



# SUMMER IN RUSSIA

June/July 2018

## Белые Ночи *White Nights*

When I was in high school, I learned about the composer Tchaikovsky, and the collection of songs he wrote called "The Seasons." There was one song for each month of the year, and each song was based on a part of Russian culture that corresponded to that month. The song for June was subtitled "White Nights," and thus I had my introduction to one of St.

Petersburg's most famous phenomenon. At that time, I was intrigued by the idea of the sun never quite setting, but I certainly didn't imagine I would experience it for myself.

Last year, I left Russia in the end of May, so this year I was excited to get the full effect of the White Nights culture in St.

Petersburg.

Summer is a busy time in St. Petersburg, a city which already attracts a lot of tourists, but the season of the White Nights are an even greater draw. All of the street vendors and museums prep for the influx of visitors and, likewise, the Ingrian Church always looks for ways to use the good weather to

reach out and do ministry. There have been great opportunities, including a "White Nights" youth gathering and various concerts, and I've enjoyed helping out and participated when I'm able (you may have noticed that I didn't send out a newsletter at the beginning of June—there is too much going on!).

### **Ночь Музеев (Night of Museums)**

One of my highlights was definitely Ночь Музеев (or, in English, Night of the Museums), which took place in the end of May. This was a citywide event that happens every year: participants buy one ticket and can visit over one hundred museums in the city. The museums are open all night, along with the metro system, and thousands of people are on the streets taking advantage of the cultural side of St. Petersburg life. The Ingrian Church of St. Mary's also participated in the event, and our doors were open all night. We held organ concerts until midnight and greeted

### **Prayer Requests**

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9 (ESV)

- For safe travels to and around Europe for me and the other volunteers who will be helping with English camps
- For the Cortrights, as they settle into St. Petersburg
- For safety in St. Petersburg during the busy tourist season and the FIFA championship

the incoming tourists with free New Testaments and pamphlets explaining what we believe. We also gave tours of the building, and I had the responsibility of talking to anyone who spoke English. Over 3,000 people came through our church doors during the night!

I have not gotten used to the sun rising so early. I took this picture while helping at Night of the Museums. The time was 3:51am:



## Children's Camps

In addition to the Night of the Museums, the schedule of summer children's camps with the Ingrian Church is now in full swing. The first two were in the beginning of June and, without really knowing what to expect, I headed off to help. The camps were held at the Ingrian Seminary outside of St. Petersburg, and my main responsibility was teaching an hour of English language each day. For four days, we led the kids through Bible studies, prayer times, crafts, morning exercise, mealtimes, songs, group presentations, and games. The kids seemed to enjoy it all, but personally, my favorite part was the "Journey through Egypt," where teams of kids went from station to station on a journey based on the search of Joseph's brothers for bread. I was in charge of the Egyptian language school, where the teams had to decipher a text in hieroglyphics before moving on to Joseph's palace. At the end of the journey, the kids made *blini* (a type of Russian bread without yeast) over a bonfire. Along

the way, they learned about how God used Joseph to provide bread during the famine, and the allegory between him and our Savior, who is the Living Bread.

## Updates

In other news, I'm very happy to write that my colleagues, the Cortrights, arrived in St. Petersburg just a few days ago! Rev. Dr. Charles Cortright will be teaching at the Ingrian Seminary in the fall, after they settle into St. Petersburg. They are already greeting people in Russian and reading the Cyrillic signs—it won't be long before they're teaching *me* about Russia!

In July, I will be traveling out of Russia to help with English camps in Poland and Czechia. I'm looking forward to these opportunities, and watching God's kingdom at work.

In between all of the big events, normal life goes on—I joined the choir at St. Mary's and also had time to do some private tutoring. I'm slowly beginning to feel more at home in Russia and, amazingly, more comfortable in the Russian language. I continue to pray that the Holy Spirit works through my life to bring God's light to the people in Russia, however that may be possible.

If you receive this newsletter through the mail, but would prefer to get the email version (or vice versa), just let me know! Send me an email at [psalm111.2@hushmail.com](mailto:psalm111.2@hushmail.com) and I'd be happy to make the change.



Playing with the kids at camp



The Cortrights have arrived!

## Support

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**You can also send your gifts of love to our Friends at:**

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