

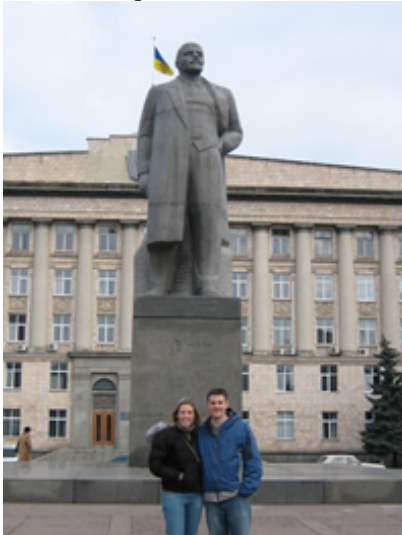
## HAPPY NEW YEAR! WE'VE ARRIVED IN LVIV, UKRAINE!

Here's our first missionary update from 2007! Thanks for your patience & prayers. We are finally here, after a year of preparation. We finally made it! We've been here 15 days, and there is so much to share with you.

**PRE-DEPARTURE:** It's been a while since our last update. Since the fall, we've completed training, moved, sold or shipped our possessions, said goodbye to so many people, and really seen God at work. He orchestrated everything to get us ready to leave. We survived the shipping process through the Ukrainian courier service, Meest. We were commissioned ("sent off" and prayed for) by our NJ & IL churches & youth group. The last months in the States were mainly spent sharing quality time with loved ones (and eating Mexican food, a scarcity in Ukraine.) On Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>, we dragged oversized luggage through Newark Airport en route to Lviv, Ukraine, where we were greeted by our Josiah Venture (JV) missionary partners, **Jay & Cameron Hughes**, and their daughters, Lily & Paige.



**LIFE IN LVIV:** Since arriving, we've been caught up in a whirlwind of activities! We're living with the Hughes and being well cared for. We don't know what we'd do without them! They're great. We've visited 4 churches and youth groups. We've started our summer camp prep and budgeting process. We've spent time in prayer and planning for the US high school teams, US college students, and Ukrainian churches who will all partner together to host English camps. We've visited potential camp facilities. There've been visits from the Hughes' US pastor, our JV president, and a member of the JV missionary care team. We've driven half way across the country to Kiev (8hr.) We've met other US missionaries in Lviv. We met our 2 language tutors. We've met with our "realtor" and have seen a few apartments so far. We are finding rest, too. What a huge life adjustment!



**SASHA, CHERKASSY, & NEW LIFE:** **Sasha** a 20-yr. old Ukrainian Christian girl Kristy met at the Lviv English camp last July. (see photo) They hit it off when they realized they both speak Spanish. Since then, they've communicated over email. Last week they ran into each other at an open-air market here in Lviv! Pray they can grow this relationship. **Cherkassy** is the city we visited near Kiev. Our NJ church youth will do a camp this summer with a church there. Pray for our relationship with the Ukrainian church leadership team (see photo). **New Life** is a church in Lviv. We visited their youth group. This church is a potential fit for us, but it's too early to know.



**CULTURE:** Here's a list of culture things that strike us as...different (we learned in training "it's not weird, just different")...brown toilet paper; so many women in thigh high heel boots and skirts, regardless of the temp.; legal, open drinking on the streets; bathtubs w/ shower heads but no curtains; no clothing dryers; Hallmark cards and 6 McDonalds now in Lviv, yet we can't find index cards, green lettuce, or diet drinks; tons of electronics stores (Kristy found a hair straightener); tiny shops offering more cell phones than Cingular, Nextel, and Verizon combined; fur coats in every color of the rainbow; a dog wearing a babushka; plenty of cabbage and mystery meat; police check points everywhere; customs officials demanding proof of health insurance (in case we came to Ukr. to take advantage of their medical care!) Easter Peeps candy sold in Kiev in January (not stale); stray dogs/cats, etc.

We write about culture because we think it is fun. Keeping a sense of humor while adjusting to a new country is so important. (And none of those culture quirks should keep you from coming out to visit!) We laugh a lot, and we truly do like it here! We continue to pray that we not only adjust but embrace many of their ways.

**PRAYERS:**

- Pray we meet students and youth leaders who are interested in developing relationships with us
- Pray we find an apartment suitable to meet needs (guest rooms, location, cleanliness, price, size, storage) and our remaining shipments arrive safely and without damage or theft.
- Pray for the US youth & young adults who'll join us in service this summer. We want God's perfect teams.

*Colossians 1:9-10* For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

We'd love to hear from you about more specific things in your own lives. One of our concerns about being so far away from our friends & families is that we will lose touch and stop communicating. We don't want that to happen!

**SKYPE:** We've been using [www.SKYPE.com](http://www.SKYPE.com) to use the Internet to call our parents for free. It is easy to use. All you need is a headset, microphone, or USB phone connected to your computer. Download the program, and search for Benjamin.p.williams. There is a free Instant Messenger feature, too. Let us know if you get connected! Also, if you want more photos and details about our daily lives, check our blog! [www.benandkristy.com/blog](http://www.benandkristy.com/blog)

**We want to end by rejoicing in the genuine contentment God has given us in this new place. We believe that this is where we are meant to be. We have peace and are overjoyed by God's leading us to full-time missions.**

*Psalms 103: 1-5* Praise the LORD, o my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name.

*Praise the LORD, o my soul, and forget not all His benefits - Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,*

*Who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,*

*Who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

Praising God for having taken us this far,

Ben & Kristy Williams [www.benandkristy.com](http://www.benandkristy.com)

Temporary Address: Zelena 89 kb 25 Lviv 79017 Ukraine

(Ukrainian postal service functions but isn't super trust worthy; don't send anything of value)

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