



February/March 2024

February 24th 2024: Two years since the illegal Russian Invasion - our friends in Eastern Ukraine are suffering.



This picture was sent to us from Pokrovsk in the Donetsk Region by our partner, Pastor Vasyl. It shows damage from rocket attacks on November 29th 2023. Ten people were injured including a baby.

The situation is becoming more and more difficult in Pokrovsk. There is constant Russian bombardment and power outages. Pastor Vasyl has asked for prayer.

'From the depths of despair, O Lord, I call for your help.' Ps 130: 1

<https://www.dniprohopemission.org/>

Renewed Russian attacks

On December 29th, Russia launched one of its largest nights of missile and drone strikes since the war began. Many of our partners have been suffering. In Pokrovsk, eleven people, five of them children, were killed in attacks on January 6th. Eight more people were wounded. On January 8th, Pastor Sergei from Novomoskovsk asked for prayer especially for his wife and children - following rocket damage earlier in the day. Thankfully, on January 14th he wrote: 'Praise God, they are alive!' He continues: 'It's hard to endure the explosions and the danger, but my family trust God. They continue to serve people in the volunteer centre. They help IDPs with groceries and do whatever they can.'

'I went with my son to evacuate people from Krakhovo. When we came to the electrical power station, two Russian rockets hit! Oh, how they want to give us nightmares! This is today's reality for residents.' Pastor Vasyl



Joshua writes: The DHM team wishes all our partners and supporters a blessed new year. The Ukrainian people are undergoing the whole horror of a brutal and relentless Russian attack, but the faith of our Ukrainian friends continues to inspire our respect and admiration. In these photos sent today by Pastor Vasyl, you get a glimpse into the sacrifice and pain of the people directly affected by the war. With your help, we will continue to enable Pastor Vasyl and his team to bake thousands of loaves of bread every week to distribute to civilians caught up in the fighting in Eastern Ukraine. We continue to pray for Pastor Vasyl and all our brave Ukrainian friends! Happy New Year!

For more photos see: <https://www.facebook.com/DniproHope/>

'Who will protect me from the wicked? Who will stand up for me against evildoers?' Psalm 94: 16

A minibus for the Equilibrium Project

Margarita (Mira) has written to our treasurer : *'.... I received the bus last weekend, and it immediately went into service. It was successfully reissued and delivered to Ukraine. It all took a while, but it's great. I cannot express in words what a significant contribution you have made to the project and to our church. This week it is already in full service. It has been completely inspected and prepared for work. I am sending you photos of parents and children from the rehabilitation programme and from serving with teenagers in the church. Thank you for your kind wishes, prayers and concern.'*

Thank you to all who support us - this is only possible with your donations. DHM trustees wish to thank the Mennonite network in the Netherlands who jointly funded the minibus with DHM.



Please pray:

- ♦ For all the refugees in Uzhhorod (Uzhhorod is a relatively safe Ukrainian city at the border with Slovakia and near the border with Hungary) and for the families participating in the project.
- ♦ For Mira and her co-workers as they wish to expand the project and for Mr H. who will be working on a project proposal with the team so they can apply for wider funding.
- ♦ That psychological support services and rehabilitation are available for all victims of this terrible war.

Christmas in a time of war

Pastor Sergei (see also p.2), an army chaplain, sent these photos from a Christmas gathering of soldiers. He says: *'It was a wonderful service. The soldiers heard the word about Jesus Christ, received support and prayers. Pray for us. We wish everyone a Merry Christmas.'*



- ♦ Please pray for all military chaplains, as they support the soldiers on the front lines; minister to the wounded; participate in the funerals of the fallen soldiers of their units and comfort the bereaved.
- ♦ Pray for the wounded, widows and orphans.

'For he has not ignored the suffering of the needy. He has not turned and walked away. He has listened to their cries for help.' Psalm 22: 24

Christmas Greetings from the 'House of Mercy'

Dmytro and Olha, sent greetings from the 'House of Mercy' - our most recent rehabilitation project for displaced, single men who are often ill, disorientated, unemployed and former addicts. This photo shows the whole household, including clients and co-workers.



- ◆ Please pray for Dima, Olha, the clients and their co-workers and the development of this ministry.

