

August - December 2022

Dear Siloam friends and prayers supporters,

We hope this letter finds you and your family well. Thank you for any support that you provide, whether it is a prayer, finances, hosting refugees or maybe you volunteer to help in sending the aid to Ukraine. Thank you very much for any help!



It is blessing to have this time and write you this letter. Praise God "nothing bad" happens in Chernihiv on these days. We all are well for the moment, and we can repeat the words from the book of Samuel:

"Thus far the Lord has helped us" (1 Sam. 7:12).

Almost 10 months passed since the full invasion of Russian Federation into Ukraine. February 24 was an awful day for every Ukrainian. Unfortunately, the war has not stopped yet and the hostilities have even intensified in the east and south of Ukraine. The Ukrainian army has already liberated many territories from Russian occupation in the East and South of Ukraine. We continue hearing terrible stories from people who were released after being under the occupation of the abnormal Russian "army."

Some Ukrainian soldiers told that they do not understand how they have survived in some situations and even succeeded in battle. They feel our prayer support very much!

On the other hand, we hope, that our army will have faith and enough wisdom and weapons to kick the Russians out from our country and protect our skies from Russian missile and drone attacks.

Russia uses missiles and drones to target the civil population and the objects of infrastructure of Ukraine. They want to leave us without power and heat and make a "cold winter" for us. As you know, they have already destroyed many power stations and as a result, there are constant power outages every 4-6 hours throughout Ukraine.

The only word, which can describe Russian's attitude to Ukraine is "genocide." Every country need to recognise, that Russia is a TERRORIST STATE!!

Some people say that the Russian authorities are the only ones who are guilty and responsible for all this, but I do not agree with this. When I listen to some interviews of Russian civilians, where they say that Russian soldiers need to kill our babies and rape our women... I understand that all the Russian people are responsible for this. The whole nation is to blame for this invasion and genocide.

Almost every day the villages of Chernihiv region which are close to the border with Russia are shelled from Russian territory. In November in one of the villages of our region Russian artillery destroyed a farm with 46 cows.

On the night of **November 23**, a Russian missile ruined the maternity hospital in Zaporizhzhia region. Three people were in the hospital at that moment: doctor, mother and her two-day old baby boy. All three were survived the hospital attack, but the infant sadly died shortly after.



In the book of Romans, Paul says:

Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (Romans 12:19 NIV)

From our side, we pray for peace and do all we can to help the people in Chernihiv Region. Only God knows when all these massive killings of the Ukrainian people will stop. Please, continue praying for Ukraine! GOD HEARS OUR PRAYERS!

The last time I sent you an information letter was in July (it was long time ago). Therefore, I want to share with you what has happened and what is happening here right now.

It is hard to tell which month was the busiest for us, because every month we had things to do, no matter whether it was a workday, or weekend. God kept us busy 24/7.



August 15-20, we had a great opportunity to hold a week of children's Day Camps. It was our second camp during the war. Considering the huge risk and responsibility, and not knowing what could happen, we trusted the Lord and began the camp. We knew that many people prayed for us and that gave us the courage and inspiration.

Throughout the week, we had over **320 children** who registered and attended our Day Camps. Not all of them came every day, but all of them heard about Jesus. Children came at 9:30 a.m. and stayed with us until 3 p.m.

Games, inflatable slide, trampoline, different activities, crafts, popcorn, cotton candy and some snacks - brought a lot of joy and excitement to the kids, and Bible lessons and morning services gave them hope that God is with us.





After 3 p.m., our team was gathering for lunch and the time of discussion and preparation afterwards. In the evenings, from 6:00-9:30 p.m. we had games and fellowship with the teenagers. They listened to the message, sang songs with us and asked many questions. It was wonderful time together.

It is interesting to notice, that when we did the first camp in June, these teenagers were afraid to come, and they did not know how to communicate with us. When they saw that we were "normal" and wanted to be friends with them, they started coming and enjoyed our fellowship.

At the second camp, they came even before the camp started and helped us to install the inventory and tents.



On one of the days, we organized “boys” and “girls” fellowship apart, so that they could ask questions and talk freely.

At present, the number of kids and teenagers continue to attend our Sunday school and teen group and their parents began to attend church. It is a blessing for us to help them in getting to know God more.

We are very grateful to everyone who prayed for this camp and helped us to make it possible.



We are also very thankful to the team from Lutsk (Western Ukraine) who came and helped us to hold both of the camps in summer of 2022. Praise God!



For about 30 years, our church have prayed for people who live in the neighbouring houses and flats. All these years, something prevented them from crossing the threshold of the house of prayer. The time has finally come for our neighbours to check us out!

Due to the war, and because of the need, many people began attending churches in Ukraine, because churches helped them with food, hygiene items, medicine, clothes and other available supplies.

After they visited the church once, twice or three times, they realized that Protestant churches are not as bad as they had heard from the former Soviet authorities and the old communist

regime.

People heard the Gospel and God began His work in their hearts! Many people completely changed their attitude to God and church.

In August, we had baptism services at three of our churches. All these years, and especially since the war started we have been working closely together. Praise God, people want to know Him, get saved and baptized.

