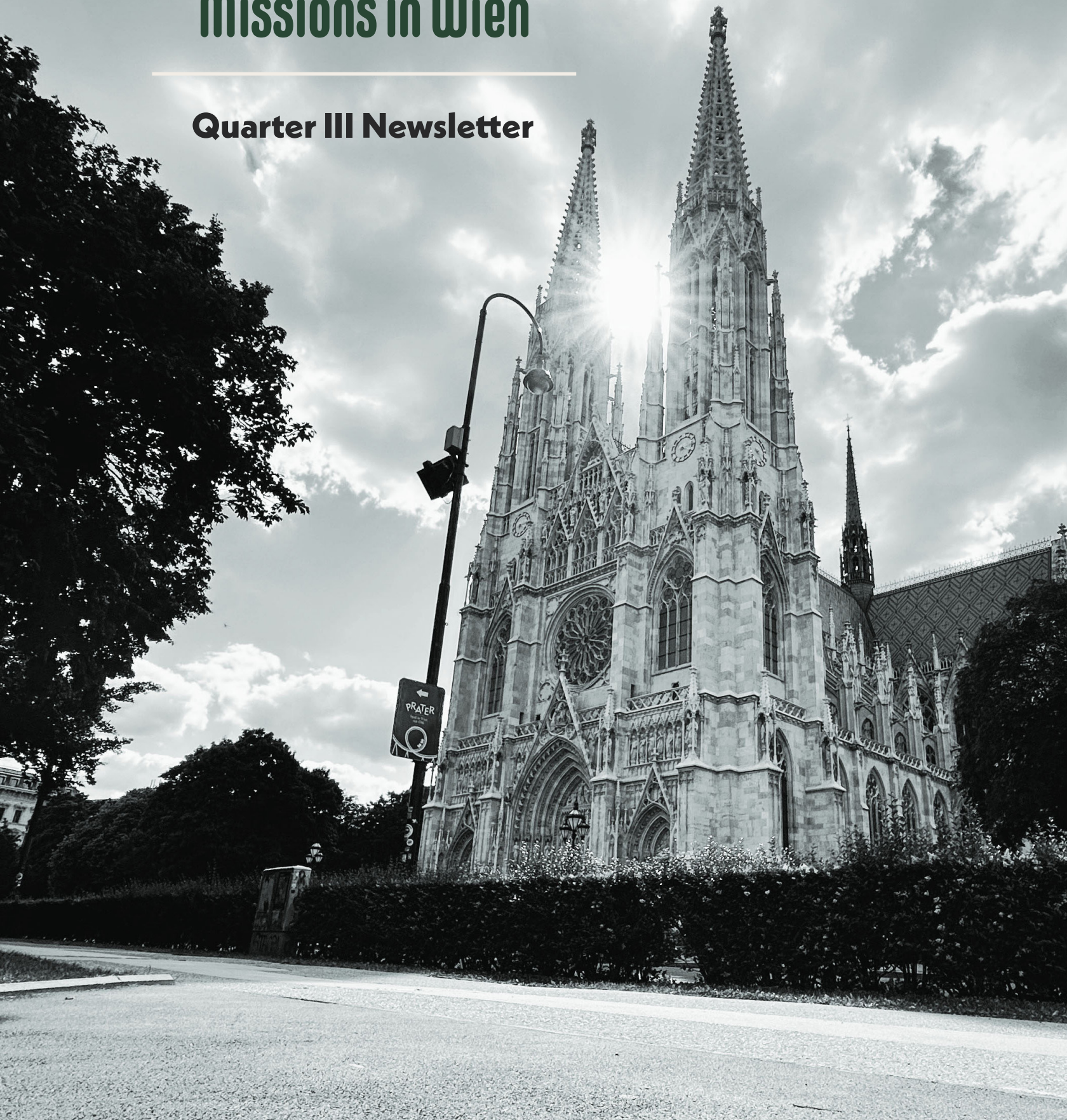


Haskew Family

Missions in Wien

Quarter III Newsletter





Haskew Family: Missions in Wien

Quarter III Issue I July 2023

Anita Pt. 2 by Amanda Haskew

When last we left our hero...

