



Hatcher Update - May 2022

Dear praying friends,

It has been a couple of months since our last update and oh so much has been happening! While the pandemic seems to be fading from the headlines, the world, especially here in Europe, got another shock. Russia invaded the Ukraine, casting a shadow over our lives and ministries. Many of you have asked us about this, so let me say a few words about how this crisis has impacted us.

- First, unless Putin expands the conflict significantly, Lynette and I are not in any danger. (The closest Ukrainian border is about 300 miles due east of Vienna.)
- My GEM region of central Europe, however, is that part of Europe most impacted, especially Romania, where my GEM colleagues are working with partners to help both in Romania and Moldova, where the people speak both Romanian and Russian. It is great to see how GEM has been able to engage with the refugee crisis in short order from the very beginning, and I have been involved in facilitating some of that.

- We have personally been involved in supporting a ministry in Poland that is reaching out to Ukrainian refugees by collecting and delivering needed items to that ministry.
- Finally, Lynette and I have had the privilege of opening our home so far to two larger Ukrainian families for overnight stays (not too many have the space we have).

More could be said about each of these, but since most of our ministry does not revolve around the Ukraine crisis, I will leave it at that.



Some of the donated items for Ukrainian refugees via Poland

DAILY MINISTRY, TRAVELS AND INTERRUPTIONS

This has been a season of travel after so many canceled trips over the previous two years.

- Lynette was in Greece this past March ministering with Connecting Hearts, encouraging women in GEM during a spiritual retreat.
- I have been with my field leaders in Berlin, Budapest, and Brno – and recently returned from 6 days of GEM leaders' meetings in Athens.

In the midst of these – not to mention the regular local ministries of preaching and Bible studies, etc., such as Lynette just completing teaching through Job over a 4-month period – we sometimes have moments when God interrupts our lives for His purposes. The week after Easter was such a time for us.

I had started the week by preaching on Easter Sunday, followed immediately by a Ukrainian family of 5 staying with us. A Bible study on Tuesday, several meetings on line... the usual. We were looking forward to 4 special friends overnighing on Thursday, and hosting a pastor over the weekend (lots of sheet washing that week!). Saturday was a trip to Bratislava, Slovakia, where we would be meeting with key contacts regarding GEM's future involvement there. In the midst of that already busy week came the first interruption. I found out on Wednesday that the person assigned to preach the following Sunday could not (Covid in the family). I felt that this was something God wanted me to do. This was followed by a second, much more significant, interruption.

Friday morning at 3:30, while our guests were sleeping (as were we!), we received an unexpected call. Our dear friend and former GEM colleague "B", now retired and widowed and living with her troubled son not far from us, called to tell us that her son, 36, who had been in the hospital for two weeks, had suddenly died of organ failure. I had just seen him on Wednesday and we had a really nice visit. Now he was gone. I got dressed, drove to pick up "B" and spent the next several hours in the hospital, grieving and in shock. I left the hospital and headed to the airport to pick up our missions pastor and start our weekend together (which was a great blessing in the middle of everything else). Did I mention that two days later I flew to Athens for a week of meetings?



Ukrainian family finding refuge in Austria

PRAYER

Please pray for the following:

- I will be doing the memorial service on May 17 for our young friend. Please pray for his mother “B”, someone very dear to us.
- I usually only preach once per month, but after preaching 2 of the last 3 weeks, I will also be preaching this coming Sunday.
- Please pray for the resolution of some challenging issues in my region.
- Next week my GEM colleague in Switzerland, Kevin, will be with me here in Vienna. He is a cook, musician, videographer, and passionate evangelist. We have invited some neighbors for dinner and music next Wednesday.
- At the end of the month, I will be traveling to southern Romania to meet with GEM’s field leader there. We have many things to talk about including expanding the ministry with a new team launching in Bucharest this summer.
- Our daughter, Kristiana, and her family have come down with Covid this week. Lynette was with them several times just beforehand. Lynette and I are feeling well, so far.

Thank you all for your faithful support for us and our ministry. We look forward to seeing many of you this fall and winter. (We will be in the US from Sept. 15 to March 18, 2023).

Living by faith, yours in Christ,

Jim and Lynette

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