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Subject: Winter Update
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Our dear Prayer Partners,

As of the beginning of the year, I have been working full time again. The choir rehearsals are in full swing and plans for services with *Gospel Union* are being made. I still have to take it slowly and can tell that I don't have any reserves. As soon as I do too much, my body reminds me and I have to slow down and rest. The old symptoms return, though not as strong as they were. I was uncertain as to whether I'd have the strength to make my annual trip to the States to visit my parents this Winter. I prayed specifically that God would make it clear to me if I should book a flight. I felt He did do that, and so I have a flight this Saturday (Jan. 28) to fly to Phoenix. I will be there for nearly a month, in which time I hope to continue to recover from my long illness. I know, I know, people say we aren't getting any younger and recovery takes longer, we can no longer do as much as we did at thirty. I am getting used to that.

But God is in no way limited and He is working. We have begun our **Bible studies** again and are adding new members to them. One lady who came for the first time doesn't own a Bible (hard for us to imagine, but that is fairly common here), but was very open and enthusiastic and had good questions which showed that she'd previously been wondering about who Jesus is. She was so grateful for being included in the group. I gave her a New Testament, and when people who are that interested begin reading the Bible, I know they are on their way to joining the Kingdom family. **Please pray** that as we read the Bible together, God's Spirit will lead people to faith in Jesus.

Last week I went out to dinner with the lady who gave her heart to the Lord exactly one year ago. She wanted to celebrate her first birthday in the Lord. Her life has changed so much since she made that decision and she has witnessed to her family, friends and people at work. But there are challenges in being the only Christian in the family. There are **several women** in that position who have come to know the Lord through the choir and Bible studies. On the one hand, they are experiencing God's love and power in their lives and it is giving them a joy they had never had. On the other hand, they are experiencing new problems in their family. Jesus said members of our own households would become our enemies and I see this very clearly in the lives of these women. **Please pray** that they will be filled with the power of the Spirit and be able to continually forgive and love, not allowing anger and bitterness to pull them down. By this they may be able to win their family members to faith in the Lord. The temptation to give up (not on the Lord, but on the family) is often great.

AND we are getting **new members** into the choir. Young people are joining us and we have three new men! This is a real answer to prayer. Now **please pray** that they will stick with it and that others will also join us. Our choir members are so friendly and so excited when new people come, it is really heart-warming to see how they take the new people under their wings, helping them with the music and the English pronunciation, and just welcoming them into our choir family. The fellowship in the choirs is a very important part of the ministry of this work. After the rehearsal last night, one young woman, who was there for the second time, was full of enthusiasm and told me with tears in her eyes that she'd sung in other choirs, but this one had something "different". It was a moving moment and very encouraging to me.

We now have dates for **upcoming Gospel services**. God is working. Our first service will take place on **May 13** in the large State Church here in Neustrelitz where I live. At the present, that church is looking for a pastor and I am praying they will choose a man of God who loves the Lord and wants to help people to learn to love Him as well. We are being allowed to ask the pastor of the Baptist Church, where I have attended since living here, to preach the sermon. He and I will plan the service. This is a wonderful opportunity and I consider it an answer to prayer.

On **June 3** we will sing in a service in the State Church in Feldberg. **Please pray** for these services and our preparations. We are learning *A City Called Heaven*, a spiritual in which the singer says, "I'm trying to make heaven my home". Another song we're singing at the moment is *There is a Redeemer*. How well these two songs go together! Last night I told the choir members how they could make heaven their home. Not through their own feeble efforts to be "a good person", but because Jesus has already paid for their entrance there. Hallelujah!

On Jan. 15 the Protestant Allianz held their annual service, where all the Protestant churches in Neubrandenburg come together to worship. *Gospel Union* usually sings for this service every year, but this time, because of our preparation time being so short due to my illness, we were unable to sing. In spite of this, the Allianz allocated the offering for the support of this work. As the woman pastor of the Methodist Church made this announcement before the collection and explained our mission, I was moved to tears. I found out last night that the people gave very generously. Praise the Lord, not just for the financial support, but for the spiritual support. The choir members sense this and we are all encouraged and grateful.

It occurred to me that some of you may not have seen our website since it has been updated. Our address is:

www.gospel-union.de

To read the texts in English, just click on the American flag. You can also see and hear the choir singing so you can get an idea of what we are doing in these services.

I appreciate the time you've taken to read this update, which has been longer than usual. More importantly, I appreciate the time you take to pray for us all. Thanks for praying that I'll have strength for my trip to the U.S., that God's Spirit will continue to work among the singers in the choirs here, that He will guide us as we plan the upcoming services, and that more and more people in the choirs will want to give their hearts and lives to our Lord Jesus Christ. And I pray that God will bless you!

Very grateful to and for you all,
Linda