Happy New Year to everyone from Aleksei

Pastor Aleksei, our friend and partner from Vinnytsia, says: 'We thank everyone who has continuously worked and collaborated with us this year! We express our deep gratitude to everyone who made even the smallest contribution to support our projects and followed our work. May God bless you all this year and lead us to victory!' He sent us this very moving video about the life saving work that you have made possible through your donations to Dnipro Hope Mission. Do watch it if you can.

https://youtu.be/QAb_eH5x41o?feature=shared

Aleksei has been working non-stop distributing gifts to children and humanitarian aid to soldiers and households near the front lines. As an army chaplain he risks his life daily and he writes: 'Our defenders are part of our population whose needs are never ending, including in the most basic needs. These are the people on whom our victory depends, people who put their lives on the line for our freedom. It's so important to support our guys!!' Aleksei has also been sharing videos about atrocities which took place in the village of Mirolubovka, near Kherson in September. [Pray for the family of little 'Viktoria' who died](#). Aleksei reports that 'even the Russian soldiers wept over the child'. A witness to the killing says that the tears make no difference but one of our trustees, Mary, has pointed out 'Maybe the tears are the answers to our prayers?' You can find out more about this story in this video—but it is very hard to watch.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0uO2i_fWV8

- ◆ Please pray for Aleksei and his team; and the church for refugees in Vinnytsia.
- ◆ For Ukraine's defenders—it is not just Ukraine's freedom they are fighting for but it is ours too.



'Justice will rule in the wilderness and righteousness in the fertile field. And this righteousness will bring peace.' Isa 32: 16/17

From Deacon Yevhenii, Dnipro Independent Church

Deacon Yevhenii from Dnipro Independent Baptist Church sent us these photographs of Christmas activities in the church. He says: *'Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! May the Lord bless you and keep you and may our Lord grant you joy, peace and love. Thank you for your prayers and all the help you provide for Ukraine and for us. I am sending you some photos of how we spent Christmas for the children. Say hello to all mission trustees and those who know us and pray for us!'* Over 90 children attended the Christmas Party mostly from IDP families who do not usually attend church.



Yevhenii's wife, Polina returned to Ukraine with their two children, for the first time since the war began. Like many other areas of Ukraine, Dnipro was hit by the renewed missile and drone attacks. Please keep the city of Dnipro in your prayers. On January 14th, residents remembered the Russian missile attack exactly one year ago which left 46 dead, among them 6 children, and over 80 people were injured. Seven people died and 29 were injured in the 29th December 2023 attacks. Dnipro was also hit by missiles on January 13th.

Please pray for:

- ◆ Deacon Yevhenii, his family and Dnipro Independent Baptist Church.
- ◆ Pastor Mykhailo, his family and Dnipro Central Baptist Church.
- ◆ Dr Daryna, at Dnipro State Hospital, and her sister Anna, a paramedic.
- ◆ There is heavy fighting over the Dnipro River.
- ◆ The pain of the families of over 700 children killed by the Russians.
- ◆ The tens of thousands of mothers and fathers whose sons and daughters will never return from the war.



A message from Pastor Mykhailo, Dnipro Central Baptist Church: 'We have been holding our winter camp. There are at least 10 kids here who have never been to a Christian camp. One girl declared herself to be an atheist, but yesterday she changed her mind! Keep praying for us.'

Join us as we pray for peace

Every month, on the first Thursday, we pause and pray for justice and peace. Please join us, if you can, on February 1st and/or March 7th from 3-4 GMT as we pray for a just end to this terrible war and an end to the anguish of the Ukrainian people. Please know that we are grateful for you all as we stand with Ukraine.

