

GOING WHERE GOD CALLS

August 2019

Travel *Путешествие*

What does it mean to serve God's church?

We all probably have a stereotype in our mind of what service to God looks like; maybe it involves a pastor distributing communion or a Sunday School teacher preparing for a Bible lesson. Yes, these people are certainly serving, answering the call that God has given them. But there are times when we are surprised by where our callings take us and what we are asked to do. Service in God's church can look differently than we imagine. Sometimes it means washing dishes. Sometimes it involves sitting for long hours in a language classroom. Sometimes it means changing all your plans for the day so you can help out a friend in need. And this summer, for me, it involved A LOT of traveling.

From Russia to Poland...

This summer I've been away from St. Petersburg more than I've been in it. After returning from home service, I spent a few

weeks in Russia (enough time to help with the kids camp I wrote about in the last newsletter!) before leaving again. My first stop: Krakow, Poland.

The English Bible Camps have been going on in Poland for over ten years, giving teams from America and the Polish Lutheran church the chance to share God's love and the good news of his salvation to kids across the country. I arrived in time to greet the first group of teams in Krakow, and I (along with missionaries Ben Helge and Sarah Harms) spent a few days with them to orient them on the culture and prepare them a bit for the week of camps ahead. It's always an exciting experience working with short-term missionaries, and this year was no exception. I enjoyed getting to know the team members, people who were eager to volunteer their time and energy for the sake of God's Kingdom, and then, once the camps were in progress, to see and hear how God was using them to

Prayer Requests

"I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?"

My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth."
Psalm 121:1-2 (ESV)

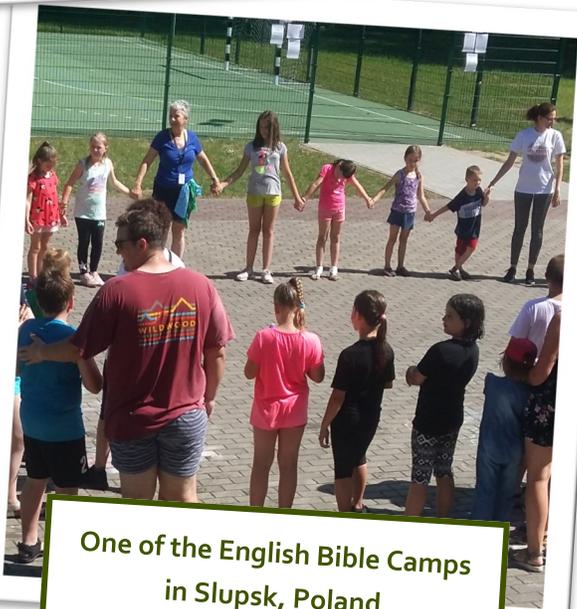
- That the seeds of faith planted in the kids' hearts would grow and bear fruit
- Thanksgiving for all of the completed English Bible Camps in Poland!
- Praise for safe travels for myself and all the other missionaries traveling as part of their service this summer
- For the upcoming semester and the Theological Institute



Short-term mission orientation in Poland

proclaim His truth. After orientation, it was more traveling for Ben, Sarah, and I as we visited each of the camps, which were scattered throughout Poland, to encourage the teams, troubleshoot where necessary, and get feedback on the curriculum (to inform us as we prepare the curriculum for next year).

and then set off to my next destination: Odessa, Ukraine, where our Regional Conference was held. Once a year, all of the workers in the Eurasia region gather for fellowship, teaching, learning and worship together. We were updated on the changes in the region, delved into a study on Resolute Discipleship and reconnected with dear friends and fellow workers. Getting to hear what God is doing in other parts of our region is inspiring. It also allows us to collaborate and share insight and ideas.



One of the English Bible Camps in Slupsk, Poland

There were a lot of moments that stand out in my memory from the camp visits, but the one that comes first to mind was the simple and unaffected way one of the volunteers shared the Gospel message with the kids one morning during the opening presentation. This is why we do what we do—so that these kids, whatever background they come from, can hear the truth about Jesus. “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom.

...from Ukraine back to Russia

As wonderful as it was to see everyone at the regional conference, it was with a sense of relief that I disembarked from my plane in the St. Petersburg airport. Finally, I’m back in a place where I have cell phone service, I know the local currency, and I can sleep in my own bed!

God is calling each of us to serve him, with our own talent and interests, and sometimes with our fears and weaknesses. I never know quite what to expect, although I do know that he will provide all that I need, and it is certain to be an adventure!



Touring in Odessa between sessions

10:17). Another encouragement that stood out were the many comments from the Polish church about how the camps helped them to connect with the communities around them. In a heavily Catholic country, the Lutheran churches are often looked at with suspicion or just ignored. The English camps helped to ease that tension, sometimes even the Polish volunteers (who also came from a variety of backgrounds) were the ones asking about what Lutherans believe.

Support

I’m now online! If you would like to support my work in Russia, visit:

www.lcms.org/anders

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

MISSION CENTRAL
40718 Highway E-16
Mapleton, IA 51034

Make checks payable to Mission Central

Write “Russia/Alyssa Anders” on the memo line

...from Poland to Ukraine...

After three weeks of traveling around Poland, I squeezed in a week of vacation to Norway (where I re-energized myself surrounded by God’s beautiful creation!)

If you receive this newsletter through the mail, but would prefer the email version, just let me know!

Send me an email at alyssa.anders@lcms.org and I’ll gladly make the change.