did have a few lines in English about the side altars. One of the tombs was Maria Theresa's favorite Saint John of Nepomuk, she had changes made several times before she died. The last change was adding 4 angels, one at each corner of the tomb. It is very ornate. One altar shows St. Ludmilla as she is murdered. She raised her grandson Wenceslaus. Her daughter-in-law had her murdered. They finally chased us out so the cathedral could be opened for the public (for a price).

We saw a sign to a Cafe Bistro, which led to 91 steps down to the cafe outside the castle walls. We had a berry smoothie, each had a panini, his was salami, mine was Caprese. After a stop at the toilet (20 kroner each to get in) - Czech is in the European Union but use their own money, everywhere else we've been on this trip has been euros - we walked out on the terrace overlooking the city for the view. Then we climbed the 91 steps up and got tickets for the castle.

We went to the Old Royal Palace, went in the room where the Third Defenestration took place in 1618 - the enemies threw the 3 men out the window there - they survived miraculously - the window was on the second or third floor. That started the Thirty Years War. We went in the Royal Hall where coronations were held - it was huge. They wouldn't let us go in the Holy Spirit Chapel. We did go in the Diet Room where royal court was held.

History lesson: from the 9th century -1306: duke of Borivoj I (880) began the castle. He and his wife Ludmilla became Christians in 883. Their grandson was King (St.) Wenceslaus. 1306-1526: Charles IV had the royal palace rebuilt. 1526 - 1918 the Habsburgs were in control. Empress Maria Theresa carried out the last major rebuilding of the castle. It is now the official office of the President of the Czech Republic. According to the Guinness Book of Records, Prague Castle is the largest ancient castle in the world.

Next we went to St. George's Basilica. It was used before St. Vitus and is Romanesque in style, small very plain. King Wenceslaus had his grandmother St. Ludmilla buried there.

We spent much time in the Golden Lane. We saw exhibits of armor and helmets. Along the lane were several small houses (maybe 8' x 16'). In the arches was space under which the guards requested to build houses. Later the houses were sold to others. There was a seamstress' house, a goldsmith's, a guard's, a tarot card reader's (she was executed by the Nazis because she was predicting the fall of the Third Reich), a tavern (your tavern could be shut down for bad behavior, such as shouting).

By then we were exhausted, so we walked back to the entrance and waited for a tram. Tram 23 took us to the bottom of the hill. We took a couple of different trams, should have taken tram 15 back, but didn't, so ended up walking several blocks back to the hotel.

It's now after 9 and I'm exhausted. I slept through the night without waking up (that happens about once every six months), but then I'm exhausted the next day.

I wanted to go to Charles Bridge and to the Old Town Hall, so we took a bus - the hotel receptionist gave us directions. However we never did find either one, finally took a tram back to where we got on this morning. Then we decided to walk there. But I was starving, so we stopped in an Italian restaurant (closest one to where we were) and had pizza. They brought us 2 kinds of bread and tomato chutney for while we waited - that was good. The pizza crust was so hard to cut, even with very sharp knives, and it was slightly burned, so I didn't enjoy the pizza very much. Oh, well!

We walked back to our hotel - over 12,500 steps today. It was 80 and sunny though rain was predicted.

It's always good to hear from you.

Have a good week!

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Breakfast - apple strudel on the right



St. Vitus Cathedral tower



Worship in St. Vitus



Front of St. Vitus, altar



The altar had steps going up behind it. Never seen that before.



Rose window in back. There was a tomb in the middle of the aisle, no idea whose.



Tomb of St. John of Nepomuk in St. Vitus Cathedral, decorated at Maria Theresa's direction



Baptism of Jesus, mosaic in back of cathedral



View from the Castle steps of Prague. Note the building to the right of the cupolas - it looks like a V!



Crown Jewels in Diet Room

Front of St. Vitus Cathedral





Pizza for supper

6/6
Hi!

Tired doesn't even touch how I feel. I'm glad tomorrow we take a bus to Munich. We need to be tested for covid before we can fly to the U.S. Wednesday we take the subway to the airport and then fly to Dulles Airport in Washington D.C. I'm just exhausted.

