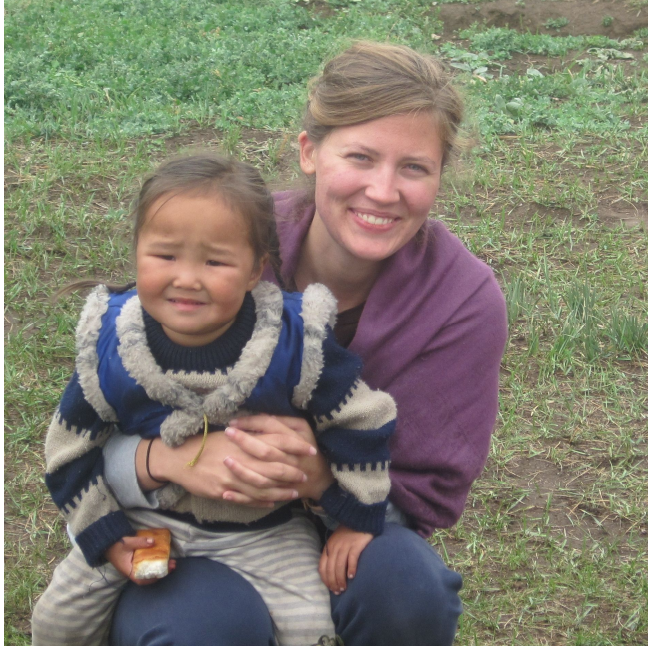


GBGM Mission Intern Erin Eidschink



For the past year and a half Erin Eidschink has been a General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) Intern serving in Mongolia. The GBGM Intern program allows young adults (ages 20-30) to explore what it means to be a missionary. Interns receive health benefits, a place to stay, and about \$1100 a month salary. Her blog ([Erin Eidschink](#)) provides a glimpse of the spiritual journey of a young woman answering God's call. Home for 9 days, Erin and I spent an hour together last week.

She had some confessions in her blog: "I officially hate driving now. Hate, hate, hate it. I long for public transportation and the ability to walk most everywhere I need to go." And, "Shopping exhausts me. Grocery stores baffle me. 50 million choices of chips, really?"

Here's more of our person-to-person conversation:

Question: What was the toughest part of this experience?

Answer: The adjustment period. This was a culture completely unlike our American culture. They use the Russian alphabet. It was very cold. People got around using public transportation. When we arrived, the H1N1 pandemic was happening. Everything was shut down – all public gatherings closed down – there was a curfew at 7:00 every night. The first two months were very difficult. In hindsight, it was a blessing. We had to let go of all our assumptions – had to unlearn all old skills and capabilities." All this was bearable because, "We knew that's where we were supposed to be."

Question: What was the funniest thing that happened to you?

Answer: I remember an incident on a public transportation bus. There were no foreign people in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia and I stuck out. An older guy on the bus struck up a conversation, asking questions, watching me. He finally reached over and touched my nose.

Question: Where do you go from here?

Answer: The second half of my 3-year term will find me in Nebraska, serving alongside the awesome staff of [United Methodist Ministries](#) (I have yet to meet them, but their emails make me like them already) in the city of Omaha. There will be urban gardens and a thrift shop (called the Blue Flamingo!) and mission teams. There will be new folks to know and new corners to get lost in. There will be new stories to learn and new tears to cry.

Question: What do you want people to know?

Answer: I'd like them to re-think the stereotype they have of a missionary – older with family and seminary degree, settled, life planned out. GBGM has a young adult missionary program so committed people can explore the call to mission, can become a part of the community in a different way. Youth and young adults can see similarities across cultures. You're never too young or too old to be a missionary – GBGM recognizes this.

Question: You'll be pretty far away in Nebraska. Is there any way you can share your stories with United Methodists in Western Pennsylvania?

Answer: I shared with a Sunday School class in Illinois while I was in Mongolia through Skype. I'd love to talk with youth groups, Sunday School and Bible School classes. Using Skype you can make connections when you can't be present – build relationships – then continue those relationships in person when possible.

I'm grateful for this remarkable young woman – and I intend to stay in touch, sharing her journey through her blog, connecting her to you when I can.