

Sharing Christ's Compassion for Ukraine

" For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

January 23, 2013

Dear Prayer Partners:

Happy New Year! Have you recuperated from the holidays yet? Since Ukraine celebrates Christmas January 7 and "Old New Year's" Jan 14, we have just finished with the holidays! My Christmas tree is still up. Anyone want to come help me pack up decorations? ☺ I have been meditating a lot on one of my favorite passages, the 4th chapter of 2Corinthians. God brings this to mind whenever life seems overwhelming—the **Creator of the Universe gave me the treasure of His glorious power in this frail "earthen vessel"**, this weak human body! Since my colleague Holly Friesen left for furlough in December, the full weight of the pro-life ministry and the village clinic ministry falls on me. Here are some of my responsibilities:

- mentoring Larysa, one of our new "**Forgiven and Set Free**" group leaders.
- As the director of the **post-abortion ministry**, I am helping all four groups at some level and meeting regularly with the leaders.
- registration of "Choose Life" as a legal organization.
- liaison for three different **sister-church relationships** (partnership of church in North America with Ukrainian church), which means a lot of correspondence, translation, and financial accountability.
- two **village clinic days** each week, with each clinic taking 10-14 hours including travel.
- supporting the **church** in Krasnosyolka and their **outreach** to nearby villages. All the pastors associated with the clinics want me to come visit their worship services periodically, which is important for the **spiritual follow-up of my patients**.
- frequent **medical consultations** outside of clinics.
- planning two weeks of **seminars** for the post-abortion ministry March 25—April 6 and a **dental/medical team** April 12-27. *God provided the needed doctors!*

And the **vertigo** has returned. My stamina is already limited from arthritis and all the health problems that hit me in 2011. Dealing with the recurrent vertigo again is stressful, but it does give me time to spend with the Lord when I can't do anything else! *So you can see why I have been meditating on God's all-surpassing power, and why I greatly need your prayers.*

Monday (1/21) was our first meeting with the **new FSF group**. One lady is not sure if she will continue with the group so please pray for direction for her. **These four ladies have done a total of 33 abortions, and there is much pain in this group.** Pray for God's grace and mercy to be evident to them as we study His character and His forgiveness. Let me share with you another testimony from a lady in one of our previous groups:

"I have been a believer for a long time. I love God and believe that He loves me. I could not understand why again and again there was such a battle within me: anger, irritability, discouragement, feeling of not being worthy of love. During the course ("Forgiven and Set Free"), God showed me that the reason for all of this was abortion. He freely gave me His forgiveness and the opportunity to admit my sin, mourn my unborn children and entrust them to His hands. Now I am free!"

Thank you for praying for **Natasha**, my **cancer patient** who was bedridden at home with little help. **God took her home to heaven** December 14. It was wonderful to see the Krasnosyolka church functioning as her family, as several of our ladies went to Kubanka to bathe and prepare Natasha's body, clean the house, and prepare a meal for the funeral the next day. Here a funeral is held at the person's home, and all who attend are invited to a meal. Pastor Lonya preached about the good news of eternal life. **A funeral without drunkenness and demonstrating hope rather than despair was a great testimony to the village of Kubanka.**

Last week at the Kubanka clinic, there had been so much rain that we had trouble navigating the muddy pothole-ridden roads. I needed to make several home visits, and Lonya did manage to get my Honda CRV up one small hill, fishtailing the whole way! **Maria** has been attending our services for several years and professed faith in Christ. The previous clinic I had diagnosed atrial fibrillation, a serious irregular heartbeat, and prescribed medicine. During the holidays her neighbors got her started drinking again and she quit taking her medicines. Lonya and I had a good talk with her. **Pray that she will get into God's Word again and make her relationship right with Him.** Alcoholism is a terrible scourge here.

Pastor Anatoliy started a church in the village of **Limaniy** several years ago, and has made many new contacts through the clinic. He and his wife Alla spend 3 days each week visiting people in surrounding villages, a nursing home, a hospital, and an orphanage, plus holding Sunday School and services in Limaniy. He was pleased to see new faces at their Christmas services. His church in Odessa has been hard hit by the economic crisis and has not been able to pay his full salary. **Pray for God's financial provision for Anatoliy and Alla so that they can continue their ministries.**

Christmas Eve, January 6, the Krasnosyolka church put on a special **children's program**, the culmination of 3 days of "VBS". The church was packed! January 7, we had morning and evening services celebrating Christmas. Then Jan 8, we went to Kubanka and Shamanovka to hold services. The **snowy icy track over the curvy dirt road to Shamanovka** was challenging with slipping and sliding and a couple of 180's! Thankfully our drivers kept the van and Honda in control, especially near a couple of places where there is a shear drop-off. No such thing as a guard rail on these village roads! It was about 15°F and the "club" in Shamanovka is not heated. We were surprised to see about **10 adults and 5 kids turn out to shiver through a short service.** Remember, these clubs were auditoriums built for the Soviet collective farms, so it is a delight to share our living Christ in places where they declared him dead 25 years ago! **Pray for others in Shamanovka and all my villages to receive God's gift of salvation.**

Thank you for your support in prayer and finances that makes this possible. It is surely a team effort as we reach out to needy Ukrainians through a ministry of God's mercy.

*Leaning on The Rock,
Miriam*