It rained some last night after we went to bed - I heard the raindrops on the window and on the balcony. This morning it was cloudy when we got up, just tiny sights of blue sky. But it turned sunny after we left the hotel for breakfast at the bakery across the street. Later while we were eating lunch there were black clouds overhead but they blew away without dropping any rain. It's 84.

We took the bus to the same bus stop we went to last evening, but walked the other way along the Vltava River. There are many boats moored on both sides, sightseeing boats and restaurant boats. We saw a towboat pushing a barge to the riverfront. There were some tourist boats in the river.

We walked to Charles Bridge which is famous. I just wasn't very impressed with it, guess my expectations were too high. Charles Bridge is a medieval stone arch bridge that crosses the Vltava in Prague. Construction started in 1357 under the auspices of King Charles IV and finished in the early 15th century. We went under the Old Town Bridge Tower which served chiefly as a triumphal arch on the Royal Road. There were many artists to draw a picture or a characterization of you, plus many selling jewelry or souvenirs. There was a class trip of first or second graders crossing the bridge. The Charles Bridge connects Old Town and the Prague Castle, the only bridge across the river for centuries. The Lesser Town Bridge Towers are at the other end of the bridge.

From there we took a zigzag route to Our Lady of Victories to view the Infant Jesus of Prague. Legends claim the statue once belonged to Teresa of Avila. 2 school groups maybe (4th or 5th graders) went through the church while we were there and an older group was coming as we left.

We took a tram for a few minutes towards the Old Town Hall. We arrived at 7 minutes to noon, so were able to see the Prague Astronomical Clock in action. It is the oldest working astronomical clock in the world. The skeleton beats on a bell. The 12 Apostles appear in the windows above the clock. I'm guessing the astrolabe moved (a rotating image of the heavens showing the movement of the sun, moon, and stars as well as the heavens that are the seat of the God), but I missed seeing that. The church bells chime the hour (at 1 p.m. it chimed 13 times).

We found the White Horse Restaurant on the square to eat lunch - we sat outside so could see the blue sky/dark clouds/blue sky overhead. We shared a pig's knuckle and a beer and were given bread and oil and vinegar. We're not sure what part of the pig the knuckle comes from, possibly the elbow. It was very good, we couldn't finish it. A couple with 3 Pekinese dogs was at the next table - they had a wagon with an umbrella over it to carry the dogs. (You see dogs on trams, in stores, wherever you go, all have been well-behaved.) Then I used the Water Closet - down 27 steps - guess you can't use the toilet if you are handicapped, since most of them are downstairs.

We then toured Old Town Hall, it is listed as the most beautiful monument in Prague's historical center. In May 1945 the Nazis destroyed a large part of the building. We, as seniors, could use the elevator (50 kr each) instead of walking up and down the 5 story

ramp to the top of the tower. We could see Prague in all directions from the top. We were only allowed in one of the ceremonial halls which was plain and set up as a dining room with a long table. We went into the Chapel of the Virgin Mary, consecrated in 1381. We could climb a staircase up to a window overlooking the 12 apostles which circled at the outside windows while the clock struck. We didn't take the guided tour the medieval underground, the ticket taker said it was too dangerous for seniors.

We then walked to St. Nicholas Church which is the Czech Hussite Church. There were displays about the Hussites (Jan Hus). Steve expected the Hussites would not have images and statues similar to the Calvinist Reformed, but they kept them. We tried to visit the Tyn Church but it is closed on Mondays. We walked a few blocks to the subway. You take long escalators down 3 or 4 floors to get there - my vertigo starts bothering me when I ride down such a long escalator. We rode for 2 stops, then came to the surface and walked down a long promenade along the street - the buildings were painted very prettily. The building on the corner where we caught the tram had many statues on it. The tram took us back to our hotel.

Hello, again! 8 p.m.

I started writing this letter, then was so tired that I laid down. I fell asleep for over an hour, and I never nap during the day!

We walked down the street, stopped in the first souvenir shop we stopped in in Prague and got souvenirs. Then we walked further down the street, going into the Palladium which is an upscale shopping mall with shops on 5 floors. We rode the escalator to floor -2 (2 floors down) but I couldn't find what I wanted in the toy store. Then we rode the escalators up to the top floor, floor 2 to the food court. We saw Burger King, KFC, McDonalds, and Pizza Hut - all their menus were in English and looked like what you could get in the U.S. The other shops also had menus in English, I didn't see any Czech language. We each got a cup of ice cream - he had Belgian chocolate, I had pistachio (which didn't taste like pistachio) and salted caramel. We found the escalators down to the ground floor (0). Then we walked back here.

