

From: **J Danz** <[jdanz33@yahoo.com](mailto:jdanz33@yahoo.com)>  
Date: Thu, May 27, 2010 at 11:18 AM  
Subject: Vilnius report  
To: Danny Dodd <[ddodd@gatewaycoc.org](mailto:ddodd@gatewaycoc.org)>

Dear partners,

Greetings in the Lord! I pray that all is well with you. We continue to give thanks to God on your behalf for your faithful partnership with us in the Vilnius mission work.

They are gearing up for summer camp there and are excited about this opportunity to share Christ. Camp is always a major spiritual boost for the church there. So please be in prayer with that God will once again use this ministry to open up a door for the gospel. This year there will be only one session. Paul Franks from the Blvd. Church of Christ in Lake C`harles, LA will lead the group from the states to help staff this session. This congregation oversees the camp ministry. I will not be able to travel over this summer.

I have attached is a letter from Al Espino which you will enjoy reading. Al and his family are Americans who moved to Vilnius a few years ago because of his work in the American Embassy. They have been a wonderful blessing in numerous ways to the Vilnius church. In the letter he expresses his appreciation for this church and for your support of it.

As I have mentioned several times, the church in Vilnius is one of only two churches of Christ who meet regularly now in Lithuania. They are relatively isolated in terms of inter-action with other congregations and even short-term mission work (the camp ministry is their only regular contact). Ilia and Juozas faithfully minister in sometimes difficult situations without the kind of resources and support we are accustomed to here. Please continue to pray for them and drop them an encouraging note. It would mean a lot.

Please let me know if you are not getting their monthly reports. If you have any questions- please feel free to contact me.

Thanks again for your partnership. It is a gift from God.

Blessings,

Danny Dodd  
Gateway Church of Christ  
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To the Churches of Christ in America, who provide support to the church in Vilnius, Lithuania:

I am writing this letter at the end of my 3 year assignment to the American Embassy in Vilnius. It seems like just yesterday that I wrote an email to Brother Danny Dodd at the Gateway Church of Christ in Pensacola, Florida. I Googled "Vilnius Church of Christ" and one of the links was for the summer camp (Camp Ruta) which is sponsored and attended by members from Gateway and other churches. It was from there that I got Danny's email address and inquired about the Vilnius church. He gave me Ilia's contact information, and shortly after our arrival to Lithuania, we attended Sunday worship at the Vilnius Church. We missed the 2007 camp session by a few weeks, so we had to wait almost a year for Camp Ruta 2008. It was then that I met Danny in person, and got to put a face with a name and also meet some other brothers and sisters from the states who came to help out with the camp. We had a pre-camp "5th of July" party for the new short-term expats (they arrived sleepy and jet-lagged on the 4th), and had a good time meeting each other and having a lot of food, fun, and fellowship. The house was full with about 30 American and Lithuanian camp counselors. My heart was uplifted, and it was a good feeling to see so much love and praise directed to God. We were able to repeat this for 2009 when Danny, Bubby, and a different group came from America for Camp Ruta 2009.

God has truly blessed us with a house that is very suitable for hosting birthday parties for church members, Camp Ruta parties (sorry we'll miss this year), and also a weekly bible study (in English) that has an average attendance of 8 Lithuanians, plus my family. We hope to continue hosting bible studies and such in Warsaw, Poland, as that is my next assignment. Lord willing, we will be able to drive to Lithuania for Camp Ruta 2011.

We have attended church services regularly, except for the weeks when we were back in the states for R&R. Zivile, wife of Juozas, provides simultaneous interpretation of the sermons that Juozas and Ilia preach. In her absence, Daiva (Ilia's wife) or Vladimir will interpret for us. Usually my family and I are the only ones wearing headphones, but occasionally there will be a visitor who requires the headphones for interpretation. The headsets have a lot of interference and noise, and could probably be replaced, but it sure beats the alternative of not understanding anything, or skipping church altogether. It will be strange to get back to the states for two months, and not hear the sermon in my left ear via a headphone!

I want to finish by saying that we really appreciate your support of the church in Vilnius, be it with finances, prayer, or some other means. The only other churches that have services in English here in Vilnius, are Catholic, Lutheran, or Episcopalian, none of which we have any desire to attend. In short, we were able to have three wonderful, spirit-filled years in Vilnius, Lithuania, and will miss the church and its members very much.

In Christ's love,  
Al Espino and family