

# FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

Dear Family & Friends,

January 2019

Greetings from St. Petersburg, Russia! I wish you a Happy Belated Christmas & New Year! (I know, we don't say that in English, but it's perfectly normal in Russian!) By the time you get this newsletter the Russian Orthodox Christmas (January 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>) and the Old New Year (January 14<sup>th</sup> - the date according to the Julian, or Orthodox, calendar), will probably also be past. I hope and pray that your holidays were blessed and peaceful, and that your New Year will be bright, blessed, peaceful, and joyful. May His shalom fill your lives and His Presence satisfy your soul.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your faithfulness to our Lord and for supporting World Impact, and me. You have been a shining light in my life. A source of love, friendship, joy, encouragement and inspiration. You have been my backing and my support. For that, and for YOU, I am eternally grateful. I pray that all the wonderful blessings of our Lord would befall, besiege, follow, chase after, come upon and overtake you. May they come to stay and be yours in abundance, because you obey the voice of the Lord our God.

I know that I have not written since the end of the summer/beginning of the fall 2018. However, 2018 is already behind us, and we are in a brand-new year. So, I won't go into great length about the last quarter of 2018. Although, I will try to hit the highlights.



In the fall, we celebrated the Lord's Fall Feasts. For Rosh Hashanah, Bella and I celebrated it together at home, as well as with the Synagogue in the Moscow Region, where we live. We were walking distance from the restaurant where the celebration was held, and the fall weather was absolutely beautiful.

For our home celebration, I tried to have or make all the traditional Jewish dishes, including fish head! Not an easy task for someone who has never cooked



fresh fish, but since Jesus's disciples included fishermen, I thought I should try. After all, it was the head of the year, and we are the head and not the tail!



In October, I came back to the States for the wedding of my nephew, Joel Weischedel to Maddison Lowe. The couple was married on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Joel is Aunt Sue's first nephew to get married. A new era has started. We've gone from high school graduations, to college graduations (although there is still one more college graduation), to weddings! Oh, the many facets of life! I am so



grateful to be able to see and participate in the milestones of my nephews' lives.



By October, Russian Aliyah had experienced a 40% increase. When compared to worldwide Aliyah, Russian Aliyah made up 35%, and Aliyah from the Former Soviet Union made up 65% of worldwide Aliyah.

The December 27<sup>th</sup> issue of the Israeli publication, Haaretz, states: total immigration to Israel in 2018 shows a modest increase of 5% over the past 12 months, according to estimates from the Jewish Agency for Israel. Estimates show 29,600 Jews from around the world moving to the Israel. The biggest factor behind the increase was a significant rise in the number of immigrants moving from Russia. According to the estimates, 10,500 immigrants from Russia will have arrived in the country by the end of 2018 – representing an increase of 45 percent from the previous year and accounting for more than one-third of the total number of immigrants.



With Elena Kravchenko, Coordinator, Jewish Agency for Israel, Russia NW Region

The Russian branch of the ICEJ continues to work in close cooperation with the Jewish Agency for Israel in the work of Aliyah, with providing logistical support, sponsoring summer & winter camps, Aliyah seminars, assisting NAALE & SELAH participants (youth Aliyah) and other projects.



With Anna Shekhtman, Repatriation Department, Jewish Agency for Israel, Russia NW Region

The photos shown here were taken at the "Israel Profi" fair, held at the



Yesod Center in St. Petersburg. Hundreds of Jews, young and old, came from Northwest Russia to learn information about Israel: life, language learning, and employment in Israel; and to strengthen Jewish identity. It was a privilege to meet Isaac Herzog, Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel at the event. Mr. Herzog replaced Natan Sharansky in August 2018. He is an Israeli politician and has served as a member of the Knesset. Mr. Herzog's father was the sixth President of Israel and his grandfather was Israel's first Chief Rabbi.



Once again, the ICEJ, Russian branch was one of the sponsors of the 3-day Tolerance Festival, hosted by "Eva" a Jewish Charitable Organization. «Eva» works in the areas of Humanitarian assistance for the needy, and Cultural programs. Despite the name, this event is geared toward educating young people about the Holocaust. This year more than 1,000 people attended this event. The first day, middle school pupils (grades 7-8) attended the festival and the second & third days, senior high school pupils (grades 9-11) attended.



«Eva» provides charitable assistance and cultural programs to over 8,000 needy residents of St. Petersburg and the surrounding region. Of course, "Eva" is only able to do what they do owing to the support that they receive from sponsors and supporters. In addition to helping to sponsor the Tolerance Festival and other cultural events, ICEJ, Russia has been helping to provide humanitarian aid items such as: sheets, pillowcases, duvet covers, blankets, towels, socks, women's nightshirts, men's T-shirts, and pharmacy gift certificates to purchase much needed medication for elderly, handicapped and Holocaust survivors.

*(Pictured is Elena Grigorievna Amiryana, Executive Director of "Eva")*





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Someone had a birthday on Christmas Day! Bella turned 93 on December 25th. A big heartfelt “THANK YOU!” to everyone who has prayed for Bella over the years and continues to pray for her. I ask that you please continue to do so. Please pray for her physical health, as well as her spiritual walk. Only our Creator knows the number of our days on this earth. As we age, inevitably our bodies grow weaker, our eyesight grows dimmer, and we just can’t do what we did when we were younger. Only a few months ago, Bella started taking her cane with her when she leaves the house. Her eyesight is getting worse, and she has a lot of aches and pains. Pray that the Lord continues to strengthen her and enable her to do what she needs to do or provides the necessary help for her. She does have someone who comes and helps her with the house cleaning per week and someone who brings food once or twice a week, as needed.

Also, I ask you to pray that Bella would continue to grow in her relationship with the Lord. Pray for the Lord to instill within her a desire to spend time with Him and to know Him more, to read the Word and to pray. The other evening, as I was praying for the meal, and thanking the Lord, Bella chimed in, “and thank you that I have become somewhat of a believer.” That’s the first time I’ve ever heard her say that! So, there is growth, but pray for her continued growth, that she would come to know the Lord better while on earth, before she goes to spend eternity with Him. I pray that she will go to be with the One she knows and loves.



Once again dear family and friends, I thank you for your love, support and prayers, and pray that the Lord would bless you immeasurably!

*The Lord bless you, and keep you [protect you, sustain you, and guard you];*

*The Lord make His face to shine upon and enlighten you and be gracious (kind, merciful, and giving favor) to you;*

*The Lord lift up His countenance (face) upon you [with divine approval],*

*And give you peace [a tranquil heart and life].*

From **Russia** with **Love**,

*Sue Schramm*

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