

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD

November 2019

Thanksgiving *Благодарение*

The dark, cold, icy season in St. Petersburg has arrived. The snow has already started falling and the sun is rising later and setting much earlier. As we bundle up against the cold and wind, I'm reminded of the words in Psalm 147:16-17—

"He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes. He hurls down his crystals of ice like crumbs; who can stand before his cold?" (ESV)

As the Russians know well, it's no small feat to stand against the cold and wind of winter in the far north. This psalm, however, is not simply trying to scare us with the power that God has at his fingertips, but it is essentially a psalm of praise to God, reflecting on all of his might and goodness and faithfulness to us. The Thanksgiving holiday is coming up soon, and combined with the words of this psalm we are reminded that we accept all things from God's hand, the cold and the heat, and we praise God for them.

In this newsletter I wanted to reflect on the

many ways that God has been faithful in the past year, through the struggles and the difficulties, and to share with you some of the things I have noticed, some of the things I am thankful for this November.

Our Team

I'm thankful for the people that God has called to work in St. Petersburg, Russia. I still vividly remember arriving as the lone LCMS representative and now we can officially say we have a "team" of missionaries here. Rev. Charles and Connie Cortright arrived in the summer of 2018, Sarah Harms came this March and now Rev. Lawson, his wife Patty, and their three children have landed in Russia (see the picture on the bottom of the next page!). Each member brings a different skill set and plays a different role with the Ingrian Church, but together we can encourage and support each other. I know that the team will change in the upcoming years, but I'm

Prayer Requests

"Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting."

Psalm 147:1 (ESV)

- Pray for visas! Several of the LCMS team members are applying for new visas; also, team members for next years' English Camp are starting the visa process
- Pray for all the planning and preparation that are needed for our English Bible Camp
- Praise for my visa being successfully renewed!
- Praise for all of God's faithfulness



grateful that God has not called us to work individually or alone.

The Students

God has shown His faithfulness in the lives of the students I meet with every week.

The kids who sing in the children's choir performed "A Mighty Fortress is Our

God" (see the picture on the left). As we learned the lyrics in the weeks leading up to Reformation Day, we discussed their meaning. It was incredibly precious to hear them sing, "Though the prince of this world seeks to do us ill, he can do nothing! He is conquered by one word " (my rough translation from the Russian lyrics). I've also been able to see God work through the progress that my students at the Seminary are making. Week by week, it seems like such a struggle for them, but when I think about where they started and what they are able to do now, I can definitely see improvement.

I'm also grateful for the students I've come into contact with through English Club and the kids' classes I teach. There are so many opportunities here, and sometimes I just need to step back and thank God for the hundreds of times I get asked why I'm here (a perfect segue into my faith) or have an opportunity to pray before class starts. God is active in each of these moments.

Daily Needs

God is also providing for our daily needs. Sarah and I moved into a new apartment a last month.

Our new place has more room, so the two of us fit comfortably, and we have space to invite others over. In addition to a comfortable living space, I'm grateful for the little things, such as being able to find turkey and pumpkin as we prepare for Thanksgiving dinner.

English Bible Camp

Next summer, we're planning to host the first English Bible Camp in Russia. After three years of living here and two years of helping with the English programs in Poland, I'm excited that we're finally able to start doing English Camps in Russia! I praise God that we already have a team signed up to come and dates on the calendar. There is a lot of work to be done, however, and I'll try to keep all of your posted with prayer requests as Sarah and I work out all of the many details.

Anniversary

This November marks the third year since I first arrived in St. Petersburg. I am amazed by how I have seen God's faithfulness in those three years. People have been baptized and confirmed—the church is growing. New ministries are starting, more people are coming into the church out of curiosity. He is guiding and providing for me, and the other workers here. God is faithful, even in the cold of the Russian winter.



Support

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www.lcms.org/anders

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40718 Highway E-16
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Send me an email at alyssa.anders@lcms.org and I'll gladly make the change.