

“You will show me the path of life;  
In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;  
At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.”

(Psalm 16:11)

Another week has gone by here in beautiful South Carolina and I am kinda running out of ways to start my blogs. Because whenever I start writing a new story, literally the first sentence that comes to mind is: what a week! I am having so, so much fun here in Florence and every day is a day worth writing about. Every day I get to do something new and I am so thankful for all the amazing and exciting things I got to do this week!

Thursday, July 18 & Friday, July 19

We have a new STEP-per in the house! On Thursday night we welcomed Geraldine (‘Gerry from Paris’) from France into our giant OM-family. She will stay for 10 weeks, so I will have at least one friend until the end of my stay here in Florence! On Friday we decided to celebrate the weekend and do something fun: see the new Lion King! Note to self: *a/ways* make a reservation on the first day of a movie. We drove all the way to Julia’s to go see the movie and guess what? All *four* shows were sold out that day! So we got back into the car and raced to Regal Swamp Fox, where we could already see a big line outside of the cinema. I had almost given up hope already, but when we got to the ticket desk my jaw dropped on the floor. They had 36 showtimes of the Lion King that day... I repeat... THIRTY-SIX! Which meant the movie would start every 5-10 minutes. Needless to say: we got tickets. We were all starving by the time we got out so the seven of us (4 STEP-pers, two volunteers and Sarah) ended up at Waffle House for a late night dinner at 11pm. One of the nastiest restaurants I’d ever been to but I was so hungry the waffle barely touched my plate. *Hakuna matata!*



Some late night waffles at Waffle House.

Saturday, July 20

On Saturday Sarah and I had a little 'ginger-bonding-time' on a two hour road trip to Columbia to pick up another STEP-per. Two in one week? What?! Her flight was delayed for a good two hours, so after waiting and waiting and a little more waiting we finally got to meet Cristina from Germany. It is nice to have a little more European blood around. Shinee moved out of our apartment this week and Cristina moved in so lots of changes in the house! Just for you to keep up: in apartment 7F we now have New Zealand, the USA, Bolivia and France, in

apartment 7G we have Germany, Argentina and the Netherlands and then we have Pakistan in another apartment. You got that?

Sunday, July 21

*"When the night has come*

*And the land is dark*

*And the moon is the only light we'll see*

*No I won't be afraid, no I won't be afraid*

*Just as long as you stand, stand by me."*

This beautiful Sunday morning started off with some sweet Ben E. King, sung by someone who could actually have been Ben E. King. Hallelujah, what a voice! This morning we ended up at Sarah's church, Newspring. With a building as big as Walmart, we had quite high hopes for this service. And oh man, it did not disappoint! At the entrance we were given some earplugs 'cause it 'could get a bit loud'... After Ben E. King left the stage the drums kicked in and *wow*, I got goosebumps all over and tears in my eyes. The music was so loud and the base so strong I could literally feel it in my heart. Every word, every beat went straight into my soul. And the service had not even started yet! *Oh, the spirit is here, let there be freedom, let there be freeeeedom!*

It went something like this...

After singing and dancing our hearts out we sat down for the actual sermon. We watched the sermon on a big screen because Newspring is what they call a 'campus church' or a 'satellite church'. In this case it means that there are 14 churches or 'campuses' across South Carolina. Every Sunday there is an actual pastor in one of these churches and they stream the service live to all the other churches. So at the end of the day all fourteen churches have had the same message! I thought that was pretty cool. This Sunday Clayton King was the pastor and he held the fourth sermon in the 'Live for Freedom'-series. He talked about Psalm 16:11 and "the path to a lifetime of freedom that comes from letting the patterns of your life lead you into God's presence." And "how intentional daily choices can 're-wire' your mind to seek the rewards of God, not the world." If you want, you can check out the service [here](#). To God be the glory forever and ever!

After spending the entire afternoon catching up on some sunshine at the pool (yes, we have a pool next to our apartment) we went over to Peter and Patti's house for a night full of wonderful food (thanks Patti!) and fun games. Peter and Patti love to invite STEP-pers into their home, so there are many precious pictures and memories of previous STEP-pers! Time to make some new memories for on their fridge! See our best attempt down below:



Another fun night with Peter and Patti!

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