



# ANABAPTIST INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

Pointing people to Christ

Winter/Spring 2019 | Issue 74

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## GET TO KNOW A CHURCH FAMILY

*In this feature, meet Wojtek and Agnieszka Wojtynska, who share what led them to Agape church and what their work is here.*

About 16 years ago I met Laura Smucker and her family. I couldn't understand why I wanted to spend time with her so much. It was like a strange power pushed me toward her.

In those days, I thought I was a very happy woman who had a loving husband and a child we had had despite what the doctor claimed. He told us that we would never have a child, and that really let me down. Now I know that Nikola is a miracle God gave us. But when I observed Laura's life and her family I felt a lack of something special in my own life. I was a Catholic and I didn't know Jesus. I used to go to church but always felt emptiness. I didn't know how to pray and reading the catechism didn't help. I started to ask Laura more and more about God. I wanted to understand what and why was different between us while we both believed in the same God and she answered all of my doubts and prayed aloud for me.

Together with Lolita Hershberger, she organized meetings for women, of which the main theme was Jesus. We all talked, read the Bible, and sang songs glorifying the Lord. I loved that time because after those meetings I felt like a new, better person. I didn't understand that feeling.

Laura often invited us to church but the first time we decided to come was for Conrad and Austin Smucker's baptism. I will never forget the happiness on John and Laura's faces and the feeling accompanied me during that ceremony. I understood that for John and Laura the biggest desire was for their children to give their lives to God. Today it is also my only desire, that our daughter will trust God and give Him her life. But Nikola as a 17-year-old girl still stands on the crossroads between God and the world. She attends a public school and lots of time she spends with her friends who don't know Jesus. I and my husband see that the world impresses her. All people in our family and all our friends who are not newborn, claim that we have a wonderful child, who doesn't bring us any problems. They even ask us how to raise such a good child. They claim that she is a good, sensitive and a helpful daughter; that she studies very well and we don't deny it but they can't understand that our desire for Nikola is to give her life to



the Wojtynska family



## WINTER BIBLE SCHOOL REPORT

*by Annaliese Hershberger*

Once a year during the school break we get together with friends from church and all over Poland for Winter Bible School. We have stimulating discussions, ask thought-provoking questions, and have wonderful times together in God's presence.

Speakers come from our church and neighboring churches. Subjects include our role as young people in the church and how to share our Christian journey with others. One of the talks that I remember from several years ago was a talk by Jonathan Miller on "Purity When You're Young." The things that you see, hear, and fill your mind with when you are young greatly affect the person you will be as an adult. And remember that even though you are young, God can use you in mighty ways in the church.

Something that we all enjoyed this year was our free time, playing games, singing, or just hanging out and talking. One afternoon, we all piled into cars and drove to a nearby ice rink. Another day we enjoyed a winter barbecue and nature walk in the snowy forest. We also had special times of sharing our testimonies with each other.

At the end, these friends we shared our hearts with and prayed for felt like family. These are friends and times that we will never forget.

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Jesus. We pray for her and ask God to open her eyes and touch her heart.

I am a teacher and my husband is a builder and we both lead a preschool, where we have 50 children aged 2.5 to 6. We think that God opened a door for us to say the gospel and serve God through it. Among our teachers we employ there is a lady from the Baptist church who supports us in this. Also Mennonites from our church help us. But besides the preschool, God called me to help old people as a volunteer. So for more than 2 years I have taken care of a 74-year-old, partly paralyzed woman named Teresa. Our Father is wonderful because He called me to service that brings me joy and happiness.

Some time ago God also put on my heart the desire to open a nursing home. I told my husband about it and from that time it is our common goal. In Poland there are such homes, but usually they are directed to rich people and we want to create a home also for lonely, sick and poor people, who can't afford it themselves. We want to open a home where everyone can feel Jesus' presence.

I see how God is working in my life. He changed my parents' attitude toward my belief. They don't accuse me anymore that I left the Catholic church, that Nikola doesn't attend religion class at school or receive the holy sacraments. I think they see how much I and our life has changed and become more beautiful since I gave Jesus my life. Maybe they can see the same as I saw in Laura's life years ago? Of course, sometimes I feel discouraged but in these moments I meet my sisters from our church, mainly Lolita Hershberger. I feel our church is my real family. I am so grateful to God that He put Mennonites on my way because they helped me to take the first steps toward Jesus, my Savior.



*Nikola, Beata, and Julia sing during worship time at Winter Bible School*

# MEET OUR NEW VOLUNTEERS



## **Alyssa Zimmerman**

My name is Alyssa Zimmerman, and I am from Lebanon, Pennsylvania. My home church is Sharon Mennonite Fellowship. My first introduction to AIM was through REACH 2015. I was secretary at a local school for three years; and through God's leading, I felt called to serve in Poland as a teacher. My favorite memory of Poland is an extended weekend trip to Gdansk. If you ever visit Poland, I recommend that you eat zurek [a traditional Polish soup]. My most difficult time of day is preparing to teach the final class of the day; time often tends to drag, even though the classes themselves aren't difficult to teach. My favorite classes to teach are Kids 1 classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It is so exciting to see their vocabulary expand and to see their eyes light up when they understand what you say to them. A book I am currently reading is *Packing Light* by Allison Vesterfelt.



