

COMMITTEE TO SUPPORT THE ST. PETERSBURG CHURCH

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Dear Friends and Donors,
October 13,2000

The long awaited event has happened! A beautiful space for the Church, Reading Room and ' Sunday School rooms has been found and purchased. I was fortunate enough to be there when the papers were signed. That happened on Wednesday September 27 but the final papers were not ready and the money transferred until this week, so I waited until we knew for sure that the place was ours before writing this letter.

It was a wonderful unfolding. We initiated the purchase that Wednesday, got the key and learned about all the switches and valves and planned to have our first service on Sunday. Thursday we ordered and received the chairs and Saturday about 10 of us gathered with buckets, scrub brushes and cleaning materials and scrubbed and polished for over six hours. The store had been an outlet for heating supplies, saunas etc., all foreign imports which it couldn't sell after the ruble lost most of their value. One could see where each piece of equipment stood by the black ring of footprints around it. The floor is white tile, so we worked very hard. We watched a Reading Room and church auditorium grow around us. One of the members had rented a truck and hauled all of the furniture that we had gathered through the years to the site. It was pure joy.

Sunday morning the auditorium was filled and I sat in the back with tears of joy and gratitude in my eyes....they return as I write these words. Everyone came to me to thank me and tell me to bring this thanks to all of you. They felt as I did that they had finally come together as a church family and their commitment to Christian Science grew. Many volunteered to serve in the Reading Room, a task always difficult to fill. Last night when I received the e-mail telling me of the closing of the sale, Andrei Koudaev, the second reader said the following: in his own words) 'Thank you for your warm letter. We finished first step of buyng place for our church. The services are just wonderfull at our new place. Our Kirifl already was in Sunday school and liked it a lot. We are so happy to have this place, everybody like it. It also a big responsibility for us (preparation to the service, start in time, etc.). This is a real public church and it is a new step in our development."

The space we bought is part of a larger square space, of which we have

an L shape. The smaller part which completes the square is an apartment that the owner wants to sell. It would be a perfect place for expansion as the church grows. It could also provide income to help pay the utilities until the Society has more members and can afford them themselves. We used almost all of the funds

we had in this purchase, so we will wait and see if God directs us to buy the apartment by directing more money our way. To human reasoning it seems logical to obtain it, but we do not want to be directed by human reasoning, and will continue to pray to be led to the right conclusion.

We will continue as a committee to direct help to the Society and will be happy to keep you informed on developments in Russia if you desire. Perhaps a small Newsletter would be in order in the future. The short-wave radio broadcasts are bringing many requests for literature and from this are growing small groups which ask Hildegard Arnesen CSB to visit them. Visits to larger groups which meet regularly are funded by TMC and trips to smaller groups are being funded primarily by private parties, mostly in Germany.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the interest you have shown and the help you have given the St. Petersburg Society.

Sincerely and gratefully,

Bill Arnesen, for the committee