



Building bridges for the gospel

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Global mission workers, Romania

The Transylvania region of Romania has, for many centuries, been a place where multiple ethnicities and cultures reside alongside each other. The modern-day city of Cluj-Napoca is a continuing example of this history, blending those of Hungarian, Romanian and German descent.

Furthermore, many students from different countries attend university in the city, with courses taught in a variety of languages (Hungarian, Romanian, English, French and German). As the 'Silicon Valley of Romania', Cluj is an international hub for many fields of information technology. Following the fall of communism in 1989, many Romanians travelled to other parts of the world, sometimes marrying there before relocating back to Transylvania.

It is in this context that the Hungarian Reformed Church congregation of Tóköz has for some time sought to build bridges for the gospel. The congregation's most recent mission initiative is Cluj Christian Fellowship (CCF), described as "an international community of faith serving the city in the English language".

CCF began in November 2020, yet we are already seeing God's blessings. Initially gathering for a monthly worship service, we now meet weekly in a blend of worship, discipleship groups and informal fellowship, representing seven nationalities. We work with another 13 nationalities in our outreach to international students, including gatherings for food and conversation, day trips and game nights. A film club, partnering with Pulzus youth organisation, provides conversation and discussion on contemporary issues.

Most recently, an influx of Ukrainian refugees has brought a new dynamic to the city. Rosie teaches English in the Tóköz kindergarten, and now also with Ukrainian refugees. As the

conflict has continued, we have built a bridge between Cluj-Napoca and Northern Ireland: 17 Ukrainian refugee students at the Royal School in Transylvania have their education funded by Kilbride Presbyterian Church, Kilbride Central Primary School and Ballyclare High School.

The key word in this ministry has been community, as God has connected us into the international lifeblood of the city. Early in our ministry, we

spent time in our worship services studying the book of Acts, and how a fledgling community of faith developed in a city context. We noted the significance and gospel impact of building relationships and growing community.

Our regular refrain has been to serve those that God has brought us. We long for Christ's salt and light to flavour and shine throughout all this city, and we are thankful to be a part of God's mission here. As we seek to provide welcome, deepen each other in faith and build relationships, we trust that Christ will shine through this community of faith.

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Please pray:

- Give thanks for the community that God is building in CCF and beyond, and pray that relationships will deepen.
- Pray for wisdom as programmes and meetings increase: that we will not lose our gospel focus, or allow busyness to take over.
- Pray for our international student ministry that connects with many people of different faiths and none – that gospel opportunities will arise.
- Continue to pray for the situation in Ukraine and those refugees that we have contact with.