## **Alex Yoder**

Hello, my name is Alex Yoder. I am from a small town in western Maryland called Swanton. My home church is the "Bittering Mennonite Church" in Bittering, Maryland.

The first I remember hearing about AIM was when I received an email from Matthew Gingerich asking if I would consider teaching English at GTE. From there it was a matter of prayer, talking

to different people, and essentially re-evaluating the direction of my life and where I believe God was and is calling me. Not only in the time frame of leaving home for at least two years, but also in the greater picture of life. I don't feel like Poland has been the answer to a question but rather a place where questions need to be honestly explored.

As far as a favorite Polish food, I would highly recommend the frozen pizzas from Tesco. They have at least three variations to suit your different

tastes. Just kidding! So far one of my favorite Polish foods is simply grilled sheep cheese covered with a delicious cranberry sauce.

The most difficult time of day for me is usually right before evening classes begin. In some ways it feels like the day should be ending, and for some people it is, so it takes a little bit of a mental boost to get excited about not only finishing the day but finishing it well.

My favorite class to teach is either a Teens 2 class, where there is no end to "brilliant" ideas, or an individual lesson with a young energetic 10 year old boy who uses all of his communication skills to attempt vaulting over the language barrier.

One memory that has been "en-drenched" in my mind was a lovely bike ride we took one evening this summer. We got caught in the rain on our way to a barbecue, and on the return trip, it was even worse. It was a great introduction to biking in Poland.

Different people inspire me in different ways, but I remember talking to a polish pastor named Adek. I could feel the love and passion he had for his people and church. It is always inspiring talking to people who have set their eyes on a higher prize and have enough faith to follow through with their lives.



## **Kristin Herren**

Home community and church: Word of Life, Montezuma, GA

First heard about AIM through: Lavern & Lita Hershberger's family when they spent time in my hometown during their furlough in 2017.

What led you to Poland: When I first heard of the need for English teachers in Poland, a seed was planted in my heart/mind that started to grow. At first I didn't think that moving to Poland was

an option for me, as I had deep roots where I was. However, over time the Lord kept laying Poland on my heart, and I began to really pray about it. I eventually became convinced that He was indeed leading me to teach English in Poland, so...here I am. And I am so thankful to be here.

Best memory so far from your time in Poland: I have so many great memories already! Some meaningful conversations with students come to mind, as well as time spent with the church family here. My first visit to the

Baltic Sea and the city of Gdańsk with its incredible architecture and nearby Oliwa Park were a spectacular sight in the fall. I meet weekly with one of the youth girls to trade English/Polish lessons, and we have a lot of fun getting to know each other in the process.

What traditional Polish food do you recommend: Kotlet! Think American pork chops, but... Smashed. This meat is thoroughly beaten until flat, then battered and fried. Accompanied with potatoes and sauerkraut, this is a delicious dish.

Favorite class to teach: There's no way I could pick just one- I have such an incredible group of students, with a lot of variety! I love my individual lessons with a student my age, who always makes me laugh, but also has shared tender parts of her life with me. I love our Adults 2 class, with lots of lively students who are eager to learn English, and full of laughter and fun.

Favorite Bible story: The words of Jesus in Mark 8 have become very personal and dear to me this past year. While this passage isn't a story, these verses definitely affect our stories, as well as the stories of other people: "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it."

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## AIM Financial Report

October 1, 2018-December 31, 2018

<b>Available balance October 1, 2018</b>	<b>\$10,035</b>
Restricted funds October 1, 2018	\$-0-

### Income

Unrestricted donations	\$20,649
Restricted donations	\$9,791
English lessons	\$18,307
Other income	\$801
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$49,548</b>

### Expenses

Labor	\$34,430
Administrative	\$242
Facilities	\$2,181
Personnel	\$5,087
Public relations	\$1,446
Publications	\$3,873
Supplies	\$565
Travel & Events	\$200
Utilities	\$1,246
Other Expenses	\$14
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$49,284</b>

<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$264</b>
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<b>Assets released from restriction</b>	<b>\$9,791</b>
Restricted funds December 31, 2018	\$-0-
<b>Available unrestricted funds</b>	
<b>December 31, 2018</b>	<b>\$10,299</b>

## PERSONNEL NEEDS

We have an opening for a male or female volunteer teacher to provide instruction in conversational English at Gateway to English, starting in August/September 2019. Teaching experience is preferred but not absolutely required.

To volunteer or to recommend someone for this position, please contact Matt Gingerich at [personnel@aimpoland.org](mailto:personnel@aimpoland.org).