

# LORI IN UA

“ Look to the nations and watch; stand in awe and be amazed for I am doing something in your day that you would not believe even if you were told. ”

HABAKKUK 1:5



## CHRISTMAS, NEW YEAR'S, CHRISTMAS AGAIN!

**I love the holidays in Ukraine, they never end.**

Christmas decorations go up in the beginning of December; and there is enough Western influence (especially in Kyiv) that December 24th and 25th are celebrated.

Then everyone starts getting ready for the New Year--the biggest holiday in Ukraine. We don't have a day this celebrated in the states. It is like a conglomeration of many holidays all rolled into one--there is a feast and fireworks and family and friends. Grandfather Frost brings children presents--with the help of his granddaughter the snow princess (Snegorochka). The decorated tree is not for Christmas, but for the New Year. Games and festivities are offered in every city square around the giant tree--often one of many in each city. On New Years, faces that seem grim and cold to outsiders on any other night are aglow with

smiles and greetings of a happy new year (S Novim Godom) as you pass them on the streets. The old year is reminisced and wishes and dreams are shared of the one to come. No city sleeps this night.

Six days later (Jan. 7th) marks Orthodox Christmas and this is the date our Savior's birth is celebrated in Ukraine. There is something special to me having a day set aside specifically for Him. No Santa; if the tree is up it is simply left over from the New Year's celebrations; no gifts are exchanged; this day is His.

And finally, sometime mid January, is the old New Year--the New Year according to the Julian calendar. And it, too, is celebrated.

I love the nonstop festivities in Ukraine throughout December and January! Never a dull moment :o)



**Sometimes it's weird not to be with my family on the holidays...but God has extended my family and allowed me to be with these awesome kids!**

# JOY & PEACE



THANK YOU!

СПАСИБО!

Many of you donated socks to go in the Christmas bags this year. Thank you so much. And many of you may not realize it, but money you sent me went toward black drawstring backpacks and to building supplies for gingerbread houses. You are a huge part of what God is doing in my life and in the lives of these kids.

## Visiting the orphanages on New Year's is a very special treat.

There are very few kids left in the orphanages on new year's day. Because the holiday is such a big do most children have family who come to take them home for the day--if not several days during this time.

Usually the kids who are left are the ones who really do have no one.

This year 12 of us and a dog piled into a nine passenger van and headed off to see the kids. It was awesome to get to Bela and see that there was already music playing in the upstairs room and the kids were playing games. We just joined in and played with them. Then there was some karaoke time and we made gingerbread houses. (In the picture to the left Andrey has written out Happy New Year beside his house). One of the kids dressed up like Grandfather Frost and delivered presents. SO MUCH FUN!

After visiting Belorchinka we headed to Krasnadon where where there was snow covering the ground. We played Jenga and Connect Four and Checkers. Someone from the village brought by a cake and some candies.



Forrest prayed with the kids for the new year and we gave out presents. There were lots of hugs and smiles.

Before driving home we drove out to the Russian border (so close you could see a Russian factory on the horizon) to a small village where four of Forrest and Darcy's boys live when they are not boarding at Krasnadon.

It was also a huge blessing to have Katelyn, a 16 year old with a huge heart here serving with us this winter. Madison was also here on her Christmas break and came with us. But most encouraging for me were all the Ukrainians who piled in the van with us on their holiday to love these kids.



Our Very Own Grandfather Frost!



**Dentist in UA**

I was so scared when I realized I was going to have to visit the dentist here. It turned out to be the best dentist experience of my life. I feel like I should get a merit badge or something for having completed said task.

**Natalia Nikolaivna: angel dentist**



**Never a dull moment in the ministry apartment...**

**We didn't** just visit the orphanages over the holidays. There were plenty of parties to attend around the ministry apartment (aka my current home) as well. We had several friends over on new year's eve; we played games, ate WAY too much food WAY too late at night and shared what we were thankful for this past year. One of our friends shared that he was thankful God moved me to Lugansk. I am thankful for this, too. In more ways than I know how to express.

**A good** friend, Vika, was home for the holidays. She had been in the states for Discipleship Training with YWAM and then to Thailand on outreach. She came over one night, prepared

Thai food and shared pictures and stories from her time there. She asks that we pray specifically for women in Thailand.