Please pray for safe travel and for negative covid tests - we need to have the tests to fly to the U.S.

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



The Vltava River with the castle and St. Vitus Cathedral on the hill.



The Charles Bridge over the Vltava River



Old Town Bridge Tower led to the Charles Bridge



Infant Jesus of Prague



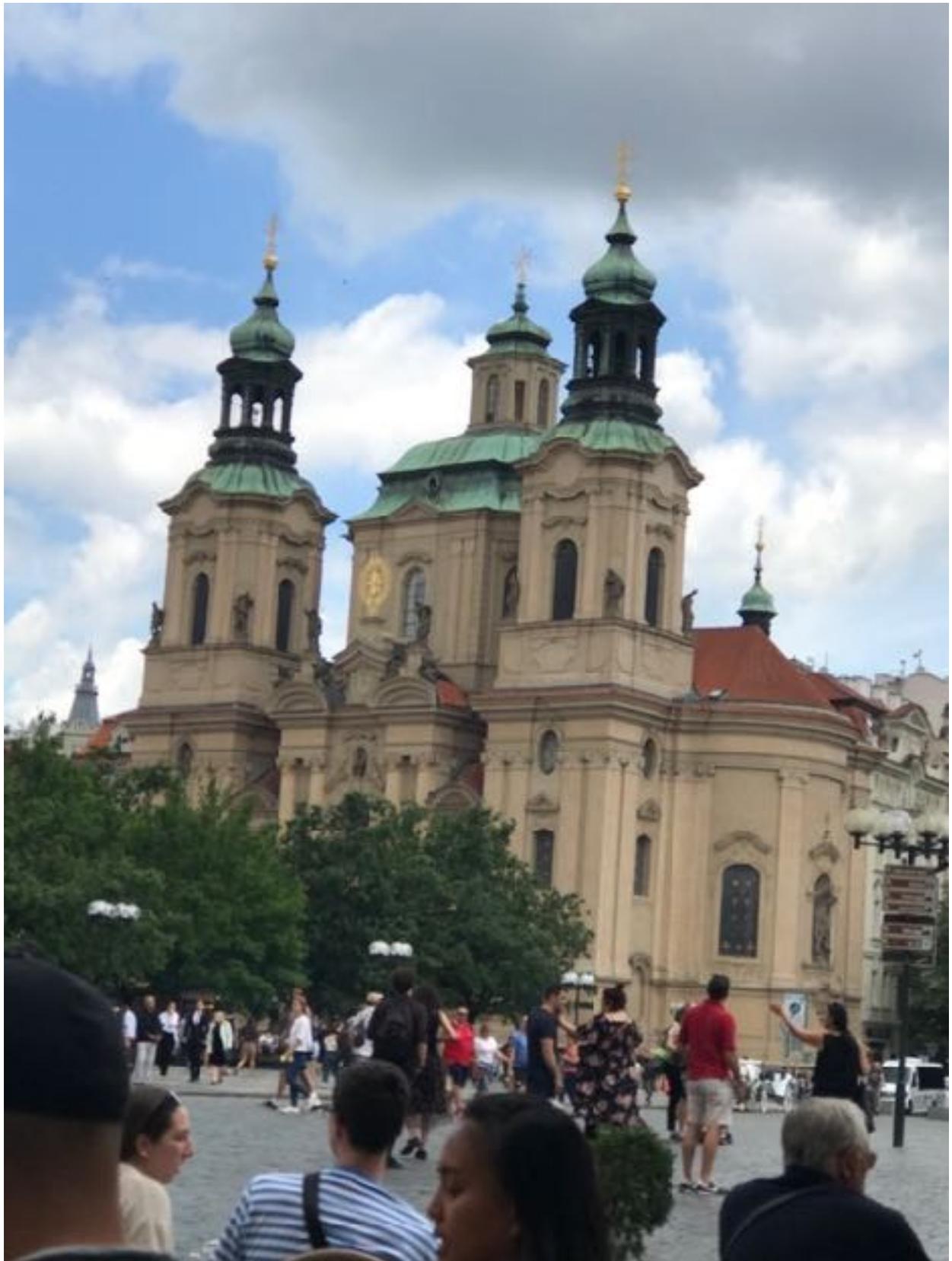
Prague Astronomical Clock on Old Town Hall. The skeleton just to the right of the blue rings a bell. The 12 apostles appear in the windows next to the angel at the top.



