



# ANABAPTIST INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

Pointing people to Christ

Winter 2024 | Issue 80

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## **What is happening in Agape Mennonite Fellowship? An interview with church members**

*How many years have you been a part of Agape Mennonite Fellowship?*

**Piotr Ławrynowicz:** I have been a part of Agape for 13 years.

**Agnieszka Wojtyńska:** I have been a part of Agape for nearly 12 years.

**Kristin Herrin:** A little over 5 years, since the summer of 2018.

*How has the church changed and developed during the time you have been a part of it?*

**PŁ:** The church has changed from the Mennonite Church, where the Mennonites were in a teaching and organizing role, to the Christian Church, where the Mennonites are an important component on equal footing and every member of the church has his own importance and role. Mennonites founded this church, and it is as much theirs as it is ours. They have a lot to offer in education, experience in walking with God, teaching on family life, and values they hold, but they are not the overriding force. That force is Jesus.

And it would be disrespectful to the Mennonites and their work to remain at the stage of the same model that was at the beginning of our Church.

**AW:** My impression is that earlier there were more brothers providing teaching and more brothers invited to preach. Today the brothers are trying very hard, but I personally feel that the lack of a leader or elders makes it very difficult for the church to function as smoothly.



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## What is happening in Agape Mennonite Fellowship? An interview with church members

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**KH:** A significant change happened in the spring of 2022, when many Ukrainian refugees moved into our community in Mińsk Mazowiecki. The church expanded as we welcomed new people into our midst. We transitioned from being a bi-lingual church to having 3 or even 4 languages represented among us. We found out that family can be experienced even without conventional conversation. Our lives have certainly been enriched as a result.

Another big shift happened when Lavern and Lolita Hershberger and their family moved to the US in January 2023. Our church found itself without a pastor, but the body pulled together in beautiful ways to support one another through this transition. People stepped up and did things that felt stretching and new. It has not all been comfortable, but there has been growth.

*How have you experienced God working in our church?*

**PŁ:** I've experienced God working through people, and specifically, the Mennonites have helped us change our approach to life. Instead of viewing God who is an addition to life, we see a God who is the purpose and content.

**AW:** I have experienced and continue to experience sisters and brothers helping each other by caring and praying for each other.

**KH:** One of the first things that comes to mind is

that I have experienced God working in our church through the body being a family. Our church really cares for those in need in our midst, and expresses this in practical ways as people reach out to meet physical needs, send a message of encouragement to someone who is struggling, or spend time in sharing and praying together.

*What are the things our church does well?*

**PŁ:** Our church does well in involving all members in the life of the church and by being active.

**AW:** Our church cares for new people who come to worship, including helping and caring for refugees. In addition, there is the evangelistic work of the sisters and brothers at the GTE school and taking care of the youth at youth meetings.

*What are the areas where our church could grow in the coming future?*

**PŁ:** By having more Mennonite families come in to increase the impact, I think our church could grow even more.

**AW:** According to me, we could grow in the area of teaching and in zealous preaching from the Spirit.

**KH:** Having a pastor, someone who feels the call of God to shepherd people in our church would be a huge blessing. I think the church could also grow in a shared vision for evangelism and discipleship in our community, things outside the scope of our English school. I would love to see the youth group grow as well, for the young people in our midst to have more believing friends in their age group.



**Agnieszka Wojtyńska**



**Piotr Ławrnowicz**



**Kristin Herrin**



Sheryl, talking with conference attendees.



## New Volunteer Introduction



**Hello!** My name is Karla Horst. I am originally from New Columbia, Pennsylvania, where I worked as a cashier at a local market. Currently, I am a teacher at Gateway to English in Minsk Mazowiecki, Poland.

My school week consists of four kids' classes, a teen's class, an adult class, and several individual classes. As I have worked with my students over the last few months, I have grown to love each one. There are so many different personalities, English levels, and interests. I have learned that the children adore you and want to learn well. The teens want someone to listen to their interests and fears. And the adults want to improve their English to further their careers and ability to communicate when they travel.

The biggest thing that I have learned is the fact that I do not need to have all the right words. My students want a simple answer, conversation, and someone to gently correct their mistakes. All I need to do is provide them with new vocabulary, methods to use that vocabulary, and fun ways to help them remember it.

The most difficult thing about being 4,500 miles from home is the possibility of change in the lives of family and friends. Life moves on for them and may seem completely different to me when I return home. But God has been so faithful in giving me an unexplainable peace. I have an amazing prayer support team back home and caring friends here. I am so excited to see how God works in the coming months.

## “Imported, Not Alone”, missions conference

*by Matt Gingerich, administrator*

The AIM team spent November 6 and 7 at a missionary conference, “Imported, Not Alone,” in Poznań. Organized by various North American missionaries working in Poland, the goal of the conference was to connect second culture workers with each other for mutual encouragement.

The conference consisted of approximately 35 people from a variety of mission organizations. Some of the attendees had lived in Poland for over thirty years and raised families here while others had been here for less than two months. I experienced the other attendees as being down to earth and serious about following God’s call, along with having a great sense of humor. Hearing other people’s stories of their cross-cultural experiences and knowing that other North Americans have similar experiences relating to Poles helped us feel at home. My wife and I talked with other families about their experiences of raising children in ministry, third culture challenges, and school options. It is very helpful to know other expats who are further down the road in this process.

Part of the value of a conference like this is learning about what is going on in other parts of Poland. Of course, there are Polish churches and believers to connect with, but this conference helped us to gain a broader context and vision for how North Americans are ministering in Poland. Hearing about other ministries’ vision for Poland helped me to think more optimistically about the possibilities in the work that we are involved in. Conversations about partnering with Polish people helped me think in new ways about the church here and gave me a vision for how to continue pursuing relationships in our church.

God is at work in many parts of Poland, including my own town! There are many things happening that I cannot see, so I am praying for better vision to see what God is doing around me.

## AIM

## PERSONNEL NEEDS

We have an opening for a male and a female volunteer teacher to provide instruction in conversational English at Gateway to English, starting late summer 2024, for a two-year term. Teaching experience is preferred but not absolutely required. To volunteer or to recommend someone for these positions or for more information, please contact Matt Gingerich at [personnel@aimpoland.org](mailto:personnel@aimpoland.org).



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## AIM FINANCIAL REPORT

July 1 – September 30, 2023

<b>Available balance July 1, 2023</b> .....	<b>\$86,006</b>
Restricted funds July 1, 2023.....	\$122,602
<b>Income</b>	
Unrestricted donations.....	\$15,919
Restricted donations.....	\$7,337
English lessons.....	\$4,432
Other Income.....	\$199
<b>Total income</b> .....	<b>\$27,887</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Labor.....	\$26,756
Administrative.....	\$1,291
Facilities.....	\$2,913
Personnel.....	\$7,892
Public relations.....	\$174
Publications.....	\$2,499
Supplies.....	\$398
Travel & Events.....	\$227
Utilities.....	\$1,429
Ukrainian Refugee Exp & Grants.....	\$25,929
Other Expense.....	\$331
<b>Total expenses</b> .....	<b>\$69,839</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b> .....	<b>-\$41,952</b>
<b>Assets released from restriction</b> .....	<b>\$30,303</b>
Restricted funds September 30, 2023.....	\$99,636
<b>Available unrestricted funds</b> September 30, 2023.....	<b>\$67,020</b>

Thank  
you

A big thank you to Shalom Mennonite School and Dervin Martin for donating used projectors and a laptop to GTE! These fill a much-needed gap in the tools needed to run our school and church smoothly.