

Update 3, written Dec. 14, 2015

Temp Residency Permit: Thank you so very much for your prayers. We completed all the paper work and my temporary residency permit was in my hand a mere 3 weeks after I arrived - I was amazed and grateful. Again, thank you for your prayers. This permit allows me to live here for 11 months before I will need to apply for an extension (which is an easier process).

Team meeting: Over Thanksgiving weekend our Christian Missionary Fellowship (CMF) team gathered for 4 days. It had been over a year since we have all been together. We had a traditional Thanksgiving meal and thoroughly enjoyed eating on those leftovers for the next two days. For us it was a time to catch up with each other personally and ministry wise as well as a time to play and do a bit of sightseeing. I feel blessed to be a part of such of neat team.

Weather: Gray skies and cool temperatures have been the main stay this month. While we had 2 dusting's of snow but both melted quickly. We've also had a couple sunny days. Unlike apartment living, here I can go outside and be in the yard. It is fun to have optional yard work as a break from desk work...and a lovely way to soak in some winter sun. Note: I have included my mailing address at the bottom of this update.

Yesterday marked one month here...can it be? In some ways it feels like longer because so much has happened. A bit of time was spent on getting my room set up and getting things like my phone, Internet and printer all in working order. Next I turned to sorting through my things that were brought up from Crimea plus new shipments of humanitarian aid. With that done and my permit paper work finished, I felt free to begin engaging more locally.

One day I simply set out to figure out how to get from where I live to the church and back. As it was I got off the bus way too early and ended up walking about 2 miles but that was fine. I know that road now! I have been out by myself many times since then and each time my world gets a little bigger!

My world is expanding relationship wise too. I was invited to the Ukraine Christian Medical Association meeting held in Kiev last week. I know the leadership and have been involved in their conferences in the past. So that was good to connect with them again. Church wise, there is Friday night Bible Study held here where I live for moms with special needs kids. There is another Bible Study held on Saturday night at the church for moms with special needs kids. There is Church on Sunday and I also attend the Wednesday morning prayer meeting at church. This next Saturday I have been invited to share the the English Club (an evangelistic outreach through the church). It sounds like a lot of busy - at it is. But, it is a way to develop relationships and get to know who's who and what's what within the church.

There has been days I've come home with my heart singing! A project of learning the bus system met with success! A unexpected warm invitation by the pastor and feeling included. A heart to heart conversation with Tanya (the leader for the special needs

ministry). Just the peace inside of knowing that this is where I am supposed to be (despite the many unknowns that remain.) And, there have been some crash landings....

After I put my token in the machine, the gate into the metro slammed down in front of me and other passengers quickly bottled up behind me. Why did the gate slam???? The metro guard yelled at me for putting my token in too fast. Learned that lesson.....only 99,999 more lessons to go!. Or, like getting chewed up one side and down the other by the bus conductor the other day. I handed the money to her as I got on with a group of folks. About 10 minutes later she came up to me and accused me of trying to ride for free and made my crime quite public. I chose to stay quiet and pay her again. It wasn't hard to forgive her, bus conductors here have a really hard job. And, now I learned the lesson of how to pay on the bus....hey now there are only 99,998 lessons to go! Another crash happened yesterday at church.

Since I arrived Tanya has been asking me to give my testimony in front of the church. I personally wanted to delay this for a while (a real long while!) but Sunday the moms that attend the Bible Studies (for moms with special needs kids) put on a skit about the parable of the 5 unwise and the 5 wise virgins who brought extra oil for their lamps while they waited for the Bride groom of wedding feast. After the skit was done, Tanya introduced me to the church and asked me to share my testimony. I knew it was coming, I had looked up all the hard words in Russian, written it out, practiced...but as she handed me the mic and I looked out over a sea of 200 faces...the gears inside seemed to just jam up. It didn't go well. I made an impression alright and maybe they will forget about the whole thing in the next decade or so. Oh well, this is when you take a deep breath and just keep going.

Thanksgiving: I got to spend Thanksgiving Day with my CMF team. But Thanksgiving is a state of heart *WAY* more than a date and thanks to Jamie, we celebrated it again this past Friday. Earlier in the month, at the Friday night Bible Study, Jamie was explaining to the group that our Thanksgiving was coming up, what that meant to us and how it compared to a similar church holiday here called - Harvest. Well after she got done one of the ladies piped up that she wanted to celebrate Thanksgiving like we did and the plan was launched. On Friday 21 adults and 12 kids gathered here to give thanks and celebrate God's blessings in our lives!

What a spread! Jamie made the turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy and 2 pumpkin pies, I brought a veggie plate with Ranch dressing and an apple pie and the ladies each brought something. It was a colorful, crammed, delicious looking table and we feasted!

We have had guests from America this week who have already adopted 2 teenagers from Ukraine and are in the process of adopting 2 more. Matt shared the story of the first Thanksgiving in America and Robin shared about their adoption journey. Then we went around the table and each person shared one thing they were thankful to God for in this past year. It was humbling to be allowed to glimpse into some lives that have hard hard stories. And it was heartwarming to hear repeated over and over, 'And I am thankful to God for bringing me into this family.' Meaning, the church family. To me this

was powerful testimony of God's work in this place through Tanya.

Merry Christmas! Our Christmas is still several weeks off but yours isn't. My prayer is that yours is a Christ centered Christmas and a God filled New Year!!

With much much love!! June

My mailing address: the easiest is to print this page out, cut out the address and tape it on your envelope.

Кулешов Ю. В.

Кристина

ул. Гайдамадская 1

село Перемога

Броварский Район

Киевская Область

Украина

07400

UKRAINE

I've not tried it this way before so you can tell me how this turns out on your side but here are a few photos.

I am finally out of my suitcases and into my new 'home'. I live in the house below with the white roof, on the 2nd floor and far right window. If you look close you will see my lamp shining in the window. A photo of my room. The third photo is of Sveta & Yuri who live on the other side of the red fence. And, I share the house with Jamie who has been a missionary for 22 years. Thanksgiving for 33! June