Please contact the prayer convenor for the Zoom link: melanie@dniprohopemission.org

'Deceit fills hearts that are plotting evil; joy fills hearts that are planning peace!' Proverbs 12: 20

A Christmas message from Rev Dr Roman Soloviy

The terrible suffering of Ukrainians caused by the illegal invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation almost two years ago continues - though we see little of it in our media. Even the UN is pleading 'Please do not forget Ukraine.' Our friend Rev. Dr. Roman Soloviy, Rector of the Eastern European Institute of Theology in Lviv graphically describes the situation and mood in Ukraine in this extract from his 'Not-so-Spiritual Christmas Reflections':

Dear friends,

This year, I didn't send any Christmas greetings to anyone, and I received very few myself. This fact doesn't surprise me; I almost take it for granted. I have a strong feeling that Christmas, like many other things from our past, has been taken away from us Ukrainians. Or maybe I'm wrong, and it, along with all our pre-war life, vanished without a trace in the smoke of war. Perhaps it left us to avoid hearing the cries of the wounded, the widows, and the orphans or to avoid seeing the thousands of destroyed towns and villages where no one lives anymore and no one will return. Maybe Christmas couldn't bear with despair and hopelessness slowly taking over our country like a poisonous fog. Who knows?

That first Christmas was not very joyful either. Jesus was born in an occupied country that was given over to the local collaborator and despot Herod. Christ was born on the move, like many Ukrainian children born in the basements of bombed-out maternity wards and hospitals in Mariupol, Izyum, or Vuhledar. Unlike that first Christmas, however, it was not the singing of angels, but the cries of the dying that were heard there, and it was not wise men rushing from the east to worship the child but Russian soldiers guided by the evil star of hatred. Like Jesus, millions of Ukrainian children had to flee from their homes to foreign countries. Almost seven hundred of them failed to do so and will never grow up. The pain of their mothers can only be compared to the pain of those tens of thousands of mothers whose sons and daughters will never return from the war because they laid down their lives for the sake of those they love.....

That first Christmas happened at night. What do you associate with the night at Christmas? Perhaps with the bright light of festive illuminations? With the bottomless starry sky? Flying to your family on a fast plane? The only planes I can see in our skies are old Ukrainian military aircraft heading for the airport nearby. And I will probably associate the night for the rest of my life with reports of yet another group of missiles and drones attacking Ukraine, destroying infrastructure and ports and killing civilians. Even as I write these words, two groups of drones are attacking Ukraine from the south and north. The night is a time of curfew, the silence of which is broken only by the piercing sound of ambulances carrying wounded soldiers. But night and darkness are not only astronomical but also metaphysical, or, if you like, spiritual phenomena. It is the night of hopelessness that is enveloping the hearts of Ukrainians more and more tightly - we are at war with a country that has set itself the goal of destroying us. Every time Russia has defeated Ukraine in a war, it has ended in the destruction of Ukrainians, famine, torture and deportation. Is this what awaits us again? It is the night of despair - the free world's help to Ukraine is in question, and without it, we have no chance of preserving our state and the right to live on this land. It is the night of distrust, which splits society along dozens of lines that no one knows how to close together. It is the night of fatigue that only the Ukrainian military truly feels, but in its way, it has crept into the soul of each of us. It is the night of uncertainty. A night of fear. A night of pain. A night like death.'

Dr Soloviy ends his message with some words of hope: 'At the same time, Christmas is primarily about God coming into this dark, awkward, dangerous world. He shares all the burdens and pains of our existence. He knows the fatigue and agony of death. He knows the terror of the night and the despair of loneliness. And he expects that, as He has entered the darkness of our existence, we will dare to walk with others on their journey through the night.'

December 28th 2023, 673rd day of the Russian war against Ukraine

To all our supporters we say : 'Thank you for standing in solidarity with our brave Ukrainian friends and partners; thank you for walking with them on their journey through the night and thank you for keeping the light shining in the darkness.'

'When I pray, you answer me; You encourage me by giving me the strength I need.' Ps 138:3

News and Reflections from Pastors Alexander and Sasha



Pastor Alexander is recovering. He writes: 'Last Sunday, for the first time since my accident I preached standing up for a full 40 minutes.' Please continue to pray for him. He was in a lot of pain after delivering his sermon and has further consultations and rehabilitation ahead. He writes: 'Thank you for your support. I'm

grateful to God for sending me these trials. They show me the condition of my heart. Therefore, I do all I can to allow God to change me...'

Please pray:

- ◆ For wisdom for Pastor Alexander and his family and that the Lord will direct their steps.
- ◆ For all Ukrainians who had to flee and are 'exiles in a foreign land.'

