

# Missionary Baptist Church

Chernihiv, Ukraine



August 1, 2025

## Dear brother Richard and prayer supporters,

It is truly a blessing to take a moment and share this update with you. In a world filled with uncertainty, noise, and daily worrying headlines, there is no greater comfort than being where God has placed us — the place we call *home*. We are deeply privileged and humbled to serve our people here in Ukraine. Even amid the ongoing war — with missiles overhead, cities under attack, and the constant threat of drones — we feel a profound sense of peace and security. Not because of our circumstances, but because of God's faithful presence.

As His Word reminds us:

**“The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” — Deuteronomy 31:6**

**We sincerely thank Siloam Christian Ministries and everyone who supports Ukraine and our ministry—through prayer, finances, humanitarian aid, or kind words. We thank God for each of you and appreciate your faithfulness and sacrifice!**

Time flies so quickly — two months of summer have already passed, and only one month remains before children return to school and enter into a busier daily routine.

Although summer is still in full swing on the calendar, many parents are finding it challenging to manage their children's free time. With parents at work or serving on the front lines of the war, kids are often left on their own during the day.

This summer, once again, God graciously used our church to serve our community. We had the joy and privilege of organizing the Crossroads Day Camp for children, teens, and youth.



**The camp ran from June 30 - July 5, 2025. Each day, we welcomed around 160 children at the kids' camp and about 40 teens/youth at the evening camp.**

**God richly blessed this ministry in many ways. Here are just a few of those blessings:**

- We were able to purchase the foldable tables and an inflatable slide for our church — thanks to the generous support of our friends, brothers and sisters in Christ.
- We had an amazing team! This year, several new volunteers joined us, and we had just the right number of people to serve at every station. It took about 5 hours to set up the camp and only 4 hours to take everything down. Praise God!
- Our “anti-camp” neighbors did not disturb us at all — no police calls this year!
- The children were more receptive to God's word and truly enjoyed the Bible lessons.
- On the sixth day, many parents visited the camp to join their children for a special ‘Family Day.’ It was a joyful and meaningful time for everyone — and also served as a powerful testimony and witness to the parents.
- Two of our teenagers, who had previously participated in the camp and were now helping as volunteers, invited Christ into their hearts shortly after the camp ended!

These are just a few of the many highlights from our first summer camp. Now, I'd like to share some testimonies from parents whose children participated in it:

**Hanna Korytko** | Mother of Maryna, 8 years old



“This was our first time at the camp, and we were deeply impressed — my daughter absolutely loved it. Every evening, as she goes to bed, she’s already looking forward to the next morning so she can return to camp.

I believe camps like this are essential during wartime. They help children disconnect from the constant sound of sirens and the emotional toll of alerts.

We’ve even started reading the Bible — something we hadn’t done before. We used to attend church occasionally, but Maryna had never read the Bible on her own. Yesterday, the children were given their own Bibles, and now, thanks to you, she comes home and tells me Bible stories.

We’re also incredibly grateful for all the gifts: every day there were prizes, presents, coloring books, toys... Thank you so much!”

Maryna shared: *‘I really love the camp — especially the inflatable slide, the trampoline, and the popcorn!’*

**Maria Nesterenko** | Mother of Polina, 11 years old



“We live in the city of Chernihiv, not far from the Crossroads Camp. The children spend their time actively at camp — enjoying outdoor activities, fun games, new friendships, joyful songs, and Bible stories. The kids are absolutely delighted.

Thank you for giving the children a bit of happiness during such a difficult time — a chance to laugh, play, and be distracted from the constant stress and anxiety.

Polina truly enjoys everything about the camp. She’s so happy to be there and is already looking forward to the next one. When she gets together with her friends, they sing the songs they learned at camp!

It’s also wonderful that you tell the children about God. We are a believing family and celebrate all the Christian holidays. And thanks to God, I believe we still have — even if just a little — peace in our hearts. Thank you!”

