

Dear Family and Friends,

Warmest greetings from chilly, wet, Asia Minor to you all in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus! This is one of our most favorite seasons of the year, not because of the weather, but because of what the Christmas season represents! What an awe inspiring time to meditate on the truth that approximately 2000 years ago, our God took on the form of a man and became a servant, so that we could be reconciled to Him. That is true love that is only found in our God. In this country, "Christmas Cheer" is not the norm. Though Christmas trees are erected in large shopping malls in honor of the new year, it lacks the muzak version of "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" being pumped throughout and the festive charm that this season brings to a culture who celebrates Christ's birth.

Most of all, however, we have been reminded of how this sinful world has come to accept sin, and to even excuse it in many cases. We are reminded of Psalm 36:1-2, when King David describes the one in sin, "There is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flatters himself in his own eyes, when he finds out his iniquity and when he hates." Sinful man excuses himself for his evil, and even congratulates one another for fierce words and harsh actions! We pat ourselves on the back for a job well-done. Oh, to have a heart as David did in Psalm 51:1-4, acknowledging his sin which he says, "is always before me." This is our challenge, as those who are sent here to bring the Good News of the Gospel: to present our friends with our wonderful Savior, while allowing the Holy Spirit to use us and convict them of sin, righteousness, and the coming judgment. (Jn 16:8)

In this day and age, it is easy to see the results of sin all around us. We continue to be in a state of emergency here until the end of January and a high likelihood of further beyond that. People continue to lose their jobs for no lawful reason and with no recourse. Workers being expelled and imprisoned on a whim is becoming commonplace. Only a few days ago there was another terrorist bombing at a soccer stadium in Istanbul and threats of more throughout the big cities and highly populated areas of Turkey. Fear permeates the hearts of the people here; fear and disgust. What can we offer? What can we do to help? Your fervent prayers are needed, for we have the greatest solution, what the heart of every person that thirsts for truth desires. We offer true and lasting peace, joy inexpressible, and eternal life through our Savior and King, Jesus Christ!

We are praising the Lord for bringing several people into our lives that we are meeting with on a regular basis to read and study God's word. We have called them by name in our list of prayer requests and we would appreciate it if you would pray with us. May we bold in our speech as we share the Gospel, redeeming the time and opportunities the Lord brings to us, and may our lives adorn the Gospel of Christ in all that we do. There are four people in particular that seem as though the Lord is really working in their hearts - that would be Fatin, Zerrin, Guven, and Sema. Pray that the Lord would illuminate the scriptures to them and they would come to know Him before the year ends.

Finally, this Christmas we are having 2 celebrations; one as an outreach (on Dec. 24th) and one as a more intimate celebration among our fellowship of believers (on Dec. 21). Please pray for these times to be special and penetrate the hearts of everyone in attendance. We have been experiencing some push-back from local forces regarding our celebrations. We ask that the Lord would intervene and that we would have favor in their eyes, and that their presence at the celebrations would not dampen the joy of anyone in attendance. Please pray for our protection and the protection of all of God's people during this tense time here. We are also planning an evening of praying in the new year on the 31st. In the past, it has been one of the most meaningful and blessed times of fellowship with one another as we worship our Savior and King into the coming year. May we build one another up to love and good works; may we encourage one another while it is still called today; and may our spirits be renewed and refreshed as we worship our Lord together, as Ankara Hope Church, and bring in the year 2017!

May you each know more what is the depth, breadth, width, and length of Christ's love this Christmas season and throughout the year 2017. Have a blessed and merry Christmas!

Joyfully serving for His glory,
Joe, Karyn, Jacob, Joshua, and Angela Cavon

Cavon Praises and Prayers:

- Praise God we received our 1 year residency permits!
- Praise God Jake's semester in Japan went extremely well and that he is coming to see us this Christmas, Josh is learning responsibility as a working individual and will be able to spend Christmas with Karyn's family, and Angela is catching on to internet schooling.
- Pray for both Jacob and Joshua to make wise and godly decisions in their lives and to draw near to God. Please pray that they would surround themselves with godly people who will stand with them and build them up in the Lord.
- Pray for good attendance of our holiday celebrations. May hearts be touched and the Lord magnified. Please pray for protection from evil men that mean to do harm.
- Pray for Berna who has been faltering in her very new faith due to health problems, losing her job, arguing with her son, etc. May it not be choked out by the things of this world, but may she see that God is sovereign and faithful in all these things and that she needs to seek Him. Pray for her son, Zafer. May the Lord reveal Himself to him and draw him to Christ.
- Pray for Esma, Fatin, Rasha, and Gozde who we are meeting with on a regular basis for Bible Study. May the Lord open the eyes of their hearts to see their position before a holy God and the way which has been opened for them to be reconciled.
- Pray for Zerrin who is also meeting with us, but is experiencing a lot of negative input from her family for considering Christianity.
- Pray for Guven and Sema to come to know Christ.
- Pray for Bercu who seems to be experiencing spiritual warfare in the form of health issues to herself and close family relatives. May the Lord be her strength during this time and may she know Him in a deeper way through this trial.
- Pray for Ozlem to be able to stay in Ankara, especially for suitable housing and to be able to move out of the dorms.
- Praise God for Turgay's eye surgery went well. May he have peace in his household as he cares for his father, tries to find a steady job, and works on getting another degree. Please pray for encouragement for him and perseverance.
- Praise God for Muzaffer who has stepped away from the fellowship and has now decided to return. May God orchestrate his work schedule so that he is able to attend the weekly meetings regularly.
- Pray for Altan to grow in his love for the Lord and put God first in his life and in all his decisions.
- Pray for Selma to be diligent to seek new employment and that God would lead her to just the right job.
- Pray for wisdom as we take steps towards outreach during this time. May He bring to us His elect while keeping those that seek to cause trouble far from us.
- Pray we continually grow in our love and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