Old Town Hall with Astronomical clock



Interesting painted building



St. Nicholas Church (Hussite)



We split a pig's knuckle for lunch



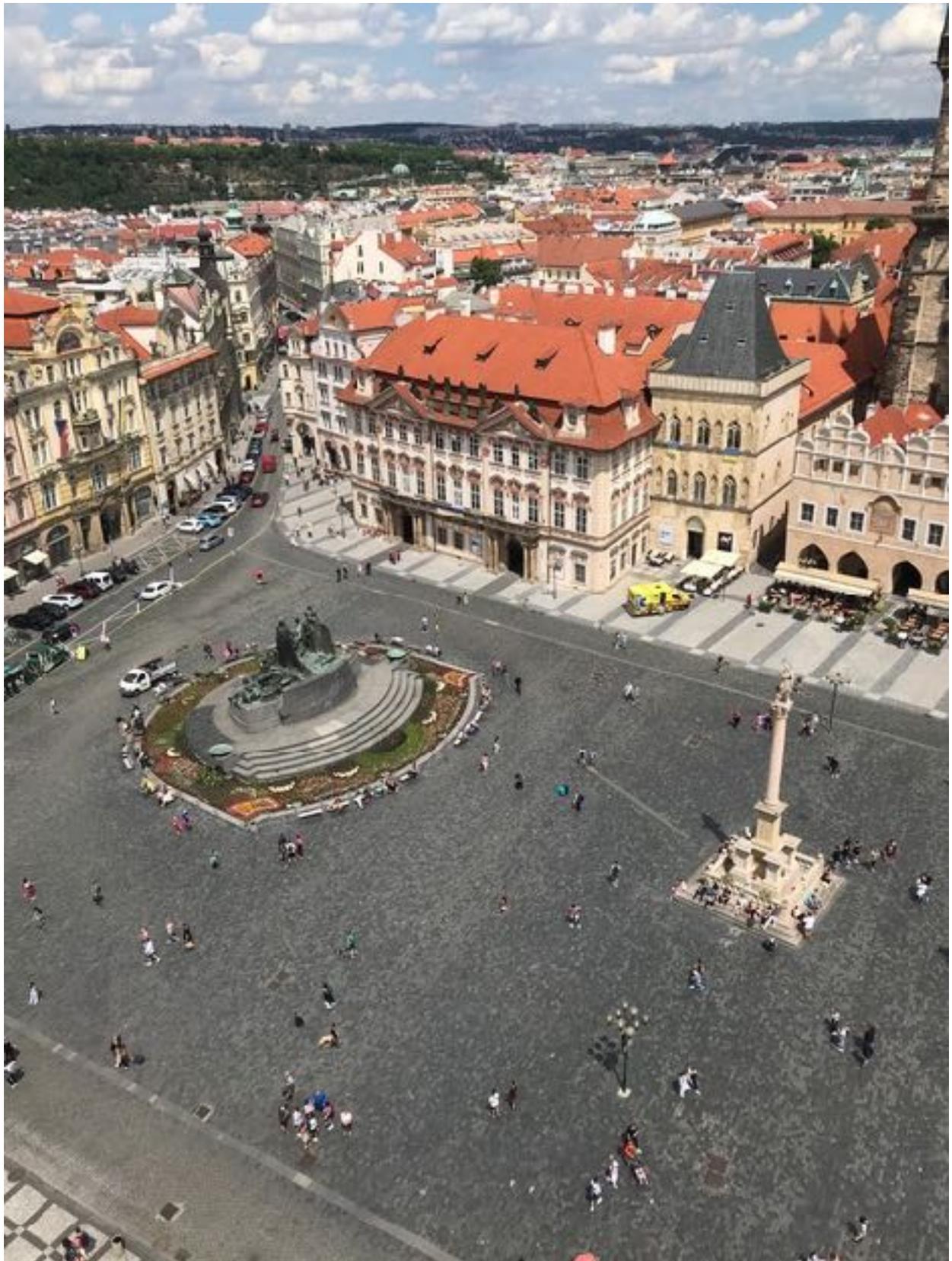
View from the Old Town Hall Tower of the castle and St. Vitus Cathedral



