

## 600,000 Russians in New York City need a church that speaks their language...



Sent by Grace Baptist Church of Urbana, Ohio, through Baptist World Mission -  
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Dear friend,

**T**uesday, August 14 was filled with that odd blend of sorrow and joy that comes when a Christian you know goes home to be with the Lord. On that evening, our sister in Christ, Marina, did just that.

**F**riday evening we had a visitation service before her body was flown on Saturday back



to her home country of Georgia for burial. Marina had no relatives here in America but was blessed with a church family and many friends. Many of those friends are Russian Orthodox and (we were warned) do not think well of "the Baptists." Our prayer was for open hearts to hear the Gospel. Pastor Bickel preached a short gospel message in English, and Dan did the same in Russian. Many of the Georgian ladies were stoic, making things feel very tense at times. Some were crying in a hopeless kind of way. As we greeted and expressed condolences, we mentally added up the opportunities God had given us to reach out to people we wouldn't have met otherwise. Dan closed the service by inviting everyone to church on Sunday, when we would again remember Marina by singing her favorite hymns and examining her favorite portion of Scripture, the 23rd Psalm. As we left the funeral home that night, we honestly found it doubtful that any of those ladies were planning to come to our church.

**T**hen Sunday came. It was a great day filled with the victory of answered prayer. But not in the way we had hoped to see it, and not in the way you are expecting to read it. Sunday afternoon, a young woman in our Russian church began a Bible study with another young Russian woman who has been attending our services for a couple of months. At the end of the study, Diana accepted Jesus

as her Saviour! One has entered heaven and another has been born again.

**A**t the evening service, another young Russian woman, Victoria, showed up. She is a volunteer on the hospice floor where Marina spent her last month. Sherry spent some time talking with her one Sunday afternoon while visiting Marina and challenged her to read a tract and visit our services. Please pray for Victoria to see her need for Jesus.

**A**s we prepared to head home that evening, Sherry received a text from Eka, Marina's dear friend, who is also from Georgia. We arranged to meet at her home where she began to talk about Friday evening's events. Eka shared how many positive phone calls and messages she had received from the other Georgian ladies about the service on Friday. We couldn't believe we were hearing words and phrases like "impressed with so many young people showing respect," "such nice words from the pastors," and "so grateful for all their help and kindnesses"! We couldn't comprehend how such nice thoughts had been behind such disapproving faces. What a blessing it was to hear that God may yet have softened them and may still continue to work in their hearts. Eka asked about our services just as we were ready to give her a tract. She has assured us that she will visit. Please pray for her to also see her need for Jesus.

**M**arina had a sweet neighbor, Shabnub, that Sherry communicated a lot with the past few months. Marina was a good witness to her. Please pray that somehow she would be open to a Bible study or coming to a service. Her family is Muslim.

**A**long with those already mentioned, we promised Marina in her last days that we would continue to pray as a family for her loved ones to be saved. There are no other Christians in Marina's family. As you pray for these others, will you please join us to pray for Ekaterina (daughter), Tina and Kesaria (granddaughters) and Kira (great-granddaughter)?

**T**hough this letter has mostly been about Marina's home going, at the end of August, we were also blessed to participate in the Brighton Jubilee with a literature table. We distributed a lot of tracts, and one lady so far has visited our Thursday evening study as a result. She is a believer and had been looking for a church.



**O**n September 16, Dan had the privilege to baptize four people, George and Sophia, Diana, and Gulshan. That was exciting!

**W**e also celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary on September 18. It's been great, and we're looking forward to the next 25!

**S**erving our Saviour,

*Dan, Sherry, Symphony, Lacey,  
Shastya, Gabriel, Emma, & Kelsie*