



July 2018



St. Petersburg

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

St. Petersburg is...

- **BIG:** this is Russia's second largest city with more than 5 million residents. Its metro system has 5 lines that travel deep underground to traverse under the rivers. Over 2 million people ride it daily.
- **IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE WEATHER, WAIT:** it will change quickly. Temperatures changed from the high 70 to the low 50 degrees Fahrenheit in a matter of hours.
- **"FUTBOL" CRAZY:** we have arrived during the FIFA World Cup tournament to see face-painted fans everywhere from everywhere. Many of the tournament's games are being played at local Zenit Arena.
- **OLD:** this was the seat of czarist Russia. The city center is dotted with former palaces and historic buildings.
- **NEW:** modern freeways and huge shopping malls jostle with



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New Beginnings



Alyssa Anders, Connie, and Chuck

After several months of preparation, Connie and I have arrived in St. Petersburg, Russia, to begin our work with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (ELCIR). We flew to St. Petersburg from Prague on June 27 and were met by our LCMS colleague, Alyssa Anders. Alyssa has been in Russia for nearly two years.

It has been a whirlwind first few days!

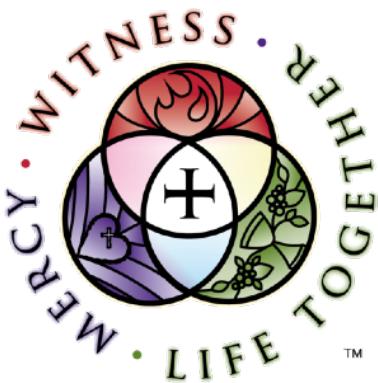
Our first home has been the apartment of a vacationing ELCIR worker in St. Petersburg's center. From there, we have walked (a lot!) and used the metro to obtain phone service, register with Russian immigration, and meet with various people in the ELCIR. Our first Sunday, we worshipped at historic St. Anne's Church.

The following Monday, we were taken outside the city to the village of Koltushi, where the seminary is located

and where we will be living and working. The rector of the seminary greeted us warmly, showing us around the campus tucked in the surrounding birch forest and talking to us about the work.

The seminary is about God's work of preaching and teaching Christ through the pastors and workers trained here. My work—under God—will be to help supply sorely needed classes and mentoring to the students. We are all very excited about the partnership.

Spacibo (спасибо) is Russian for "thank you." We have been saying it a lot the last few days! *Spacibo*, first, to our heavenly Father who has blessed us with His grace and this work; *spacibo* to our new colleagues who have warmly welcomed us; and *spacibo* to you, our mission partners, whose prayers and funding support us in this new beginning!



THANK YOU for your prayers and support to us in our work here in Russia!

With your help, we will be training pastors and church workers to bring the comfort of the Gospel through Word and Sacrament to the Russian people.

The ELCIR has some 80 congregations stretching from St. Petersburg to Kazakhstan to Siberia.

As a "resurrected" church with its roots back in the 1600s, the Ingrian Lutheran Church proclaims salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, via the Scriptures alone—all centered in Christ alone.

Большое спасибо!



On our minds; in our prayers

A flood of thoughts and prayers are ours as we make this transition...

Dear heavenly Father,

We thank You that You have called us to Russia and have safely brought us here. As we face the challenges that living in this new land brings, please guide us in all that we say and do. Lead us to be both blessed and a blessing among those we serve.

Lord, we ask Your help in finding a new home here. Bless us as we learn to speak and read in Russian. Protect us from causing offense through ignorance or misunderstanding. Preserve us in health and while we travel.

Lord, we thank You for each other, for the common faith we share in our Savior, and for the closeness and support we receive through You in our marriage.

We remember before You our family and friends in America. Bless and keep them while we are apart. Especially, Lord, we ask Your blessings on our little grandson, Christian, as he undergoes serious brain surgery later this month. Guide the doctors and nurses; protect



Our grandson, Christian

and heal him according to Your gracious will.

Father, You sent Your Son to be the Savior of the world. May those whom we teach in this corner of it hear His voice, experience His grace, and know His love through Your Word.

Lord, thank You for blessing us with fellow Christians who pray for us, encourage us, and support us. May they find joy in sharing in Your work and in serving to extend Your kingdom here and for eternity.

Lord, may Your blessing be on us to keep us and guide us; turn Your gracious face toward us; and give us Your peace.

In Jesus' name. Amen.



O Lord God, You have called Your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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