

Greetings from the Veliky Novgorod Church of Christ!

We want to share with you our life as a church for the past few months.

## **Highlights**

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## **Call to Join Summer Mission Team in Novgorod, Russia**

We are grateful we can help people in Novgorod to attain salvation in the Lord. We understand like Jesus said, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few." We are thrilled to welcome brothers and sisters who would like to serve as a missionary in the Summer Mission team in Novgorod, Russia in summer 2014. We also welcome all nominations.

You can send your inquiries Arthur and Antonina Pilipenko at [artur-i-tonya@rambler.ru](mailto:artur-i-tonya@rambler.ru). You can also tell others who might be interested about the opportunity serve on the missionary team.

## **Summer Mission 2013**

I must say that the membership of our church has changed remarkably. Some disciples moved to the Saint-Petersburg Church of Christ (the nearest church to Novgorod) because of their jobs and for some other reasons. We wrote about it in previous letters. But, during the summer missions 2013 God added a brother and two sisters to our family.



As Scripture says "their deeds will follow them." After the departure of the missionaries, we continue to meet with our friends who were interested in meeting the disciples or wanted to build their own relationships with God. Amongst them are Alexey, Alexander, Nadezhda and Katherine.

They are with us on Sunday services, midweek services, study the Bible with us and the Lord continues to touch their hearts.

### **Baptism of Alexander**

Through communication with the disciples, Alexander decided to study Bible and wanted to change his relationship with God. But it wasn't easy. He went through a lot of trials. Health problems and difficulties with job came soon but nevertheless they didn't affect his decision to be close to God. Today, Alexander continues to study the Bible by himself and with the disciples. He also visits our church services regularly. We want to ask you to pray for his baptism soon.



**Our brother Arthur (in blue) and Alexander**

It took several years for Alexey to find God and to set a goal to live like Jesus. When the missionaries were around in 2013, he attended meetings and studied the Bible. The Lord purified his heart and he made a decision to follow Christ. Having first met the disciples about five years ago, Alexey visited almost all the meetings of believers available in our city. At the same time Alexey found that he had more unanswered questions. The turning point of his search for God and truth came this summer. Through prayers, fasting and talks with disciples, Alexey can now see his destiny clearly. He got baptized at the end of October 2013. There were brothers and sisters from Saint-Petersburg at the celebration of his baptism.



### **Baptism of Kate**

We met Katherine in the summer. One of our missionary team sisters Svetlana had a dream of preaching to people with a network marketing background, because that's something she's involved in herself. So the Lord led her to Katherine.

Svetlana said of Katherine, that the first time she talked with Katherine on the phone, she thought Kate sounded probably like a 45-year-old, very serious type of woman. But Svetlana was mistaken, on their first meeting she found out Kate was just 27 and was a very lively, open, simple-hearted girl who was very talkative and attentive. She asked a lot of questions and the sisters loved her with all their hearts in a short time. After some time, it became clear that Kate was ready to be baptized but there were some situations that she had to solve and she solved it.

Soon Kate joined the church's life and was always willing to serve wherever possible.



On the January 25, Kate got baptized and became God's daughter!



Kate's husband, Maxim, was also with the church when she got baptized. At the beginning of our acquaintance with Kate, he was negative to the fact that his wife meets with believers because he had some negative experiences in the past. But after personal acquaintance with the disciples, several fun times with married disciples, lots of games and sports, his opinion about the church and disciples changed.



Please, join us in our prayers for Maxim, Kate's husband.

We are very happy and grateful for our new brother and sister in Christ!

We are also grateful for our neighbors – brothers and sisters, disciples from Saint-Petersburg.

We see ourselves as part of a big family of the church of Christ.



Friends, we are grateful to God for your hearts, your relationships, your wish to serve here with your faith, time and strength!



## Novogord Events

As we already said the life of disciples in Novgorod is full of different events.



It's great to know that disciples from Saint-Petersburg also find new friends here in our city. Last fall, a married couple Sergey and Yulia Zheglov met Novgorod musicians and decided to organize a creative meeting with music and poetry. The main theme of which was "Searching for the Meaning of Life."



There were three such meetings for fall and winter months and a lot of people visited : musicians, poets, singers and people who were interested in creation. Very nice music and poetry made the people to feel free to discuss deep questions about our life, and it gave them an opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions.

Two of these meetings were held in support of a Christmas charity event called "Stretch Out your Palm for a Miracle." Disciples from Novgorod were active participants there.

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## **Encouragement from Moscow**

God had some surprises for us. Our wonderful brother Alexander from a town not far from Moscow spent a whole two weeks in Novgorod for business! Each time, his appearance in our church brings a revival!

This time round he supported our friends who were not yet disciples and were trying to take their first steps in the search for God. Sasha inspired them with the story of his relationships with God: how he came to God and what he found in these relationships.

At Sunday service he encouraged disciples to get to know God deeper and grow in faith.



The Christmas and New Year season was also were full of surprises. We are always glad to see brothers and sisters dear to our hearts.



During the festive season some of our friends came to see us: Alexander Fedakov from Rostov-on-Don (he served in the Summer Mission team 2013 in Novgorod), Anna Khapilina (she was one of the first sisters to be baptized in Novgorod), Natasha Korchagina (she moved from Novgorod to Saint-Petersburg not long ago), our old friend Zhenya Khrapov (he lives near Moscow).



At the ending of summer Sasha Fedakov and Anya Khapilina met and since then their relationship has developed into something more special.

We are very grateful to God for our new and old friends, most of them we see regularly at our services, and are part of our church plans. Not long ago we came together to celebrate Christmas and Anton, the eldest son of our sister Irina, was also there.

### **Prayer Request for Anton**

We ask you to pray for Anton. It's a difficult time in his life now, he tries to find his place in life and to build a relationship with God. It's great that he is open to communication with the disciples.



### **Students from Ghana**

For the past few months students from Ghana come to our meetings. They are fellow countrymen of our brother Benedictus.



We have siblings, a brother and sister called Prince and Princess ☺.

Sometimes we also have some other visiting students from Africa.

Prince and Princess recently had some success in their studies, they passed their Russian language exams and now are active in singing in our meetings and services.

Singing has a special place in our church's life. We use every chance to train ourselves in singing and we try to do it better and better every time.



We are very grateful for Natasha Koreneva, our sister from Saint-Petersburg.

Not long ago the Kids Kingdom of our church was blessed with yet another new arrival. Our leader and Pastors' wife Tonia, gave birth to their 3<sup>rd</sup> daughter Alesya!

## Alexandra Finishes the Race



Very often two different events coexist: the start of life for someone, and the end of life for others. By the end of January, God took our sister Alexandra into Heaven. She was 87 years old.

For the past few months she lived in a nursing home for the elderly not far from Novgorod. We usually visited our sister granny "Shura," talked and prayed together. She always told her neighbors with pride: "These are my brothers and sisters, disciples of Christ!" Till the very end of her life God was her biggest treasure. She had a strong desire to return back home. We believe God has prepared a special place for her in His home.

God blesses us with people who are looking for Him. We have guests at our Sunday services every time.



These are our old friends and also some of those who come for the first time.



*With love, your brothers and sisters from Novgorod the Great, Russia.*