AUGUST 19 - DNIeprovs'KE VILLAGE *(located at the border with Belarus)*



On the first day of war, Russians came to the village with a huge number of soldiers and military equipment (many battle tanks). Praise God, they did not damage anything in this village and people have not suffered.

The church in Dnieprovs'ke village is our sister church. The house where they gathered burned down a couple of years ago. One family gave them the other house to use (which is 104 years old). This church does not have a permanent minister, so our church usually sends someone to lead the worship service and perform the communion service. Four people were baptized there, praise God!

The attendance in this church has almost doubled since the war started. Many people began to reconsider their values and began to think where they will be in Eternity!

AUGUST 21 – MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH (*Chernihiv, Ukraine*)



The baptisms at our church took place a day after we finished the Day Camp. We left some tents and inventory from camp, and installed the inflatable swimming pool for the baptism service on Sunday. The playground behind our church was a perfect place for this event. People from neighbouring houses could watch the service and baptism from their flats. It was a good testimony for all people who witnessed the baptism and heard the Gospel.



Eight people were baptized. We also have some new people who repented later on and now they attend Bible study classes where they learn more about God, faith and the Christian life! Praise God!

AUGUST 28 – BAPTIST CHURCH IN STARIJ BELOUS (*Chernihiv district, Ukraine*)

The church in Starij Belous village was planted by our church and mission. The village is located on the suburb of Chernihiv city. Many years ago my dad Peter Bezv purchased the land from the next-door neighbour, gave some of his land and built a church there.

The Pastor of this church left at the beginning of the war and my brother in law – Aleksei Kravets pastors this church now. He was chosen by the congregation, and approved by Regional Senior Pastor. Pastor Aleksei stayed there with the people all the time since the war began. The basement in their church has served as a shelter for 30-40 people during the active battles around Chernihiv.

In March, Russian artillery was located not far from this village and they shoot in random directions with no specific plan. As a result, they killed some people and destroyed about 20 houses of civilians in this village.

The church family have been having prayer and worship services every day since March. In March they gathered in the basement, later on they moved to the church sanctuary. However, they still have worship services every day.



After February 24, both of our churches helped people with humanitarian aid (food, medicine, hygiene items, water, bread, clothes, etc.). While all this was happening - people, the neighbours, who never wanted to attend church, began to do so. It is amazing to see them in church now! God changes hearts! In August, eleven people were baptized, praise God!

HUMANITARIAN RELIEF MINISTRY

Praise God, we can continue this ministry, because people still need much help! I go to Germany once or twice a month and bring the aid from there to Ukraine. On the way back I stop in Poland (near the Ukrainian border) and stay overnight. The local Christians provide me a place to stay when I am there. They also provide the needed supplies for Ukraine, if I have extra room in the van.

We are very grateful to God for all the people in different parts of the world who united in one goal – to help the people of Ukraine. This is exactly what it means to be God’s family - when we are together! Praise God!



Our church and mission also continue receiving humanitarian aid from other churches and organizations. This aid enables us to serve our community in Chernihiv and the people in towns and villages of Chernihiv region.



Many people come to get help from our church and mission daily. We feel blessed that we are able to help!

Thanks again to everyone who prays and enables us to help others.

Jesus showed us a great example of how to respond the needs of people – **Matthew 15:29-39**

OCTOBER 24 – HRIBOVA RUDNYA VILLAGE (Chernihiv Region)

This village is located 22 kilometers from Belarus border. When Russians attacked from Belarus direction, they stopped in this village for a certain time. They took cars, food, equipment and other things from people, and kicked some people out from their homes in order to live there themselves.



After the de-occupation of the village, the local believers contacted us several times to get some humanitarian aid for their people. They came to our mission and received humanitarian aid for their people a couple of times, and the next time we visited them personally.

People of this village, as well as at many other places in Ukraine, live in great need. It was a blessing to meet them, share the Gospel and give food packages to them.

NOVEMBER 18 – KIYINKA VILLAGE

Kiyinka village is located on the outskirts of Chernihiv city, it was constantly under the fire, the same as the other villages, which are near Chernihiv.



Most of the people, who came to receive help that day, were the ones who suffered from Russian aggression in February-March. Some people lost their relatives, some lost their houses or had great damage at their homes. They have to live at their neighbour's homes or relatives now.

The mentality and life in Ukraine is quite different from the other parts of the world. When people build a house here, it usually serves them all their lives. Generally, it takes them a number of years to finish the construction, because they usually work on it only when they have money. Therefore, literally, they invest part of their lives into that and they do not move to another city or region because of a better job offer. Home for Ukrainians is a place where they are. For people who lost their houses or flats it is very hard, because it is as if they lost part of their lives.

Though, how much more we value our lives! Many families lost fathers, husbands, brothers, sisters, mothers, grandparents or children. I mentioned to you before, that my cousin Vladimir was killed by a shell splinter of Russian weapon. He was killed in this village. His wife Julia was pregnant at that time. She was evacuated to Europe after her husband's death. Now she has returned to Kiyinka village with her baby. It is so sad, that Vladimir never saw his child. Julia came to get the help also. She tries to fix up her house now, after the damage that Russia did.