Roof top cafes



Tyn Church - they sold the property in front of the church so buildings block the view



The plaza



Chapel of the Virgin Mary in Old Town Hall



Banners painted on the wall of the Gothic Chapel of the Virgin Mary



Apostles which appear through the windows when the Astronomical Clock rings the hour



The other apostles



The front of St. Nicholas Church, Hussite



Close up of the altar in St. Nicholas Church



Tour car for rent - we saw several of them driving around town

Prague to Munich 6/7

Guten Tag!

This morning we woke up to rain, not hard, but more than drips. We dressed, went across the street to the bakery to get some goodies, then brought them back to the room to eat. Then we packed and left. The hotel receptionist told us what trams to take to go to the train station to catch our bus. The first tram came fairly quickly, the second one was waiting when we arrived at the tram stop so that worked well and we didn't have to drag our suitcases in the rain.

When we got to near the train station we did have to drag our suitcases to the station. Then we looked for the bus stop. Steve searched all over while I stayed with the suitcases. We were to go to B4, we found B1 and B2 but couldn't find B4 anywhere, even after 40 minutes of looking and asking. Finally he went up a long flight of steps and found some people waiting for a bus, so he carried the suitcases up, making 2 trips. It was still raining so we stood in the rain, but discovered that this was B4!

We arrived 5 minutes before the bus was due, but it was 5 minutes late. At least we got there in time! We drove through Munich and on to the Autobahn and headed to Munich. For some reason, the bus driver stopped twice, don't know why. We passed some pretty towns. The fields looked lush. There were many "fields" of photocells. There were also fields with plants growing straight up wires - wonder if they were pole beans. We also saw fields of yellow flowers, not sure what crop that was. The rain stopped after an hour and a half. It was cloudy the rest of the way, some low clouds, a little sun. We arrived in Germany at 11:54 a.m.

We arrived in Munich about 2:30. We passed the Olympic Village from 50 years ago - remember the massacre? We passed the BMW plant - we had seen it before, when we were here 2 weeks ago (seems so long ago!). Fortunately the bus station was next to the train station, so we knew where we were. Unfortunately the bus parked at the far end of the station, so it was 0.7 mile here, dragging our suitcases - at least most of it was paved instead of cobblestones.

We checked in to our hotel - we're in the back instead of on the street (hopefully that will mean it will be quieter). We dropped our luggage off and went to find a pharmacy to have our covid tests. It was around the corner, not far. We had to wait 15 minutes for the results, so we walked to the bakery to buy food for breakfast. Then we walked the 2 blocks back to the pharmacy.

We passed! Praise God, we do not have covid! Since that is required to enter the U.S., we can fly home tomorrow! Thank you, God! Thank you for your prayers!

We walked further down the street to a kiosk I remembered, to buy a magnet as my souvenir of Munich.

Some random observations:

*The shower in Prague was really small, anyone larger than we are would not fit. If I moved slightly to wash another part of my body, I hit the faucet and the water either got very hot or very cold.

* At the railroad station, I saw bikes being walked down the escalators or on the lifts (elevators). There were many school groups going through the station, headed on a trip. I saw at least 2 groups of students going backpacking.

* The red light adds a yellow light just before it turns green, so the vehicles start moving slowly as the light turns.

*You must wear a seat belt on a bus.

*Women gave up their seats on the tram for me - I didn't think I looked that old! Guess I look older than I think!

*The Czech Republic was the 33rd country we've been in - so we added Austria, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic on this trip.

Hi!

We just came back from supper. We left about 6:30, walked around the block, walked further, didn't find anything we wanted to eat. There was a car carrier unloading Porsches on the main street - don't know what he did with them after he unloaded the 3 cars. We finally walked back to Old Town to look for food. The streets were really crowded.

