

Russia With Love--Annual Report January 2013

The inter-confessional Russia With Love project is co-sponsored in Ann Arbor by Memorial Christian Church and St. Vladimir Russian Orthodox Church. The current members of its Steering Committee consist of people from the Disciples, Lutheran, Orthodox and Presbyterian church communities in Ann Arbor. Members of the Ann Arbor church community are invited to participate in the Steering Committee.

Our goal is to help the Russian Orthodox Church during a difficult period of transition and by doing so to establish long-term ties between American Christians and Russian Christians. Along this line our committee solicits monies to support a joint Danish Lutheran/Russian Orthodox outreach to the poor in Moscow. These monies go towards pre-and-post natal care for expectant and new mothers, emergency medical assistance, assistance to help families avoid evictions, monies for food for the poor, help to Sunday schools and other needs.

Over the course of 2012, we had \$12,000 available to help the outreach in Moscow, which meet our monthly goal for 2012. Also we had designated funds for a nursing project with a church training facility in Moscow and to bring a student to Ann Arbor for an academic year. In November 2012 we brought four nursing instructors for a two week program at the University of Michigan and local medical facilities.

As the leader of the nursing group wrote us:

We were very touched by your concern for us, at the time of the preparation of our trip and at the time of her [it]. All that we saw, was very useful for us, for our College and to the hospital. We are now preparing a report for presentation to students and teachers, as well as in the hospital of Sainted Alexei, and in the Sisterhood. We pray for all people, who helped us in organizing this trip. All of them bowed low before, as we say in Russia. With gratitude and love.

The total cost of the nursing project, air fare plus Ann Arbor expenses, was just under \$7,000. And we had a \$12,000 grant to help a young Russian student study English at the Michigan Language Center for an academic year. All of this would not have been possible without very generous help from the Anderson family, Zion Lutheran Church and the help of faithful respondents to our letters of appeal for fund raising.

For this coming year, we hope to strengthen our efforts to help the church in Russia in our own community, in Kalamazoo and among our own church organizations. We also hope to promote further contact and exchanges with students in Russia.

John Howard Wilhelm, Chair Russia With Love Steering Committee