



## Camping in Linz

Matt and Abby Edwards and their three girls – Kylie, Madeline, and Audrey – are FMI workers in Linz, Austria, and do an incredible job of reaching young people, including kids. The Lord spoke to them about doing a 1-week mid-winter break Kids' Camp this year, and they asked us to teach English as part of the event. This type of outreach to the community had not been done before, but the Austrian Foursquare church they minister in was very supportive. Incredibly, almost all of the children who came were from Linz but do not attend their church, so the Lord turned this into a wonderful outreach to their community and to new kids! We were not only able to teach English, but also taught them about God's love for them in very tangible ways. All of the kids were such a blessing to us, even bringing all of the leaders chocolates on the last day of the camp.



## Helping our Ukrainian Neighbors

We haven't posted a lot on social media about what is going on in Ukraine partly because we have been so busy with the onslaught of messages, emergency zoom calls, and emails trying to figure out how to help the refugees on our borders. We have sent out a few emails describing some of the things going on, so the following will be repetitive for some of you, and we have also edited a few of these items because of updated information.

By the time we had arrived back home from Linz, our phones were filled with messages that began a whirlwind of activity which has not stopped since. First, our workers in Russia are now safely out of the country, praise God! Their accounts of what is going down there tell the story of a Russian people that are devastated and ashamed, but also mad that this is happening. And they are in the beginning stages of suffering themselves from the squeeze that the rest of the world is placing on their country. Bank accounts are being shut down, inflation is rising, and their money is rapidly losing value. Who knows what else, but they may also be losing ways to communicate. Before leaving, our friends (dad & mom and two teenage boys) got out as much cash as they could (a miracle because most ATMs were out of money) to buy food for the people they had to leave. Life for them became quickly untenable, so they made the choice they felt the Lord was leading them to make. They didn't want to leave ... they are so heartbroken ... they are devastated. Their life and their calling in Russia, for now, will be played out from a distance. A safe distance ... in another foreign country ... but at a distance nonetheless. We are heartbroken for them as well, and ask that you join us in prayer for this incredible family.

**Gary & Joy Peiss**

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As for Ukraine, yes, we know precious people there. Men under the age of 60 must stay, unless there are medical reasons for why they can't fight. Consequently, they are rushing their mothers, wives, and children to the safe-neighbor border crossings (including Slovakia) where they are saying goodbye, knowing they are now safe, but not knowing when they will see them again. We pray for the safety and hearts of separated families!

We have been coordinating with people in Poland and in Romania to help with people either we know, or they know that need to come through Slovakia. It is amazing how we can ask on different messaging threads for help, or on different social media pages to see if anyone knows anyone who might be able to pick up a group of people from one border and drive them to the next border. Or find a place they can sleep for the night, including pets, before traveling on, and the help is offered in minutes. We are told millions may be coming. It is overwhelming but we have a big God who will help us help them. These refugees will need money, places to live, food, clothing, even jobs. This is just the beginning. There will be many stories and needs yet to come.



A young Ukrainian mother with a one-year-old may stay with us. She was on her way to Romania by way of Moldova, after being dropped off by her husband at the border there. She waited in the line to get through the border for hours with her one-year-old son. Then she was picked up by a woman she had never met before, but who was a Christian and who was part of the line of help she was to receive. Can you imagine her thoughts and fears as she is going through all this? **How can you join us in prayer?**

❖ That the gospel would move powerfully in the midst of this horrible war. ❖ For an end to the war. For peace between Russia and Ukraine. And for the departure of Russian forces from the sovereign soil of Ukraine. ❖ For safety and protection for the people remaining in Ukraine ... and for Ukrainian forces bravely defending their country. ❖ For safe transit and protection for those desiring to and leaving Ukraine. Many of whom are leaving husbands and fathers. ❖ For wisdom, discernment, and effectiveness for all of us (Joy and I included) working in neighboring countries (Slovakia, Poland, Romania, Hungary) to get resources and care to all those who are coming. Joy and I are working with City Church here in Bratislava to resource (food, clothing, shelter) refugees both here in Bratislava and in the east of the country. It's an incredible story of compassion. Ukraine's neighbors (Slovakia included) are accepting as many refugees that want to come. They are standing in unity with Ukraine, removing many of the usual restrictions (visas, passports, etc.) that would prevent them from coming. ❖ For trusting and knowing that our small piece is part of the Lord's larger plans and purposes to care for all. It is easy to become overwhelmed. One person cannot help everyone, but everyone can help some. We are thankful to be here for such a time as this.

## Updates & Paths to Help (links below)

This newsletter will be the first of our posts under the **Ukraine** tab on our website. With 4 weeks between newsletters, we want you to have access to updates as we get them. For those who already support us, thank you! We are using your provision to fund any practical help we are able to give (transportation, food, clothing, etc.). If you would like to help financially, you can do so through the **Partner** tab on our website.

<https://www.podporaeuropa.org/ukraine>

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Thank you for your prayers, and for standing with us! Love & hugs from both of us!

Gary & Joy