



Screenshot from our New Year craft session on Zoom

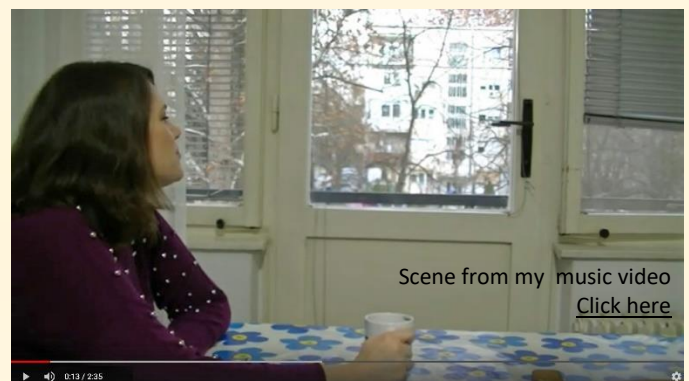
“Let our New Year’s resolution be this: we will be there for one another as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word.” ~Goran Persson

Happy New Year, Everyone! How did you ring in 2021? Whether you celebrated at home or ventured out, I hope you had a memorable time of saying goodbye to 2020 and welcoming in 2021. New Year’s Eve is the time the teenagers and youth from our churches in North Macedonia usually get together for an overnight spiritual retreat. Since COVID restrictions prevented us from gathering in person this year, we took our celebration online. We had three events on Zoom: A craft session, a music video competition, and a main event leading up until midnight.

On the afternoon of the 31st, eight people joined me for a craft workshop including the nieces of one member who got a special exemption to pass as “youth”. Participants signed up in advance and were sent a packet of craft materials. We cut out the pattern and glued tissue paper over the holes while chatting together as a class. The picture above has participants showing off their final product:

a nativity scene with a stained-glass window effect. Since Christmas falls *after* New Year’s Day in North Macedonia, we had plenty of time to use them to decorate our windows for Christmas.

Sadly, there was only one entry made to the video competition – mine. But I guess that means I won! I had a lot of fun and good language practice writing my own lyrics to a classic 80’s song. In the video, I reflect on 2020 and 2021. Click on the image below to check it out! (A translation of the lyrics can be found in the video’s description.)





Screenshot from our main event on Zoom

The best part of the celebration was the main event, which started at 10:30 p.m. The theme for the evening was „Бог Делува“ or “God is Working.” We started our time together by sharing ways we have seen God working or acting in our lives this past year. Then we played charades with all the clues being a different kind of work or worker. The bank teller counting money and the gas station attendant pumping gas were among the more memorable performances! After the game, we sang some songs together. We were really blessed to have the girls from the Murtino church lead us.



Murtino youth leading worship

Next, Dejan Vasilev shared a message from John chapter five where Jesus heals a disabled man beside the pool called Bethesda. When questioned about the healing, Jesus says, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working” (verse 17). Dejan reminded us that God sees our needs and can meet them. He encouraged us to

trust God with our needs and our future because God is always working on behalf of His children, even during a pandemic.

Finally, according to our tradition, we prayed in the new year together. It was a beautiful time of coming to the Lord as one. I expected people to hang out and chat for 15 to 20 minutes afterwards, but surprisingly we ended up chatting and playing charades until almost 2:00 a.m.! This year of social distancing has been hard on all of us. I am thankful for this event where we could connect and be there for each other as we crossed from 2020 into 2021.

In Him,

Jennifer Moore

A Year to Remember...

Understandably, most people would label 2020 as the year to forget. However, this past year of distancing and pause has given all of us the chance to reflect on our lives, evaluate relationships, and reassess priorities in ways previously unknown. I have been reminded of the fragility of life and spent more time leaning on God in prayer than ever before. I don't know about you, but 2020 was also a year I faced many of my fears. I have grown a lot this year and I am thankful. Sure, 2020 is not a year I'd like to repeat, but the lessons I've learned and new perspectives I've gained are things I will forever treasure.



My ornament for 2020 made from masks