Sasha writes: '...Sometimes I experience moments of depression...I ask myself why the Lord permits such experiences? What are they for? Yesterday, at the worship service I read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 and I understand why the Lord permits trials, including depression - it is so that I can seek consolation in the Lord in order to learn to comfort others!'

Please pray for Pastor Sasha and Iryna.



We are so grateful to Epsom Baptist Church. They bought a minibus for Pasta Sasha in 2017. Since the war started it has been in constant use by the Vasilkyvka Baptist Church community particularly for transporting humanitarian supplies and displaced people. It needs frequent repair and is no longer reliable for long journeys close to the front line. Epsom Baptist Church have again donated funds which will enable us to provide Vasilkyvka with a younger minibus at which point the existing minibus will be made available to a local ministry partner for shorter distance journeys. Please pray as we search for the right vehicle and deal with changing regulations for importing a vehicle into Ukraine.

Tsarichanka Care Home

DHM ministry partner, Pastor Oleksandr, and his team visited residents of a nearby care home in Eastern Ukraine today (Jan. 22nd).

They gave gifts (all paid for by DHM donations) to all the nearly 160 residents.

Oleksandr sent us this message: "Greetings DEAR FRIENDS!!! PRAISE THE LORD! We held a service in the care home for people with disabilities And your contribution was included in this ministry!!!"



'All praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of every mercy and the God who comforts us. He comforts us in our troubles so that we can comfort others....' 2 Cor: 3-4

A message from the trustees

We need to recruit to our Board. Dnipro Hope Mission has expanded since the war started; the need is great and we want to reduce the pressure of work on our exiting trustees. The skills we are particularly looking for are financial (sadly, our treasurer, Reg, has had to step back for now for personal reasons); social media/communications and project management/oversight but firstly and foremost we are looking for people with a heart for Ukraine. If you feel called to join our team please contact our Chair of Trustees: mark@dniprohopemission.org for a chat.

Please pray for:

- ♦ Reg, his skills and hard work have transformed our work and ability to distribute funds so responsively to our many partners. We are incredibly grateful to him for all he has done.
- ♦ Joshua and a team from DHM on a second mission trip to Ukraine to encourage our partners practically, emotionally and spiritually and give them time and space to rest and renew their strength. Pray for safe travels.
- ♦ Mr H. has returned to Ukraine to spend time with Dima and Olha and Mira—moving forward the House of Mercy and Equilibrium projects. He will also spend time with Pastor Sasha and Iryna working on plans for the House of Hope in Vasilkivka. Please pray for his safety. Finally, he will join Joshua on the mission trip and report to the trustees in Berlin.
- ♦ The trustees meeting up with Joshua in Elstal, Berlin to consider prioritisation and implementation for projects this year.

'...got woken up this morning at the hotel at 5am to terrific crash from a cruise missile attack exploding and huge fires - I dead and 6 injured, surprisingly low numbers really. No one reacts, no panic, no raised voices, watched lady walking dog in the street and just carrying on without a glance'... Mr H. Jan. 23rd 2024

Visiting speakers: One of our trustees may be available to visit your church or group to tell you more about Dnipro Hope Mission, our partners and their life saving work in Ukraine. Please contact DHM chair of trustees:

mark@dniprohopemission.org

Giving



DHM is an organisation comprised of volunteers and local ministry partners, we don't have any paid staff and 100% of your donations go directly to where they are most needed in Ukraine.

Please donate either through Stewardship or through a standing order or one-off payment to the DHM account:

Sort Code: **30-90-91** / Account Number: **68149860** / Account Name: Dnipro Hope Mission
Bank Name: Lloyds Bank

Please contact gill@dniprohopemission.org for a gift aid form or download it from our website
<https://www.dniprohopemission.org/donate/>

If you would like an acknowledgement, please email trustees Gill or Melanie and we would be very happy to thank you personally for your gift.

Every penny will help and 100% of your donations will go directly to our trusted local partners who are already working in Eastern Ukraine

Account name: Dnipro Hope Mission

Account Number: 68149860

Sort Code: 30-90-91

'The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words. I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss. Yet, I still dare to hope when I remember this: the unfailing love of the Lord never ends!' Lam 3: 19-22