

God's Mission ...as told from the perspective of Alyssa Anders

ADVENTURES AT HOME

September 2019

God's Word Слово Божьего

After an action-packed summer, it was nice to come home to St. Petersburg and unpack my suitcase.

But the action never stops. Shortly after arriving home, I was invited to help with a youth camp in a parish on the outskirts of St. Petersburg. I said I'd be glad to help, not exactly sure what I was signing up for. I borrowed a sleeping bag, followed the cryptic instructions to get to St. John's church in the suburb of Lomonosova, and prayed that God would give me strength for this next adventure. God likes to use us when we're out of our comfort zone, and He also likes to show up in ways that we don't expect. And when He does show up, it is truly something special.

Each day the camp officially began at 8:30. All of the girls slept in the attic on mattresses that covered the floor in such close proximity that when one alarm went off, we all woke up. Still a little bleary eyed,

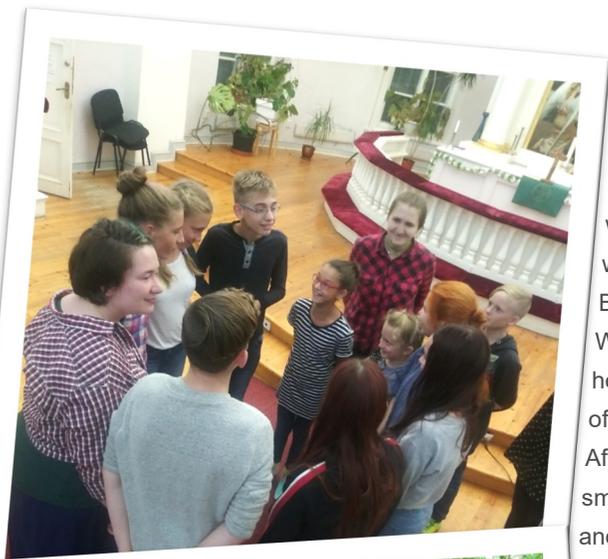
we would stumble down for a time of prayer together at nine. Sitting on the benches in the sanctuary, a volunteer would lead the prayer time with a passage of Scripture. Morning prayer was followed by exercise outside, in the bright sunshine, where we worked up an appetite for breakfast (which was inevitably *kasha*, the ubiquitous Russian breakfast of porridge made from any of a variety of grains). After breakfast we returned to the benches in the sanctuary for Bible hour. Just as the name suggests, this was a Bible lesson that lasted *for an hour*. The kids would sit for the whole time, facing the speaker, paying attention for sixty minutes while the speaker highlighted different lessons from Scripture. During one Bible hour, we reviewed the ten commandments, with the speaker explaining how these laws point us clearly to our need for a Savior. Another speaker focused on our fears showing how these fears overwhelm us and draw us away from a close relationship with Jesus. Yet another

Prayer Requests

“Hear, O LORD, and
be merciful to me!
O LORD, be my
helper!”

Psalms 30:10 (ESV)

- Pray for each of the students at the seminary, those new and those returning
- Pray that God's Word would continue to be preached in Russia
- Pray for each of the missionaries in St. Petersburg, that we would encourage and help each other and be ready to do the good works God has prepared for us here



Bible hour focused on the trials and temptations that we experience as Christians in the world and Paul's exhortation that we receive them with joy. Each Bible hour was alive with God's Word. It was such a pleasure to hear that Word, the life-giving Word of God, being spoken to the kids. After Bible hours we would gather in small groups to discuss the topics and complete tasks. This was a chance to see how much the kids were actually listening. It was a great joy to hear their responses and see the faith that God had planted in their hearts and was causing to grow.

God's presence in this place. God answered my prayer for strength to get through this adventure, but more importantly, He came to all of us through His Word, and blessed us with a spirit and joy, fellowship and love. This is the mighty God we serve. It is always an adventure when we watch Him at work!

Our team is growing!

As we serve him, God brings us fellow workers, and I'm excited to say that our team in St. Petersburg is growing. Last week we welcomed the Lawson family! After many months of waiting for their arrival, it was with great joy that we finally met Rev. and Patty Lawson, along with their three kids. Rev. Lawson will join Rev. Cortright teaching courses at the seminary. I'm excited to see how God is bringing these qualified theology teachers to teach the next generation of Ingrian pastors and church workers. God always seems to bring the right people at the right time. Keep them in your prayers as they adjust to Russia (the picture below is their first experience in the metro!) and as they learn about the ministry God has for them here!



Interspersed between Bible hours and discussions times were crafts, quests, master classes, games,

lunch and tea time. See the pictures on the left! Dinner was followed by the evening program when we sang together, reviewed the themes of the day, played group games and presented the tasks from the small group assignments. We closed the day with evening prayer. These were my favorite moments of the camp, when all heads were bowed, eyes were closed, and we had an opportunity to speak to our Lord and Savior, sharing our praise, thanksgiving and prayer requests together.

We went to bed late, after 11 o'clock, each of us heading to our respective mattresses or cots. Each day was full. It didn't take long for us to fall asleep.

When the time came for me to leave, I was sad to go. Frankly, my brain had reached its limit of Russian interaction (four days is my current limit for complete Russian immersion), but my heart soaked up the sweetness of

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