

Hope for Estonia

December 2020



Screen Shot from a video chat with Pille and her daughters

A lot of Quality Time with a Few People

It is hard to believe I have already been here for almost 2 years! Normally I would be going to events and volunteering at new places to meet new people and build connections. The limitations on this have been a blessing as it has given me the opportunity to deepen and develop relationships I already have and focus on the few people I “expose” myself to on a regular basis. This of course includes our small church family, but some friends who do not have many people here or are also distant from their families this year.

I am thankful for the opportunity I have to spend a lot of time with a few people and plan some online events as well.

Special events

- Gingerbread Cookies
- Thanksgiving Dinner
- Bible Book Club
- International Foods



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**“If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”
– Gal. 5:25**



Bible Book Club

One new thing I am super excited about is Bible Book Club. This is for my agnostic friends who have never been to church or read the Bible but are curious what all of the hype is about Jesus and what the story about his life is like.

We will be reading through the Gospel of Luke, and meeting on a video chat every other week to discuss the story and ask questions to the group. This will help them to know the person and character of Jesus, which is always different than they thought. It brings me great joy to see their interest and surprise to find that reading the Bible is fun and that Jesus is interesting.

While they are not ready to take the next step of studying the Bible as the word of God, they want to know more about the Story of Jesus. I hope, of course, that they will ask why Christians believe this is more than just a story, where the Facebook page I have been developing, "Is Jesus Believable?" will come into play. This group will have videos discussing who Jesus is in the Bible, and evidence of its accuracy, and how you can know it is true.



Dennis and Kermo at Thanksgiving



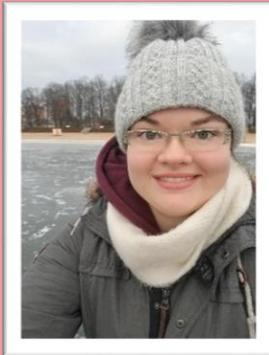
Randall and Elisa at Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving

We had a socially distanced Thanksgiving dinner at Agape the Sunday evening after the Holiday. Turkey, mashed potatoes, and pumpkin pie are rarely eaten in Estonia. It was really nice to introduce some American Thanksgiving dishes to our Estonian, Latvian and German friends. While we wore masks when not eating and sat apart, it was still nice to come together with people. After dinner, we played some Jackbox games on our smart phones where we could compare funny answers on a TV screen. It certainly was a time to be thankful. Elisa, from Germany, was a huge part of making it happen and helped me with the preparation. Randall and Dennis, brought the meat and it was a great time of fellowship.



Breath of Fresh Air



Me, standing on a frozen lake.

This past week, I took my first few days off in 4 months. Because I do a lot of my work on the weekends, it is challenging at times to break away and have space without constantly thinking of the next thing.

After finishing my Estonian course, I took three days away to the town of Võru. I stayed in an Air bnb by a frozen lake and was in awe of the beauty of God. I enjoyed the quiet, fresh air, and time to just be, read, and explore. Now I am refreshed and back at it, writing this newsletter and planning other projects.

Sharing and Baking

With the new season here, I have had some opportunities to bake and share life with the ones I am baking with as well as about Jesus and the Bible. Ginger Bread cookies are tasty, but not as sweet as the fellowship of talking about how to become closer to God and the Bible as more than a boring book of morals. I was able to give a short overview of each book of the Bible with one Estonian friend. Even though she went to a private Catholic school, she did not know that there were 66 books in the Bible, or much about it other than Jesus. It has been cool to see her discover more, as well as her interest in the Bible Book Club.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control.” – Galatians 5:22

Also this month, I have been able to spend time with people while they have also shared their international foods with me. I was able to make a German dish from fried pasta filled with spiced meat. I learned there is an Estonian superstition that if you do not eat breakfast, a bird might deceive you. If you eat a light breakfast, it is called “bird’s deception.”



One of my Estonian friends, Pihla and I making gingerbread cookies

I am thankful for all of you who pray for me and read my newsletters. I am pleased to announce that our church here now has a website! Feel free to check it out at www.tartuntc.org