

HATCHER UPDATE – July 2022

Dear Praying Friends,

One of the challenges of this past year for both of us has been some physical pain (back and knee problems for Lynette and two broken ribs for Jim). But even those annoying issues God has used for good. Not long ago, Lynette had to meet with a new doctor to get clearance for some follow-up strength training. As often happens, the doctor asked her why she, as a foreigner, had moved to Austria. Lynette's response was met with uncharacteristic openness and curiosity, which led to a gospel conversation about God's love and how we can have a personal relationship with Him. Just one encounter... (And, by the way, we are both doing better, though Lynette's knee issue is still a challenge.)

Thank you for praying for us over the past couple of months. I mentioned in our last letter that a troubled young friend of ours had died unexpected. Daniel was buried on May 17, and as hard as it was, there was an outpouring of support for his mother and brother with double the expected number of folks in attendance. I (Jim) led the service and really sensed God's presence in so many ways.

Shortly after that, my GEM colleague, Kevin, who works in Zurich and whom I have the privilege of supervising, came to Vienna for several days. Besides being a passionate evangelist, Kevin is a wonderful cook and musician and blessed us one evening with both of these gifts as we invited some of our neighbors over. Reading Isaiah 55:1-2 and 6, followed by a prayer of blessing before the meal, may have been a new experience for them, but was much appreciated.



Dinner and music with neighbors

It is sometimes hard to know how to share about my regional leadership role in GEM, which involves many meetings (usually online), problem solving, and addressing a variety of personnel challenges. But two particular items stood out over the past couple of months:

- I spent several days in Romania working with my field leader there as we prepared for new staff coming to the field to work specifically with Ukrainian refugees – partnering with Romanian churches in two locations: Bucharest and Craiova. It was gratifying to see how the Lord has opened up strategic opportunities for ministry and provided the people and resources, and especially great partnerships, so we could step into those opportunities. It was a very productive trip.
- On June 16 we welcomed David and Majka Phillips to Vienna, along with their three teenaged daughters. They will be living here, but working part of the time in Bratislava, Slovakia, to re-open that field for GEM. Every step of this journey has been a huge answer to prayer, including the issuing of their residence permits. The whole family is currently staying with us as they look for their own place.



Phillips arriving in Vienna, greeted by GEMers and family from Bratislava.

Lynette and I leave tomorrow for GEM's "annual" conference, which had been canceled for both 2020 and 2021. This is an important event for us as a GEM family and we deeply long for the chance to see friends and colleagues, some of whom we haven't seen in years. As soon as we return, we will be wrapping up several of our ministry commitments as we prepare to be in the US for six months, starting on September 15. We are very much looking forward to seeing as many of you as we can. Here is our general schedule

- Sept. 15-22 – with Erik and Bri in Baltimore
- Sept. 22 to Nov. 21 – Midwest (Wheaton, IL)
- Nov. 21 to Dec. 9 – Southeast and South (Georgia, NC, Tenn., Florida, Texas, OK)

- Dec. 9 to Jan. 5 – Northern California
- Jan. 5-13 – Colorado
- Jan. 13 to mid-March – Southern California
- March 18 – return to Vienna

Please pray for these things:

- Someone to watch our home while we are in the US
- Our church here in Vienna, which will be shorthanded over the coming winter and has also been wrestling with several challenges. Our elders need lots of prayer.
- Staying well while we travel and participate in conference next week.

Praising God for

- The Phillips' arrival, visas, etc.
- So many details about our upcoming US trip falling into place (esp. housing and even some of our transportation needs – need a little more prayer about that);
- Opportunities to share Christ, plant seeds, and disciple young people;

Thank you all for your faithful support for us and our ministry.

Living by faith, yours in Christ,

Jim and Lynette