Anita had made the choice to head back to Ukraine to try and ride out the storm that almost everyone thought would last only a short time. She was able to reunite with her friend and they were able to find a temporary apartment near Kiev. Anita was finishing her schooling on-line and her friend was working, covering their living expenses. Everything was going relatively smooth until the breadwinner lost their job. It was decided that the two would move to another part of Ukraine, still mostly peaceful to live with the friend's aunt and uncle. Sadly, this arrangement didn't last very long. I've never personally lived in a place where war was taking place. I can only imagine the stress and worry that comes with such a thing. But I do know that living with family or friends can be a challenging arrangement under the best of circumstances. Unfortunately, Anita carries with her the stigma of being an orphan and that coupled with the stress of the war made that living arrangement unsustainable.

Eventually, Anita and her friend made their way back to Kiev and found a place to live and a new job. All the while, Anita would keep in touch via a messaging app to give us updates and let me know she was safe. I was also in contact with Kerry during this time keeping up with all the work she was doing from the US to try and get Anita to a safer place. She, of course, was finding this challenging mainly due to Anita's age. Occasionally, Anita would ask us for financial help. We were able to provide some of that help thanks to the many generous folks who took up collections and sent us funds for the purpose of helping Ukrainians. Anita was only one of the people we were able to assist thanks to these funds.

Fast forward to January of this year, and Anita began contacting me more frequently and asking questions about coming to

Vienna. Missile attacks in the city were beginning to be more frequent and it was all becoming too much for her. Though I assured her she could come and stay with us, no plans were actually put in place. Then in February I received a message from Kerry telling me Anita had received a visa allowing her to immigrate to Canada. She needed to come to Vienna to get the visa physically put into her passport. PRAISE THE LORD!! Anita would be arriving on a bus (after a 24+ hour trip) in Vienna. I'll admit I was a bit shocked at the quick turn of events. However, I can't understate the amount of time and effort Kerry put into tracking down leads and possibilities to get Anita to safety.

So, we picked up "our girl" at the bus station and I'm sure she thought I was a complete weirdo the way I was hugging her and asking her if she was okay and did she need anything to eat. But there are only a few times in my life when I have felt more relief and utter thankfulness to God.

We spent the next couple of days getting her to all the right places to file paperwork for her Canadian visa, as well as jumping through the hoops for her stay here in Vienna while she waited. And then she slept! We were blessed to spend the next several days with her here in our home. We played countless rounds of Skip Bo and Uno, plowed through bottles of Coca Cola and snacks (and some healthy meals) and just enjoyed having her here. We were also able to take her shopping for some new clothes and other things she would need for her relocation to Canada. When we picked up this 17 year old girl from the bus station, she had one suitcase. One suitcase containing her entire life and with which to begin a whole new life. And I know there are many others who didn't even get out with that much.

In what can only be described as an act of God, her visa paperwork took less than a week to finalize and Anita was able to pick up her passport and board a plane to begin her

life in Canada. The plan is that she will stay there until she turns 18 and then hopefully be able to join Kerry and her family in the US. Kerry was able to make contact with a Ukrainian woman who would help Anita navigate the system in Canada.

And so, for now at least, our part in Anita's story has come to an end. We took her to the airport and I literally held onto her as long as I could before she went through security. And then we had to let her go, trusting God was with her and holding her even closer than we ever could. She is now in Canada and doing well. There have been a few bumps along the way, but Anita has seemed to work through those and is doing her best to make her way in her new home. Kerry continues to work diligently on getting Anita, the daughter of her heart, to join her family in the US. Please pray for Anita, Kerry and all of those still living in the in-between space due to the war in Ukraine. And if you have the opportunity to help someone like Anita, even if it seems insignificant, I pray you take it.

Important Upcoming Dates

It is once again time for the biennial Haskew Family Furlough. Jake, Katy and Amanda will once again be taking the US by storm, well part of the US anyway. Furlough, or perhaps a better title might be Home Assignment, is a time for us to visit family and friends we don't often get to see, as well as an opportunity to share with our supporters about our work here in Vienna. We look forward to hugging necks, sharing meals and catching up with as many as we can.

Finding Family in Vienna

By Willie Steele, Ph.D.

My family and I spent three months in Vienna, Austria as part of Lipscomb University's Global Learning Program. We had arrived on a Thursday afternoon in early February, and once we were settled in, the man and woman (Yordan and Nicole) who maintained the building where we were living invited us to worship with them on Sunday morning.

Three days later, we were welcomed into worship by the congregation, each of whom made it a point to personally meet our family. We had been told there was a meal following services that day, so we brought something to share with the group. The group joked that this was like a United Nations of food with dishes from Austria, Cuba, Ukraine, South Africa, and the United States set before us.