We decided to eat at Schnizelwirt outside (the restaurant was in the basement) on the plaza. We had beef consommé with liver dumpling (I didn't care much for the liver dumpling - I usually like liver) and Jagerschnitzel which is escalope of pork in creamed mushroom sauce with spaetzle - that was delicious, and, of course, with beer. I noticed we didn't drink the beer as fast as usual because it's much cooler out (about 65). The sun was peaking through the clouds.

Hopefully wifi will work to send this to you today. Only one photo today.

Tomorrow morning we pack up, take the subway to the airport, and catch a noon plane (6 a.m. in Baltimore). Please pray for traveling mercies. Thank you.

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Dinner 6/7: beef bouillon with liver dumpling, Jagerschniteel (escalope of pork in creamed mushroom sauce with spaetzle) in Munich



Butterfly wings on building across from where we caught the bus 6/7 in Prague

6/8 HOME

Greetings from HOME!

Yea, we made it!

This morning our alarm went off at 7 - 10 seconds before that the workmen started working on the building that is being built against the hotel (and against the room we were in) - the pile driver was going a few minutes later! They work until at least 7 or 8 p.m. - we were usually out for supper when they quit.

We ate our breakfast, packed, and were at the train station before 8 a.m. We found our subway and Steve bought tickets for us. The subway was very crowded this morning. We arrived at the airport about 9 a.m.

First we had to get in a line where the woman wanted to see our negative covid test and passport, questioned how long it took us to get to the airport, where we had traveled, was the weather good, etc. Next we got in the line to buy our ticket and get our boarding pass. Steve had tried to buy it online, but the United Airline site didn't work. We said we wanted seats together and preferred by the window. She looked around for a while and got us a window seat and the one next to it (and this was 3 hours before departure!). We went through another line - not sure what that was about, maybe another passport check. Then we went through security - I forgot to take off my money belt, so had extra checking. We dragged our carry-on suitcases through the airport - it seemed like we walked for miles in there - our gate was the furthest out. There was a line for passengers to the U.S., another passport check and boarding pass check.

Finally we sat at our gate for an hour before it was time to board. Our seats were over the wing. No one sat next to me in the third seat, so we could stretch out a bit and didn't have to bother someone when we got up. The plane started, got to the runway and turned around. There was an imbalance in the rear baggage compartment, so we went back to the gate to have it fixed. So we started about 20 minutes late.

The plane was almost full. We had a crying baby on board, unhappy and mad, he slept for a few hours, then cried more, except when the parents walked him up and down the aisle. We had some turbulence, but not too bad or too hard. We were served drinks and a very small bag of small crackers shortly after take-off. An hour later we were served chicken in mushroom sauce with potatoes and a corn salad (very good) with a Kit Kat for dessert. The window shades must work automatically because suddenly it was dark in the plane and it was between 3 and 8 p.m. Munich time, so should have been bright out.

We arrived at Dulles Airport about 10 minutes late. They separated those taking more flights from those of us staying. An airport bus took us from the plane to the terminal.

Then we got in line for Passport Control. There must have been a thousand people being processed! When it finally was our turn, we were sent to the other end of the room (at least 100' away) and were the first ones to go through the newly opened lines. Finally we were finished!

I called our son-in-law Greg and he and daughter Stephanie and granddaughter Joanna (almost 7) came to pick us up. Joanna finished first grade yesterday, so they went to the Annex for the Air and Space Museum which is on the edge of the airport today. They saw our plane land. They took us to their house for pizza for supper. Stephanie brought us home. The mailmen left more than half of our mail on our front porch - we have a mail slot in the front door so no one needs to pick up the mail. Don't understand why the mailmen can't see it! Obviously our regular mailman did not deliver our mail!

It was sunny most of the day, then turned cloudy as we drove to their home in Brunswick MD. We could see that it was raining on the mountains in the distance. It poured most of the way home, even saw a rainbow across the whole sky! It was 80 and humid. There was no humidity in Europe. It's thundering and raining now.

We thank you for your prayers for us. We thank you for traveling with us, hope you learned a few things and enjoyed hearing about other countries. We praise God for safe travel and for not having covid. (One of the other Rick Steves tours a few weeks ago had over half of their members get covid and they had to be quarantined.) No more 12,000 step days for us for a while!

God bless you.
Lynne and Steve



Rainbow over I-70 tonight. Coming home