

*Ambassadors to Romania*

# NEWSLETTER

*Summer/Fall 2025*

*Vol. 2 Iss. 1*

*Published August 2025*



*All articles are written and published by Joshua Dykes unless otherwise noted.*

## YEAR 1 IN REVIEW

### MISSION:

To fulfill the commission of Christ by teaching others the Gospel through preaching and living out the word of God. To give as Christ gave and to live as Christ lived. To make disciples that make disciples that make disciples. And to bring honor and glory to the Lord.

### PASSAGE ON MY HEART:

"All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 ESV

### What's Inside...

- PREACHING AND WORK OF THE CHURCH
- OUTREACH ENDEAVORS
- UNIVERSITY STUDIES
- BUILDING THE CHURCH AND CHURCH BUILDINGS
- 2025-2026 PLANS

### ALSO IN THIS VOLUME:



## PREACHING AND THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

### Preaching

From my arrival in Romania (September 2024) until now, I have been doing the majority of the preaching. As mentioned in my last newsletter, published in the fall of 2024, I had been doing a series through the book of Colossians. At the end of 2024, we concluded our study through Colossians. At the start of 2025, the Church in Arad decided that our focus would be on “Growth.” How can the Church grow spiritually, but also numerically? For the first half of the year, all the way up through June, our lessons were mostly topical. However, starting in July, we decided that we are starting a series through the book of Acts, and the focus will remain the same.

In Arad, it has not only been myself preaching. On occasion, there have been some from Oradea (located 2 hours north of Arad) and even a member of the Church in Arad (Gabi) who preach.

### The Work of the Church

So how has the Church worked amongst its members and also in the community? The Church, having had its doors open only twice a month prior to September 2024, has had to find ways to reinvolve many of the long-time members as well as find new avenues for reaching non-members.

I have had the privilege of visiting a few of our long-time members and we strive to encourage one another. Every other week, I am going to the apartment of Gabi, a long-time member of the Church who has been involved since the 1990s. I have also been privileged to visit sister AnaLuța

(an elderly woman, member of the Church) on a couple of occasions.

In the community, I have focused most of my outreach efforts on individuals from the University where I attend (more details on this in the “University Studies” article). There have also been other outreach efforts, and Americans have been involved in such efforts. We had a leadership seminar and gospel meeting in June, members from the Swartz Creek Church of Christ in Michigan assisted in this and taught the lessons. We had a couple of individuals from the University attend the seminar. We also had two teachers from the States come to teach English through the Bible - Michael and Heather Dykes. In total, there were 9 students for the English campaign. There is still hope in the future for a benevolence event and for us to give Bibles to the children in the nearby school, but I am wanting the cooperation of a few of our Church members in order to coordinate this so we can all work together.

In our worship, we average about 6 people each Sunday. On a good Sunday, we can have around 15 people, but there has even been a Sunday when it was just myself. Consistency in worship attendance is something that has been an issue, and I have tried to encourage our members to attend regularly and consistently.



\*Preaching in Cluj-Napoca. Ivan, a Ukrainian, is translating.

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## OUTREACH ENDEAVORS

### The University

Most of my effort in outreach has gone towards the students with whom I study and interact with regularly at the University. As will be mentioned in the next section, there is a bit of work I am doing also with the Arabs who attend the University.

Being an international student who just completed the Romanian Language preparatory year, my social circle this year consisted mostly of international students from Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe. All of us are starting our first year of University in the Fall, and the past two semesters were devoted entirely to learning the language. Therefore, these were the people I mostly interacted with.

Aside from the Arabs at University, I have been privileged to study the Bible with a few of the students from my University:

- Ketso: a boy from Lesotho (an enclave in South Africa). We had talked about the Bible on numerous occasions and we had a lengthy conversation about Galatians 3. He has attended a few of our meetings at the Church of Christ in Arad.
- Selina: a girl from Zambia. We also talked about the Bible on numerous occasions and she had worshipped with us a couple of times.
- Luzera: a girl from Angola. We have regular studies with materials published by World English Institute. We are still studying the Old Testament. There is a language barrier since she does not speak English, but we are communicating in Romanian.

Aside from these students, there are numerous others who I have engaged with. I have

cooperated with the professors on numerous occasions in order to promote different events of the Church (such as the Seminar and Gospel meeting) and my English classes. I believe that with time, more planning, and a little outside help, there could be a strong college ministry in Arad within the next 5 years.



\*Visiting the Christmas market in Arad with some of the international students



\*Luzera, one of the international students, participating in a Bible study at a coffee shop. We studied using materials from the World English Institute.

### Arab Evangelism

As previously mentioned, I have a lot of interactions with Arabs at my university. Out of the 35 students enrolled in the language

program, 27 or 28 are muslim. Because they make up the majority of my social circle, much effort had to be put into reaching and studying with these people.

I had received in December 2024 ten copies of the Arabic New Testament. I had managed to connect with three muslims on a very personal level and give these individuals the NT in their language:

Nenar (Syria) (Had visited the Church building and attended a worship service)

Abdo (Egypt)

Haitham (Syria)

I have also had numerous conversations with other muslims and connected very personally, but these individuals had refused copies of the arabic NT. Here are their names:

Jehad (Palestine)

Rahim (Morocco)

Omaima (Morocco)

Ashir (Bangladesh)

Ahmed (Egypt)



\*A game night with the college students and a couple of Americans, Matt Cook and Jacob Farber.

## Seminar and Gospel Meeting

In June, a group from Swartz Creek Church of Christ came to Romania to conduct a leadership seminar and a gospel meeting. The visiting missionaries were as follows:

- Paul Holland
- Mark Rutledge
- Marvin Roberts
- Kenny Hickmott

The Leadership Seminar was more “business” in nature and was used as a means to attract people to our gospel meeting. We had for four evenings a leadership seminar lecture followed by some singing and a gospel meeting.