Over the course of the next three months, we came to love the beauty of a group that shared their successes and struggles together, praying as needed for thanks and strength. We valued the friendships that quickly developed between our family and the members of the church in Vienna. Seeing this congregation pray for and assist members who had immigrated from Ukraine was beautiful. Watching them encourage members who were in the process of gaining new positions at work was uplifting. But seeing them come together each week to praise God was the most powerful thing of all.

Perhaps more than anything else we experienced during our time abroad, we are grateful our two teenaged daughters got to be part of this church. It wasn't uncommon for there to be 5-6 nationalities represented on a Sunday morning, with scriptures read and prayers offered in various languages. At home, it's easy to see people focusing on those things that could separate us, things like ethnic or language barriers. But in

Vienna, we saw the beauty in Christians who embraced those differences and who focused on the common love of Jesus Christ.

My family and I don't know when we will be back in Vienna, but I am thankful knowing now that we have a church family there. We have prayed for them since we returned to the US, and I am certain they have done the same for us. I am equally certain that God will continue blessing the church in Vienna, and we rejoice in knowing we now have family there as well.

The Steele Family—
Willie, Heather, Molly, and Marianne





Worship with Other Congregations

Instead of boring you all with the long history of the churches of Christ in Vienna, let me just say this, we are one of three other congregations in the city. We have had contact, fellowship, and various collaborations over the years with the other congregations and while none of these congregations (us included) are perfect, we have always found a way to work together on various projects (like Teen Camp).

Various factors in the last few years have contributed to the congregations having little to no contact with each other. But over these last nine months things have begun to change.

In the book 'Poured Out' the author, Leonard Allen describes the Holy Spirit as untamed and not satisfied with the 'status quo'. One take away from the book and months long study of the Spirit is that when those who are seeking to be led by the Spirit and do God's Will feel trapped or burdened, the Holy Spirit will ignite a fire in them to shake things up and put them on a path of renewal. Amanda and I have had a longing for some time to renew

our Vienna wide fellowship Sundays (once a quarter) with the other congregations. On this note we met with one of the long standing members from the oldest congregation to discuss not only this idea but others that might bring our congregations into closer fellowship.

Cue Holy Spirit working. Not only were they thrilled at the idea, but they had other ideas to contribute as well and now since the start of 2023 when there is a 5th Sunday in the month our two congregations worship and fellowship together over a pot-luck.

In addition, they have been organizing church outings, fun activities that all the churches can

do together. Cue Holy Spirit just getting warmed up.

We can't describe what a blessing this has been for Amanda and I. Some of these families we have known since moving to Vienna and they had been some of our closest friends and staunch supporters. In the tumultuous past few years, it is good to see old friends again, share stories of the past, meet new friends, but most importantly, introduce our members to faithful brothers and sisters with whom they share a common faith and open their eyes to the greater 'church'. Praise Father, Son and..... Holy Spirit, and watch out, the Spirit isn't done yet ;)

by Jake Haskew



Family Update

by Amanda Haskew



As I write this, I know many of our family and friends in the US have begun their summer breaks. You're already in full summer mode of less scheduled days, family vacations, summer camps and endless snacks. In Vienna, the school year goes from the beginning of September until the end of June, meaning we're still trudging along. Well, Katy is, at least.

The end of this month will mark a milestone and the end of an era for the Haskews. Both of our girls have been blessed to take part in a program offered via the Vienna public schools called Vienna Bilingual Schools (VBS). This has been an amazing program allowing our girls to receive a high caliber education in German and English simultaneously. Abby went through her whole school career in this system, Katy has opted to switch things up beginning in the fall.

Katy will be attending a public high school that has an emphasis in the tourism industry, with special attention to the culinary aspects. She has long dreamt of having her very own cafe one day. This school will help prepare her for that with classes in management, marketing, and cooking, in addition to the usual schedule of subjects. A big change will be that most classes will take place only in German, although she will also add French language class to the line up. We're all very excited about this new endeavor, especially Katy.

Abby completed her first year of university in April at Oklahoma Christian majoring in biochemistry. She has done so well with the transition to life in a "foreign" country. She's grown and learned so much this year, we could not be more proud of her. We were looking forward to having her home for the summer, but instead she applied for and was accepted to attend a summer REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates) program at the University of Mississippi. I was able to travel back in May and help her get relocated and settled in for the summer. She's doing well there and her list of life experiences keeps growing!

Jake and I have been working for many months on the next phase of our work here in Vienna and continue to prayerfully seek God's will and guidance as we look to the future. We will have some more news about that at a later time.

Love.
The Haskew's