**Natalia Horodetska** | Grandmother of Pelageya, 6 years old



“This camp is extremely important for children, especially during times of war. The constant stress and anxiety leave kids emotionally overwhelmed. Programs like this help calm their minds and give them something positive to focus on.

My older grandson also attended this camp when it was first being organized at the beginning of the war. And now, my granddaughter Pelageya is attending and truly enjoying it.

In times like these, it’s so important for children to hear about God. They need hope — and this camp gives it to them.”



**Ruslana Mykhailenko** | Mother of Nikita, 9 years old



"It is so important to teach children about God, because knowing Him helps shape the right values in a child's life. It teaches them love, compassion, gratitude, and responsibility.

We are truly grateful for your hard work and the love you show to the children. It's clear that your team serves with heart.

We sincerely hope there will be another camp this year — we always look forward to it with great anticipation."

**Olha Krasina** | Mother of Dmytro, 12 years old



At the beginning of the full-scale invasion, despite constant shelling by Russian forces, Olha and her son Dmytro chose not to leave their city. They spent that time sheltering in a bomb shelter. Dmytro is now 12 years old and studies in the 7th grade at a school for children with visual impairments.

Olha shares: "We found out about the camp through friends. My son has been attending the camp for three years now. This time everything has been wonderful — the children are very happy.

When Dmytro comes home from camp, he's always full of joy and emotions. The last day is the hardest for him, because he knows it's ending. He keeps asking me whether there will be another one... It's so important for children to hear about God — especially during times of war.

I'm very thankful they get to have fun, but as parents, we still worry when we send our children off. We feel calmer when we know they are nearby."

**Iryna Hrebinnik** | Mother of Aiden, 8 years old



"This year's camp has probably been the most exciting event of the year for us. When the children came to camp, they had the chance to rest — emotionally, spiritually, and physically. They enjoyed fun activities, creative workshops, and sports games that gave them energy and motivation to come back each day and fully engage.

When Aiden came home, he would recite Bible verses and sing songs from camp to his younger brother — it was such a joy to see.

I want to express special thanks to the organizers for the care and emotional investment they put into this program, and also for the attention to safety — which is, unfortunately, a very real concern in Ukraine today.

Thank you for giving our children the chance to rest their hearts and minds, grow in faith, and be filled with hope and encouragement for the future."

**Alla Zviahinets** | Mother of Anita, 11 years old



"I believe that in times like these — in a time of war — the Crossroads Camp is an incredibly important and much-needed ministry. Anita has been joyfully attending the camp for the past four years. We come with great excitement every summer.

The children here connect with each other, and they experience both emotional and physical rest — something they deeply lack during this very difficult time.

As soon as the camp ends, we already find ourselves saying: *'We can't wait for next summer so our children can come back to camp again!'*

I truly hope that Crossroads Camp continues to grow, welcoming more and more children. I also pray that parents won't be afraid to let their children attend, because this camp is under God's protection. God's presence is always here."

Anita shared: *'I love doing crafts, going down the inflatable slide, jumping on the trampoline, listening to interesting Bible stories, and playing with my friends.'*

**Svitlana Horoshko** | Mother of Maria, 9 years old

"For my daughter, every day at camp was special and full of excitement. During times of war, camps like this are especially important — they help children find a break from the stress and anxiety around them.

At this camp, my daughter learned how to pray. Even more than that, she now believes that prayer is something everyone should do — and do always. I truly believe that every child — and not just children, but adults too — should know about God and believe in Him. Every person needs that, because who else but the Almighty can help us overcome life's difficulties and challenges?

Since returning from camp, Maria has been in such a good mood, sharing new stories every day. I'm deeply grateful to the entire team of Crossroads Camp for being so kind and caring with our children."

**Liudmyla Kostiuchenko** | Mother of Vlad, 13 years old

"Camps like this are so important because children deserve to find joy in every day. The war has stolen their childhood — and they need moments like these to smile, laugh, and simply be kids again."