The promotion was done via Facebook. Money was spent to place an ad that would target locals and bring them to our facebook page. We had over 34,974 views for our facebook ad, but only **three individuals from the community showed up to our seminar/gospel meeting. All three individuals were from the University, and none had come as a result of the advertisement.**



\*Group of men who helped with the gospel meeting/seminar! Picture left to right is Gabi (Romanian), Paul, Kenny, myself, Mark, and Marvin!

## **World English Institute**

After the leadership seminar and gospel meeting, we had another group of missionaries come to teach English through the Bible. The missionaries are my parents, Michael and Heather Dykes. They have become increasingly involved in the Romanian work over the years.

For the WEI campaign, we had nine students. All of our students are Pentecostal, with the exception of two girls who had visited from the University I attend - Selina and Luzera from Africa.

During my parents' visit to Romania, they had also helped with various landscaping and organizing that was desperately needed outside and inside the Church building! As will be mentioned in the section titled "Building the Church and Church Building", I will emphasize how important it is that the building be utilized for outreach and for the spiritual growth of the members.

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## **UNIVERSITY STUDIES**

### **Romanian Language Preparatory Year**

In November 2024, I started at Universitatea Aurel Vlaicu Arad in the Romanian Language Preparatory Year. This is an obligatory program for international students who wish to do their studies in Romanian.

I had an A2 (on the A1-C2 language scale) level of Romanian already, and I needed a B1 by the end of the academic year in order to continue my studies at the University next year.

Through the program, I had much interaction with my fellow international students, and many of us studied diligently together to make sure we would succeed on the final exams.

For 8 months, I read Romanian books, watched Romanian movies, and filled three notebooks worth of notes and writing practice. We had numerous homework assignments and practice exams, so the school-year was very exhausting. A fun fact (and some of the visiting missionaries can attest to this): class would be four days a week and the class would be 3-4 hours long each time. Mental and physical exhaustion was a trial the last several months, but I am thankful to God for getting me through it.

In July, I had my final exams. I successfully passed my exams and received a B2 language certification - the highest the University is certified to give. In my classes, I received all 10s (which is the equivalent of the American letter grade "A"). I am not fluent, but I can understand most of what people say to me and I can hold a lengthy conversation with others depending on the topic. This program has been VERY beneficial to my work in the Church, and members of the Church in Arad had noticed and even commented on my improvement.

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## **BUILDING THE CHURCH AND CHURCH BUILDING**

In Romania, having a Church building, or a regular meeting place, is a great tool and expediency for growth if used properly.

When I came to Romania in the summer of 2024, I did not know that the entire Church building would be put into my control and that I would be responsible for the entire facility. Nonetheless, it has been a necessary part of my work. There are always repairs that need to be done, and of course, the bureaucracy of getting things done.

In June and early August of this year, I had Matt Cook and Jacob Farber, a professor and student

from Freed-Hardeman University, come to do a kind of consulting to see how the Church building in Arad can be used to:

1. Help the members as they seek to grow spiritually.
2. Bring members of the Church closer to one another.
3. Involve the community and let us become more recognized.

Now, obviously, the Church is not the building. But if a congregation is to have a building, the building should be used in such a way that these three objectives can be met.

We had discussed the need for a refurbishment of the Church court-yard and a reorganization of the interior. How can this help the growth of the Church?? Romanians and students at the University have a strong need and desire to be a part of a community. Weekly/weekend activities in the courtyard and in the Church building is a way for people of the community to know more about the Church, and it serves for members of the congregation to know others of the community. By caring for the Church building and facilities, the Church can build its membership.

In the summer of 2026, I am wanting to launch a formal college ministry and I am seeking the help of groups from America, and other Churches of Christ in Romania. I will launch a program for the college students in Arad, and it will involve:

- Summer activities in the church yard
- Weekly Bible studies and movie nights
- “International” nights where the international students can share and demonstrate their culture
- Coffee, Barbeque, and other food. Romanians and international students love food too!!

In 2026, much attention will be given to the Church building in regards to repairs, refurbishing, and making sure things are

presentable before the launch of this ministry.

The name of this ministry will be “Bible Barbeque and Coffee” and both international students and Romanian students will be the targets for evangelism. Doing this, we hope that we gain the attention of more people in the community, including the immigrants who are not students and the Romanians who have a curiosity.



\*The logo of the college ministry I plan to launch in summer of 2026. And ideas or suggestions for a name change or logo change can be sent to my email which is shown on the next page!

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## Special Thank You

A special thank you should be given to my sponsors, the congregations and individuals who support me. I have been blessed to have received contributions from several congregations and individuals, these have not gone unnoticed!

I will be sending out thank you cards soon for those who have sent financial contributions for the last year! My apologies for the long delay in both publishing this newsletter and sending the thank you cards.

The Lord’s work is able to continue in Arad, Romania because of your generous and loving spirits!

## Announcements

### **Dates to Remember:**

**November 2025** - immigration appointment(s) and visit(s) for renewing my residence permit

### **Prayer Requests:**

**Florin and Costel** - members of the Church in Iasi!

**Arad congregation** - that we will start to see growth

**Re-applying for the residence permit**

### **Contact Joshua Dykes:**

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VISIT MY BLOG: [gospeltraveler.org](http://gospeltraveler.org)

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If you would like to donate to the work-fund overseen by the Deerfoot Church of Christ in Alabama, please make a check out to the "Deerfoot Church of Christ" and put in the memo line "Romania Missions" And mail it to:

**Deerfoot Church of Christ**

**6565 Husky Parkway**

**Trussville, Alabama 35173**