**We also** hosted an inductive Bible Study method training here on Orthodox Christmas eve. Several members of the church attended and we even got to Skype with our favorite church interpreter (Yeagor) who is now studying in China.

**Christmas day** we celebrated Jesus' birthday with food and friends and singing and sharing. Two of the girls from my group at camp came by to see Katelyn and it was great to have them here to celebrate with us.

**I hope** to be able to start English lessons here soon with some informal hang out time afterwards.



FAVORITE THINGS	FOODS	TO DO	SEASON	HOLIDAYS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Beet salad</li> <li>-anything w/ dill</li> <li>-ice cream</li> <li>-coffee</li> <li>-carbs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-visit Bela</li> <li>-be w/ friends</li> <li>-walk the city</li> <li>-speak Russian</li> <li>-listen to Ukrainian</li> <li>-SNOW DAYS</li> </ul>	<p><b>FALL</b> is my favorite. I love the colors, the weather, the smells right before winter.</p>	<p><b>ALL OF THEM!</b> (is that an option? I pick them all. I just love to celebrate!)</p>

# LET THE HEAVENS REJOICE

Let the earth be glad; Let them say among the nations "The Lord reigns" -1Ch. 16:31

I've been overwhelmed with joy the past couple months. I don't know if it's the holiday season or being home to celebrate Calyn and Kenley's wedding or coming home afterwards and knowing I'm FINALLY here. In Lugansk. For a while. Wherever it came from, I wake up every morning and find myself often in moments throughout the day thanking God for Who He is and for what He is doing in my life.

## A Train Ride

Between last January and this one, I've become a very frequent train traveler. Even my missionary friends joke about how often I ride the train. I love it, though. There is still something magical to me about being on the train. Something that makes me feel five years old. Something that makes me feel like I'm in a Harry Potter movie. The best thing about train rides to me, though is the "think" time that they give me. Life is on pause while I'm on the train and I love to sip on tea, look out the window and talk to God.

On the train ride to Kyiv in the middle of December to pick up Katelyn I was watching the trees rush by, wishing for snow and thanking God for bringing me here. As I kept pouring out words of thankfulness, I reflected on how easy faith has always come to me. I don't know why it's easy for me to trust--to believe. For most of the people I encounter here, that's the hardest part about trusting God--that at some point you have to do just that--trust.

## A City Walk

On Christmas Day, Katelyn and I met up with one of our campers who goes to school in Kyiv. Lera was in my 'older girls' Bible Study at camp this summer and she is one of the girls who said, "I'll believe in God when I get older. Right now I want to go to the disco and have a boyfriend and have fun."

And as we crossed the walking bridge across the Dnipro, I felt so blessed to have another opportunity to share with Lera that life with Jesus is so much better than life without Him. And I pray that she will come to know this to be true.

## A Cafe Visit

Back in Lugansk, we went to Bela early one day to hang out with the city kids who were on break from school before going to the orphanage for our weekly visit. We woke up late and almost missed the bus and when we got there it was FREEZING and there was nowhere to go to get out of the cold. Katelyn stated making phone calls to let people know we were in the city. When Sergey finally showed up, he started making phone calls to get someone to open the cafe in the village. (I love village life--that everyone knows everyone.) When he finally tracked down the keys we went inside and stated helping set up for the day. We chatted

Merry Orthodox Christmas!

And a Happy Old New Year!



about life and I got to share how God had brought me to Ukraine. They complimented my Russian skills and paid for our tea. They came with us for our orphanage visit and we all played Uno in the upstairs room. It was a great day and as we waited (in the cold) for the bus I kept thinking "there is nowhere else I'd rather be."

## A Facebook Chat

Later throughout the next couple days chatting on Vkontakte (the Russian Facebook) we learned that Belorechinka does not have a church. Several times before I had thought about wanting to do a Bible Study or something in the village there. This new information made it even more urgent on my heart. Please pray with me as I pray about how to best go about doing that.

## A New Beginning

In so many ways my life in Lugansk is just beginning. I'm so excited--and overwhelmed with joy to see where He will lead.

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and be utterly amazed.  
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Habakkuk 1:5

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**LORI IN UKRAINE**

*New Year's 2010-2011*

*Lori A. Jackson*

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