

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

NEW CHAPTER OF LIFE



**September/
October 2020**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Дорогие братья и сестры во Христе,

Five years ago, I first left the United States for the mission field. Some of you might have received my first newsletter, which I wrote when I was still support raising and preparing to leave. Many of you have joined me somewhere along the way. It's been an interesting journey, with a lot of unexpected twists and turns.

Almost four years ago, I arrived to St. Petersburg, Russia. As I look back over all of that time and reread past newsletters, I have so much joy. I have loved participating in and sharing about the work that is happening here in Russia. It is so amazing to see how God is moving and building the church and working through the believers here. There is faith where the government tried so hard to stamp it out, there are churches where so many church buildings were destroyed, and God's Word is available where once Bibles were forbidden.

I hope that as you have read these newsletters and learned more about the work in Russia and in other parts of the

world, you have been encouraged and also challenged, as I have been as I wrote them.

Many things have changed since I wrote my first newsletter. I couldn't possibly have foreseen all the changes, challenges and circumstances that have happened in the past five years. From a military coup attempt in Turkey to celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in Wittenberg, then relocating to Russia and surviving a world-wide pandemic, it has been an adventure.

And now, God is preparing me for a new direction. I'm writing to let all of you know that at the end of this year I will be ending my service with the Office of International Missions (OIM) and moving back to the US.

As you can imagine, this was a difficult decision to make. After much prayer and counsel, I decided that this is the right time for me to move on to the next chapter that God has for me. My visa expires in November, so I will leave the country sometime in the next couple of weeks, but I have committed to keep working (using online platforms) through the end of year. I will keep teaching and work on various projects that require only my computer and

Prayer Requests

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.”
Ecclesiastes 3:11 (ESV)

- For the students at the seminary, that they would have focus, diligence, and a constant desire to seek God in their studies
- For catechism classes, in English and in Russian, at St. Anne's
- For me, as I face the monumental task of saying goodbye to Russia and moving back to the States
- For a smooth transition to working online after I return to the USA

an internet connection from my home. December 31st will be my official last day of mission work.

I can't write this letter without letting you know what a tremendous positive role you have played in my life while I have been serving. I hope one day God will show you the extent to which your financial and emotional support, and especially your prayers, have encouraged and strengthened me during the past five years. You have been with me every step of the way, and I am so grateful, Thank you!

Many of you have been faithfully supporting me financially, and I know that God has seen the sacrifices you have made. If you want to continue supporting the work in Russia or a specific worker, please remember that Rev. Jerry Lawson and Sarah Harms are both still partnering with the Ingrian Lutheran Church in St. Petersburg. You can also visit lcms.org to see all of the workers that the LCMS has sent around the world.

Even though I am planning on leaving St. Petersburg, I am trying to be as involved as I can while I'm still here. The ministry in St. Petersburg this fall has been continuing full steam ahead. There is still work to do, and it's important to remember that this work won't stop after I'm gone. The Ingrian church will continue to reach out and serve and preach God's Word, and I hope that all of you will continue to keep them in your prayers.

With the end of summer, the camp season came to a close. It was an odd summer, but I'm grateful that we were able to have camps and events anyway! Here are a few pictures from the camp I helped with in Lomonosova, a parish on the south west side of St. Petersburg. We had a lot of fun!



In the beginning of September the seminary started classes again, and more new students have joined this year than any of the other years I've been here! I have eight new students in my English classes, plus the students I had last year.

At St. Anne's Lutheran Church, the Russian pastors lead a course on the basics of the Christian faith. This course, as the name implies, covers the basics of our faith and the catechism, and once a participant has finished the course, they are given the opportunity to be confirmed and join the Lutheran church. Many of the people who come to these courses have no (or very little) knowledge of the Bible themselves. Among Russian speakers interest in this course has been consistently very high, and this year the pastors decided to start offering the course in English as well. Rev. Camp and Rev. Lawson started the English lessons this September. The attendees are Russians, but with a high level of English and a desire to hear and learn more about the Christian faith.



In the middle of teaching, I am trying to pack up my apartment and tie up loose ends before I travel back to the States. I already find it difficult to face the fact that I'll be leaving this country and these people that I have come to love so much. It is incredibly

bittersweet—I am excited that God is leading me on to something new, but I will always leave a piece of my heart in Russia. However, I move forward with confidence, knowing that God is in control. I may be leaving, but the work here will continue on.

Please keep me, and the church in your prayers!

Your sister in Christ,

Alysa Anders