



Tartuские Новости

Hannu, Liliann, Hanna and Miriam Keskinen
PRAYER LETTER 1 (33) – January - March 2009

Greetings from Tartu!

We have arrived in Tartu on January 2nd and were registered as “citizens of the same city” as soon as we showed our rental agreement. That also was the moment when bribery started – Hanna and Miriam got their Tartu reflectors. Also, we heard that Hannu had received his Estonian social security number when we had gotten married. Estonians sure have self-confidence ☺

In fact that Monday was a very successful one. In Omsk, you could congratulate yourself, if you managed to do two things in one day. Here in Estonia we did seven in three, four hours.

After the city hall we rushed to the migration office and they photographed me, free of charge of course. This then meant that I'd only receive one copy of my picture, on my new ID card. There, I also spotted an Internet address on language courses. Maybe, I'll meet there somebody who would like to come to our Bible study. We plan to start a Bible study in Russian in February. Please, pray for this \o/.

Just like almost six years ago when we went to Omsk, also this time God has given us a soft landing. Weather in the beginning was really nice. Temperature was just a little below freezing point, snow on the ground and the sun was shining as bright as possible. Maybe two, three times Lily and I simultaneously blurted out that we should take a ride and photograph all the beauty of the winter before the snow melts away. Unfortunately, we never got around in time and the weather changed.

Before coming here we surfed the Internet to find a place where we could live in and found a few good possibilities. Then we mailed them to our boss and he checked them out and recommended one. So, by the time we got here we already had seen some pictures of it but really didn't know what to expect. And were happily surprised. This is like a house designed in Heaven. The floor plan is good. Even the wallpaper pleases us.

After our bosses recommendation we still needed and wanted to think about it. One of the things was that there is a concrete plant almost just across the road. Also, it's situated far from the (down) town (but still within the city limits).

The last confirmation to us that we had made the right choice was when Lily remembered a gift we had received while we still were in Finland. A friend gave us a sauna cloth, the kind that you place on the top bench in your sauna and then sit down and enjoy the heat. On this cloth there are hedgehogs illustrated and our address here of course is Siilikatu (=hedgehog street).

Last glance at Omsk

As we were planning our last stay there, we realized that there wasn't much sense in starting something new. On the contrary, we decided to take the stand that this was the time given to us to socialize with the people we had come to know during these years, a period of farewells. And how wrong we were. Our presence and advice was needed here and there from the first beginning. The congregational matters just yanked us in. We were so busy during that time that it sure was a God's miracle that we didn't get sick. I've noticed that many times when I "seem to forget" to include the Lord's Day in my weekly schedule I tend to get sick. This time He was merciful.

Then again as we were approaching the Christmas (time), we started to dream of how we would and could take some time off and concentrate on the true message of Christmas. The result, however, was that on the Christmas week on Monday we put our things into the container and cleaned the apartment afterwards. On Tuesday we noticed that somebody had tried to brake in the previous night at the Parish Hall and we, Pastor Igor and I, went here and there trying to organize everything afterwards. On Wednesday we organized three services in the “nearby” villages (15 hour work day). On Thursday, the Christmas Day, we first needed to settle the account with the container company and then we bought the Christmas tree – there it is a pine instead of a spruce. There the Russian Orthodox Church still uses the old calendar, which means that the Russian Christmas is on January 7th (13 days difference) compared with the Western calendar. So, December 25th was and is a perfectly normal working day. In fact, there is a “holy” period there, a

week and a half here starting from the January 1st. The biggest holiday of the year here is the New Year and after that banks and (government) offices are closed for 10-12 days.

The following day was the day when the Parish hall was prepared for the Christmas service and our input was needed again. On Saturday, finally was the Party and I preached, for the first time actually. Afterwards, we spent something like five hours at notary as I was obligated to authorize a friend from the congregation to get my car back in to shape. A four-wheeler had backed in to her and reshaped the right front corner. He had tinted windows and couldn't see me down there and the rest is history.

On early Sunday morning we then left for home. We needed to get up at 3:50 am. Thank God our way back was easier than when we went there. Interesting fact was that the free commuter bus between terminals was not working that day and it of course was our problem! So, we took a taxi (inexpensive to us with many large suitcases. You need to pay also for your suitcases and large bags! We got to the other terminal very comfortably ☺ There we then found a café with "nursery" and alternated with our lunches. The four-five hours at the airport went by "fast".

In Tartu

After getting back from Omsk we stayed a few days at my parent's place. Rested a little and gathered the things we needed to take with us right away. A few days later I went back to pick up "some more" and returned with a van and a trailer. We still have that container full of our things waiting in Kingisepp, Russia. On Monday morning some friends and I go there to pick it up. This time we are prepared with two vans and a trailer. Everything should fit in, no problem. However, the problem seems to be the Estonian customs. They want to put a price tag on our things even though the law is unambiguous and on our side. If worst comes to the worst, the Tartu customs keeps our stuff, things flea markets even probably wouldn't accept, in their storage for 30 days. I wish they would make some kind of a decision on this. Then we could appeal and get things straighten out. Please, pray that everything goes smoothly at every step of the way.

Keep in touch!

In Russia the most convenient way of receiving (snail) mail is via P.O.B. One also could use his/her actual address and receive there but the mailboxes in the houses are



mostly so beaten that they won't hold even the smallest letter. So, mailbox at the post office was the thing to us.

Here we live in a house but still prefer to use "a P.O.B" as we at times need to be elsewhere, even extended times. Therefore we asked and were give the possibility to use the church office. So, our new address is: Hannu/Liliann Keskinen, EELK Tartu Pauluse kogudus, Riia 27, 51010 TARTU, ESTONIA.

Also we have new phone numbers: +372 53 641413 (Liliann), +372 53 651 931 (Hannu) and tartukeskiset (skype).

Keep in touch and even better if you come in person!



Prayer requests:

- Lily's shoulder and the coming operation (hopefully in May)
- Getting the content of our container from Russia to our home in Tartu
- Settling down process here and finding our spots

Be blessed,

Hannu, Liliann, Hanna and Miriam