



friends of the

Gypsy Roma

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Mission Trip to Romania 3-17 November 2022

The primary purpose of the Friends of the Gypsy Roma mission trip was to revamp an unused apartment into a ministry center. For several years there has been a need for storage of ministry materials, TUMI training materials for training of pastors and church leaders, a place where visitors could stay for a short time, as well as a location for Titus to meet with small groups. This trip was originally planned to take place in April, 2020 but was postponed due to the pandemic and travel restrictions. The team consisted of Jordan Webster and Paul Barkey from Grace Baptist Church and Ashland Community Church of Manhattan, Kansas; as well as Mark Watson, Brian Hobson, Clark Swedberg and Travis Van Remmen. They are all from Bible Family Fellowship Church in Weatherford, Texas. Craftsmen in carpentry, electrical contracting and installation, plumbing, heating and air conditioning, they were all giving up their two weeks' vacation to serve. An additional critical team member was Joe Kelly, one of the three pilots of the Boeing 777 that flew us from Dallas to London. Joe also was key in putting together the travel connections. One of the flight attendants gave each of us a small crocheted heart with a pocket reminder of the Lord's presence with us, and His call to this task. Just as Hiram assisted Kings David and Solomon in building projects, through his craftsmen and artists, these men used their abilities for the glory of God in completing this much needed construction.



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This project would have made a good feature on the TV series, “Dirty Jobs”. The first challenge was fixing the leak in the roof which had defied previous repair efforts. Then the interior needed to be cleared of excess furniture which was given to Gypsy families.



Doors were replaced, electrical fixtures removed and updated, windows framed, kitchen and bath fixtures as well as water lines and plumbing renovated. The bathtub was replaced with a shower, a new sink installed, as well as a new water heater. Tools and materials were acquired in the little hardware store in Cefa as well as in Salonta and from large contractor suppliers in Oradea. A monumental amount of work and construction was completed, but everyone would

have liked to have had one more week to wrap up and put a bow upon the project. All expressed a desire to return to continue laboring with the mission in other service opportunities.



Initially we had some well-founded concerns about the effect of six Americans descending on a small Romanian village and noisily renovating an upstairs apartment in an eight-apartment complex. The first few days the other occupants were wary of our team. Problems with water, electricity and sewer in the other apartments had to be dealt with in order to resolve similar problems in the project apartment, as it is on the second story. Some of the other apartments had been without utilities for several months. The team resolved these critical issues of the neighbors at no cost to the occupants. This was also vital to getting utilities to the project apartment. In answer to prayer, and skilled labor, apprehension was replaced by appreciation. As time allowed several of the team also repaired the HVAC system in the Gypsy Baptist Church in Oshand which had been installed by Mark four years ago. They also brought electricity back to the home of an 80 year old woman who had been without electricity and water for a number of months.





An additional special experience was the opportunity to visit with two of the TUMI church leadership and pastoral training students. Prior to the pandemic Titus was ministering to pastors and other young men at six locations along the border. During the military restrictions he continued the TUMI training by telephone. One of the young men was preaching at a revival service at the Gypsy Baptist Church in Oshand. His preaching was powerful and convicting. We also visited with an older student who pastors a church in a

small village near the Hungarian border. He reported that he is one of two Christians in the village. Though coming to Christ only a few years ago he has a vast knowledge of the Bible as he is continually in the Word. He expressed concern that if he dies, the church will have to close. But his fears have been removed when the Lord reminded him that the Church belongs to Christ and the Lord will continue the ministry. We also took with us funds for the Women's Craft ministry and funds for medical relief for Gypsies in the communities we have been called to serve.

The team also had the opportunity to preach the Gospel and share personal testimonies in a number of Romanian and Gypsy churches. As time allowed, we also participated in weekly prayer services in nearby churches.

We took with us 100 of the Mission Balls (soccer balls with the Ten Commandments and Plan of Salvation printed in Romanian on the cover). These are used during the Bible Day Camps in Gypsy villages during the summer. Titus will, Lord willing, be able to resume a full schedule of Bible Day Camps this coming year. Some of the team members are desirous of other family members returning to assist in the summer ministry.

As always, our lives were touched by the humility and the practice of Christian hospitality by these Gypsy Christians who are walking in obedience to the Lord, and so freely give of their few material possessions. We literally were blessed by being recipients of the widow's mite.

Before embarking on the return flight from Budapest, we were blessed to have supper with the Welch family at the hotel restaurant, and were encouraged by the report of the Lord's Hand upon their ministry in having to evacuate from Kiev this past year and relocate to Budapest. How encouraging to see their faith prevail over uncontrollable circumstances. We all made a commitment to pray for them and their daughters during this time of stress and disruption.

