

MARKEY NEWS

*Summer 2019
Ternopil, Ukraine*

Greetings from Ternopil!

As always, we are so very thankful for your prayers and support. We are excited to be able to connect with what the Lord is doing in Ternopil, Ukraine, as well as to share some BIG NEWS.

TRANSITION

In fact, I think we need to start with the news first...

About a year and a half ago, at the beginning of 2018, Steffie and I started to talk about where things stood with the church, and how close we are to turning things over to national leadership. It was exciting to think not only of all the areas in which we were no longer involved, but to see initiative, vision, discipleship all being generated by other leaders. At that point, there still seemed to be some things that we needed to work through, but we felt it was time to start talking with the leadership about transition.

We gathered the leaders to specifically ask the question “What needs to happen before we are out of the picture?” This was a difficult, yet fruitful, meeting. As we talked and prayed through it the next few weeks we realized that it wasn’t quite time to officially talk about a timeframe for us leaving, but it definitely got the ball rolling. Those in leadership started thinking differently and more intentionally about where we are headed as a church, what we even exist for, and how we can minister to the city.

One year later, at the beginning of this year, we had another meeting. This time we decided that we are ready to officially enter a transition phase. By the summer of 2020, we plan to completely transition out of leading CC Ternopil. Zhenya Chekushkin, who is currently the associate pastor will be taking my place, and I couldn’t be more excited about how the Lord has grown him in the past several years. We also have a board of four elders (of which I am included for now) that began functioning in May.



We celebrated our 12 year wedding anniversary in July!



Jon with our 3 oldest: Katie Rose (10)
George(9), and Mira(5)

We announced this plan to the congregation in March. Our vision concerning the transition is that we want to do it together. Steffie and I did not want to isolate our decision from the church and spring it on them in the last few months. From what we've already experienced, and from what we've heard and read of other transitions, it's quite an emotional (sometimes traumatic) experience for many, and we want to be working through the details, implications and changes together. We are one body. Steffie and I see ourselves as submitted to this community of believers.



Jon teaching a Sunday service in Ternopil



Sophia(age 2), Mira(age 5) and Melody(age 3)

The church has responded super well. Once again, it has caused a lot of people to ask important questions like: "Who or what is at the center of the church?" and "What is my role in this church?"

This next year will be full of changes. We want to be slowly fading out, and very intentional with how we spend our time and energy. Please pray for wisdom and against the enemies' desire to destroy.

Here are a few areas to be praying about...

DISCIPLESHIP

In September, we are wanting to start several sermon-based home groups. This means that groups will meet during the week with questions that we will come up with ahead of time based on the Sunday sermon. Each group will have a moderator, and we will be continually be getting together with the leaders of these groups. We see the need for more of this kind of fellowship and community. A place where people can get deeper in relationships, where they can share personal needs, and be a support for each other.



Sophia and George sharing a special treat at our favorite coffee shop in Ternopil, Karma Kava.

TEACHING

At the moment, I'm teaching most of the time - probably 3 Sundays a month. The goal is that during the fall I would teach 2 a month and by the spring, only 1. Zhenya teaches when I do not, but also Sasha Melnyk, one of the elders, has taught two Sundays. It's such a blessing to see how they are capturing more and more of the story of the Bible. Their approach is gospel-shaped and centered. Pray for both of them as they continue to grow theologically and in their ability to relate truth to the congregation.

MUSIC MINISTRY

As of right now, we do not have one person over the music ministry. My brother Aaron, and sister Robin are both very involved and we are all looking for ways to get others involved. There are many new faces in the teams, many gifted musicians, but still praying about someone to lead.



Core group of RFM. Us, Anya (center) and Aaron & Dara with brand new baby Elroi!

ROOM FOR MORE

Speaking of music... Room For More is thriving. We plan on having an album out in October (in Ukrainian), and we have many collaborations planned. Later this month we will be putting out a separate newsletter for this ministry, so I will be sparing with details here. Stay tuned!

KYIV

Parallel to the decision to transition out of Ternopil has been an invitation by George to come and help with church-planting in Kyiv. At this point I am traveling to Kyiv once a month to teach and meet with leaders there. We will be writing more about this separately in the future as well.



KIDS

One of the most difficult things about transition is considering the future of our kids. All of their friends are here in Ternopil and they are in public school and preschool here. We have been talking with them throughout this process, we want them to feel a part of these decisions and to understand the heart of why we do what we are doing. Please keep them in your prayers.

PERSONAL STRUGGLE

This is an exciting time, but also a time where we are experiencing doubt, discouragement and anxiety like never before. It's easy to second-guess the decisions we've made and there are many uncertainties ahead of us. Steffie and I are learning to be honest and communicate to each other, to the Lord, and to others our fears and uncertainty. It's a vulnerable place to be. Pray that the Lord would remind us of His presence, that we would lean on His grace, and that we would glorify Him not only in what we do, but in allowing Him to search us, refine us, and make us more like His Son.

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