

# RED ALERT NEWSLETTER



## Russian Christmas Tradition

Have you ever wondered what the holiday traditions of December 25th are like in other countries? Russia actually does not follow our Western, Julian calendar for their celebration of Christmas. Following the old Gregorian calendar for all things religious in nature, Eastern Europe predominately has its festivities on January 7th. Hey, if you think that waiting an extra thirteen days to open your Christmas presents is bad, consider what would happen in Soviet times when the celebration of Christmas was banned entirely! But even still, there is still remaining from old times tradition concerning...

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### PRAY FOR SAFETY

We need God to protect us each mile we travel.

2

### PRAY FOR LABORERS

Russia needs more missionaries to surrender and go.

3

### PRAY FOR SUPPORT

The faster we are funded, the sooner we can start.



Miles Traveled  
17,051 miles so far!



Current Support  
Green shows our current support.



Russia Fact  
Ring the Bells! The world's largest bell, named the Tsar Bell, weighs 200+ tons and resides in Moscow.



### An answer to prayer!

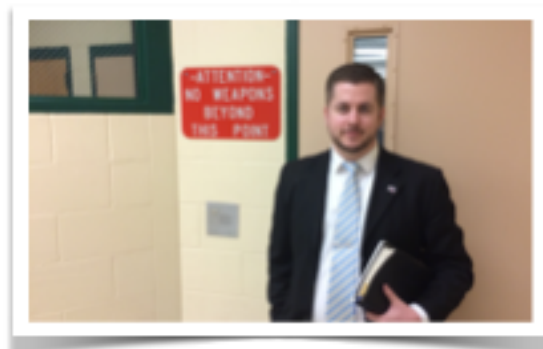
We found Jonathan's aunt and uncle in Colorado Springs and were able to spend some time witnessing to them. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will continue working in each of their hearts.



When dropping in to visit Olympia Bible Baptist Church, we crossed paths with Brother Groff who used to serve together in Fairbanks, Alaska with Katrina's grandfather. What a "coincidence!"



We saw Kyle Swenson in our travels - who's dad not only used to be one of Jonathan's favorite Sunday School teachers, but is now pastoring in Eastern Idaho. It's always great to see long-term faithfulness in the lives of God's servants.



While in Idaho, Jonathan took the opportunity to visit the county jail with Gethsemane Baptist Church and saw more than 12 inmates respond to a salvation message by making a profession of faith.

## HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Not everyone can go overseas. Active church members are needed all across the United States, but how can someone we witness in both "Jerusalem" and "the uttermost" at the same time? A commitment to pray every day for us is a

great start. A monthly commitment to support us financially would be kindly appreciated as well. After you have considered these, think about sharing our ministry with friends!



## Losing and Gaining this January

Before you know it, every person following the tradition of New Year's resolutions will be pondering about which commitments they will make to better their life in this upcoming year. Katrina and I are excited about what this next year holds. Already, we have had multiple churches either promise or infer that they will be partnering with us - hence, Lord-willing, our next prayer letter will reflect some financial support gains.

While we are making progress in raising support, we would also like to lose some things too - like some of the weight we have accumulated while eating on the road. As stewards, we are not only responsible to treat the money entrusted to us wisely - but our health as well. So... we are going on a diet! Katrina and I both have the goal of losing some serious weight. In addition to that, I am going to take Krav Maga classes for self-defense and fitness since Russia has anti-gun laws and there is sometimes a threat of being accosted while on the street. We are excited to begin this life change and start eating healthier. So... please pray that this does not make us vegetarians - that would be pretty much tragic.

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...this major holiday. In spite of the fact that many secular Russians tend to appreciate New Years as a more important holiday, Christmas is considered a national holiday, causing many government offices to close for over a week. In 1935, the State adopted the Christmas customs of decorating a fir tree and exchanging gifts into their New Year's festivities. During this time, they say that Grandfather Frost and his granddaughter, the Snow Maiden, visit bearing gifts (like our American lore about Santa Claus). More and more, Christmas is catching on. Part of their religious ritual is that on Christmas Eve, the family will return home from their Russian Orthodox services to share a meal consisting of twelve dishes - which represent the Twelve Apostles. After dinner, devout families will return to the All Night Vigil and then will wake up the next morning to attend another liturgy. Since 1992, Christmas has been a national holiday, celebrated by Russian people. And, if I might add, this holiday has been defended by the Russian Parliament in the years 1999 and 2008 against atheists and neo-pagans. What a wonderful opportunity each year to explain to Russian-speaking people about Who Jesus Christ is and what He came to earth to accomplish on the cross!