NOVEMBER 21-22 – HELP FOR THE FAMILY FROM KHERSON



The director of the social center in Chernihiv city once again turned to us with a request to help a family of migrants from Kherson.

On the left photo - Anna and her husband Yevgeny, who are migrants from Kherson, but they arrived a little earlier. Having settled in Chernihiv, they began to help other migrants as well.



In September, when their acquaintances were evacuated from Kherson, they hosted them at Anna's parents, in a village 120 km from Chernihiv. The evacuation was not easy, because at that time Olga, the mother of two children, was expecting her third child. They did not have time to take anything with them during the evacuation from Kherson. Olga delivered her baby already in Chernihiv region on November 16, 2022. She has three children now, sadly one child has a disability (infantile cerebral paralysis). The youngest child is now over a month old.

It was unusual and surprising for us, that Anna and Yevgeny received help not for themselves, but for the family they hosted. They delivered the help for this family in a few days after they received it.



DECEMBER 5 – BOBROVITSA, CHERNIHIV REGION (100 km from Chernihiv city)

In December, we visited Bobrovitsa town, where we met with people who are locally resettled. They lived in the villages near the border with Russia, where Russian artillery shoot a lot. Now they live in a safer place, but the menace of missile and drone attacks still exists. The local Baptist Church provided their building for this event.



Over 200 people heard the Gospel and received food packages for their families. Over and over again, we understand how important this work is. Praise God, that we are able to help others!

EQUIPPING OTHER CHURCHES

CHURCH IN BOBROVITSA (DECEMBER 5)

Besides the help that we provide directly to people we also try to assist the local churches so that they can help needy people on behalf of their church. We provided them food packages for over 50 families.

Two women on the photo – Yana and Lana, live in Bobrovitsa and are very active in their local Baptist Church. They are also volunteers who visit people in need, sick or bedridden so they can deliver humanitarian aid to them personally.



BETHANY CHURCH (DECEMBER 1)

The Bethany Church in Chernihiv is located on the other side of the city. Many people who live in that part of town constantly come to that church and ask for help. Pastor Viktor appealed to our mission and asked us to help them with food items in order to make up food packages. We provided some food items for their people. Christians from Bethany Church helped to transport food from our mission to their church with their private vehicles.



CHURCH & MISSION BUILDING



As you may remember, in March, prior to our evacuation, a Russian missile/shell exploded right in front of our church building. It damaged most of the windows on the façade; the wall, the heating system and the interior of the church sanctuary and did some other damage. Currently, we have replaced most of the windows on the second and third floors. The windows on the first and the fourth floors still need to be replaced.

The heating system has been fixed temporary, but the full renovation of it will only happen in the spring. This is a very costly project. Therefore, we do only the urgent matters that are important so that church can function now considering the fact that the war has not stopped in Ukraine yet. Please, pray for this project too, because the building also serves us as a place of refuge as well as providing aid for the people.

DEFENDERS OF CHERNIHIV



Food packages and hygiene items for people who defend our city - Chernihiv.

We pray for them and help them.



CHRISTMAS PROJECT 2022-2023

On Christmas days (*December - January*) we plan to hand out up to 1200 food packages. On the left picture you can see how many people still come to get help. The picture was made on December 8. At present, we register these people and meanwhile we prepare food packages for them. After the registration, each person gets a printed invitation for a specific day and time when they can come and receive food packages.



It is not easy to work with so many people, so please keep us in your prayers. Pray that God would work in their hearts! They all will get two kinds of bread – one is the ‘Word of God’ for their souls, and the other one – food for their bodies.

THE NEEDS

Please, pray that the war would STOP! Pray for the wisdom of our government and military commanders. We sincerely believe that God will not leave us alone and will help us to get all our territories back.

There is also a threat of opening a second front by Russia and Belarus from the other side of Ukraine (including my region). No one knows what to expect. Our trust is in God and in Him only!

People all over the country constantly need help. Many refugees came to Chernihiv from the east and the south of Ukraine currently. We try to help them as well as the locals of Chernihiv and Chernihiv Region with food packages, clothes and other aid. This work requires vast resources and needs to be well supported.

The big needs today:

- Resources for providing food, hygiene items, medicine and other supplies for people who stayed or returned to Ukraine. The unemployment and inflation has caused people to ask for help.
- Gasoline/diesel generators, uninterruptible power supplies (power stations) for people and churches. Due to the constant Russian attacks, the power outages happen very often. The prices have risen dramatically on these items now.

Once again, I am sorry for such a long period of no news from here, but thank you for your prayers, your financial support and for just being with us in such a hard time for our country.

We hope the joy of Christmas brought you much confidence that Christ is coming again. He’s been here once, and He will come again to get those who are with Him. Let’s just make sure that we are ready to meet Him! A belated Merry Christmas and may we wish all our friends a happier New Year!

May God bless you and your family with His Heavenly blessings!

With love in Christ Jesus,

Roman Bevz

On behalf of our church and mission people and volunteers