

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

Dear Family & Friends,



Greetings from Narnia! Well...actually, I'm writing from St. Petersburg, Russia, but it feels like Narnia this year. It has been one very cool summer, with only a handful of days when the temperatures rose above the 60's. St. Petersburg only gets about 62 days of sun a year, and most of those days are in the summer. So, when it doesn't shine, it's rather disappointing. I heard that in Moscow people were actually going to see psychiatrists, due to the lack of sun and warmth this year. Some places in the world have been struggling due to too much sun and heat, and others due to not enough. It would be great to balance the scale somehow.

Despite, the lack of sun here in St Pete, praise God there is no lack of SON. Although times may seem bleak and grey with the law that was passed last summer, God is alive and well here in Russia. It is His plan that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Therefore, no government, no law, no person, no demon in hell, can stop God or thwart His plans. So, all is well. Someone once said, "Preach the gospel at all times, and when necessary use words." Preaching the gospel entails much more than using words, it's living the gospel. We need to use the keys of the kingdom, such as: grace, faith, prayer, love, and authority. It's a time of knowing who we are in Christ and acting accordingly.



While Aliyah to Israel has seen a decrease this year from other nations, immigration from Russia has increased. Last year the ICEJ assisted about a thousand Russian Jews to return to Israel. In the first months of 2017 Aliyah had risen by 34%.

Belarus is also seeing dramatic increase in Aliyah. In 2016 the Aliyah numbers from Belarus increased by 90% from 2015. So far in 2017, the Belarussian Aliyah is already up by 88% from the same period in 2016.

The weak economy in Belarus is a contributing factor, as well as the tensions between Russia, Belarus and NATO.

Aside from the work of Aliyah, ICEJ St. Petersburg also held 2 art exhibitions this year. The first exhibition, entitled, "And there was evening, and there was morning", was from January 16th till January 31st in commemoration of the Holocaust. The second exhibition, entitled, "St Petersburg – Jerusalem" was held from June 16th till

June 30th, and celebrated these 2 very key cities. It was both a commemoration of the reunification of Jerusalem and a look at where the Jewish people are today and where they could be one day soon.



I spent 3 weeks in Pennsylvania in from May 16th – June 5th. Aunt Sue had 2 graduations to attend! My nephew Daniel graduated from Widener University Commonwealth Law School, and my nephew Eric graduated from Lancaster County Christian School. In the beginning of June, Daniel was hired by Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as an attorney with the Pennsylvania Governor's Office of General Counsel, in the Department of Labor and Industry. At the end of July, he took his bar exam. Eric will major in Computer Science at Messiah College starting in the fall. I'm so proud of both of these fine young men!



While in Pennsylvania I was also able to attend the Lord's House of Prayer City Congregation, Quarryville Congregation, and House of Praise Spanish Congregation. In addition to that, I was able to attend some ladies' meetings and home groups. It was wonderful making so many connections.



From June 24th until July 1st, the World Impact team and LHOP leaders gathered in Poland for a Missions Retreat. It was such a blessed time for the whole team. Every day of the retreat was filled with anointed teaching, ministry, worship, special events and fellowship. This retreat provided a time of sharing, growing, learning; being challenged, inspired, strengthened; seeking the Lord, and enjoying His presence. Our times together as a team were very enlightening, giving us a better understanding of just what each member has had to endure, and is currently going through. Relationally, it brought us closer and helped us to know how to better pray for and support one another. A heartfelt thank you to the Lord's House of Prayer for making this possible!

July 5th marked 19 years in of ministry in St. Petersburg, Russia. It hardly seems possible that so many years have passed. A deep heartfelt thank you to the Lord's House of Prayer for supporting me all these years! I truly would never have been able to do this without you. May God bless you 100-fold and many times over! This summer/fall I must get ready to renew my residence permit for St. Petersburg, Russia. On the 19th March, 2018, my 5-year permit will end. Therefore, I must start the renewal process 6 months in advance. This year however, the process is a little more complicated. I must pass 3 exams: Russian History, Russian language, and the basics of Russian legislation. Should I pass, I will be granted a certificate, which is valid for 5 years. Should I fail, I can take the test as many times as I need (and pay the test fees each time) until I pass the test. Without this certificate, my documents will not even be accepted for extension. I would ask that you please pray for me as I prepare for these exams. I will have to take and pass my exams in August, so that I can begin the extension process in the beginning of September. That's coming up quick...too quick!



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