**Anna Yaretsko** | Mother of Artem (8 y. o.) and Oleksii (7 y. o.)



"I have two sons — Artem and Oleksii. We've been attending the camp since 2022. Every year, my boys look forward to it with great anticipation. They come with joy and always return home full of positive emotions.

We are sincerely grateful to you for organizing the camp and providing leisure activities for children, especially during these difficult times. Please, continue to hold such events! The children are truly happy. Thank you!

When the boys come home from camp, they're full of stories — sharing everything they did, the contests they took part in, the fun activities, and the Bible stories they heard. They often come running in, saying, *'Mom, did you know this...?'* — and then they start telling me everything they learned.

I believe it's very important to talk to children about God. This kind of knowledge is valuable and contributes to their overall development. They're exposed to a new perspective, and eventually, they'll decide for themselves whether or not to believe. They begin to understand concepts like good and evil, right and wrong — and that there are consequences for wrong choices. These lessons will shape their behavior in adult life.

What's also interesting is that both of my boys are naturally very shy. But at camp, they took part in contests, won prizes, and came

home absolutely thrilled. Artem won a stuffed toy in the shape of a kitten. When he got home, he gave it to me as a gift. He told me that many kids at camp wanted to trade toys with him, but he didn't want to exchange his kitten — because he wanted to make me happy.

**Vladyslava Kravchenko** | Mother of Antonina (9 y. o.)

**You shouldn't wait for the war to end to organize camps and joyful activities for children — because by the time the war is over, their childhood may already be gone.**

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There are so many more stories to share — but I just realized we've already reached page five! 🟡 Still, let me share just a few more before I finish this update.

This year, we introduced a sixth day at camp called 'Family Day,' where we invited parents to join their children. It was our first time doing this — and it turned out to be a truly blessed experience. We had the opportunity to get to know many parents, and they got to know us as well.

During Family Day, the children took part in various fun contests and won sweet prizes. If a child couldn't complete a task on their own, they were allowed to ask their parents for help. The idea behind this was simple but meaningful: just as our parents are with us through much of life — especially in childhood — ready to support us when we ask, God is also always near. However, just like with our parents, we need to ask Him when we need His help.

The last story I want to share is about Natalia — the mother of Diana (13 years old) and Bohdan (6 years old), who have been attending our Sunday school and camps for several years. Until this year, Natalia had never visited our church or taken part in any of our camps. But when she received the invitation for Family Day, she decided to come and support her children.

Natalia stayed with her kids throughout the entire program. At the end of the day, she said something very meaningful: "Prior to today, I've heard many negative things about Baptists, Christians, and Protestant churches in general. Though what I've seen today deeply changed my opinion and understanding. I saw with my own eyes how you treat one another, how you care for the children, and how genuine the atmosphere is here — and it challenged everything I had previously believed."

With that said, I want to encourage you to pray for Natalia, for her family, and for all the other children and parents who attended camp this year. The reason we organize these camps is simple: the Holy Spirit lives in us, and He gives us the same heart that Jesus had for humanity. He doesn't want anyone to perish, but for everyone to come to repentance and be saved. That is why we continue to pray for all those who heard the Gospel through camp ministry this year. Please pray with us!

Dear brother Richard, prayer partners, and all who support us! On behalf of the Missionary Baptist Church and all the families who attended Crossroads Children's Camp, I extend my heartfelt thanks to you — together, we made it possible! Through your prayers and financial support, you are helping these children and their parents hear about our Lord Jesus Christ! Thank you very much!

Our next camp is scheduled for August 11–16, 2025. Please, pray that it will take place, that we will be safe, pray for our team and all camp participants, and for an end to the war in Ukraine.

Thank you again for everything you do for the people of Ukraine! In Christ,

Roman Bevz

Responsible for camp ministry







