

Sharing Christ's Compassion for Ukraine

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

(Matthew 5:16)

February 7, 2015

Dear Prayer Partners,

Thank you so much for holding me up in prayer! God is doing some amazing things. Many of you have dug deep into your pockets to share finances with the hurting and needy in Ukraine. **My heart is overflowing with gratitude** for your personal Christmas gifts that are such a sweet encouragement to me, for your extra gifts to the medical ministry, which make it possible to continue to give free medicines as patient numbers increase, and for your sacrificial gifts to the ABWE-Ukraine Crisis Fund. *Your resources are making a difference!*

I wish you could have been with me at a meeting in the city of Dnipropetrovsk Dec 29. **Despite a blizzard, 12 pastors from the war zone met with the advisory committee of the Ukraine Crisis Fund.** Our hearts resonated with their grief and passion as they described the horrendous conditions people are encountering. Thousands of civilians have been killed or wounded by mortar shells, rockets, and artillery. Many homes have been destroyed. One million have fled, but others stayed behind to care for elderly and invalids who could not leave. Very few have jobs. No one is getting their pensions. Grocery stores are open, but few have cash to purchase anything. Hospitals are overwhelmed and undersupplied, so only very basic care is given. Electricity and water are sporadic. But these courageous pastors are showing the love of Jesus Christ in very practical ways. One said, "we have never applied Matthew 5:16 in war before". All the remaining church members have rallied to combine resources to prepare hot lunches at the churches several times per week. Tens of thousands of meals have fed the hungry. **They buy groceries to deliver to the homebound, find blankets and warm clothes for those who are freezing, cut wood, pick up medicines, and share the Good News.** Alexander said his church dwindled from 200 to 40, but they re-filled the building with the hungry! Pavel described the long waiting line at his church just for a loaf of bread. Vladimir rejoiced that more have been saved in the past few months than in the past few years. Evginey lives in a city that was attacked then liberated, but is not far from occupied territory. **His church is a haven for refugees,** providing food, clothes, shelter and help with documents. Many refugees settle in his town, while others move further away, but all hear the Gospel! Thanks to the Ukraine Crisis Fund, all of these men received funds December 29 to continue their ministries. Their letters of thanks are pouring in, along with pleas for additional help. **Please pray for grace, wisdom and stamina for these choice servants of Christ. Pray for me as coordinator of the Fund** to lead the Advisory Committee wisely, as we choose projects to support. Pray that the Lord will continue to provide needed resources. Lonya, Holly and I would like to travel to Kharkov this spring to do **medical clinics for refugees,** so pray for us as we plan this ministry with Pastor Sasha Donchenko.

God answered a prayer of mine in December that I had been praying for 17 years! That is for Ukrainian health care professionals to get involved in village ministry. Alex is a young family physician whom I met at a conference two years ago. He has been studying in Germany, but came home for Christmas. He went with me to the Kubanka clinic along with Tanya, a senior medical student. They were thrilled with our ministry and burdened by the great need. He invited Pastor Lonya and me to a meeting of the Ukrainian Association of Young Christian Medics. Twenty-five students and professionals listened to our report and encouraged me to come back. This is critical for a career missionary to **mentor nationals to carry on the ministry.** Pray for me to teach them good medicine and how to show Christ to their patients. I hope to have a student with me at clinics 2-3 days each month. Alex also invited me to speak at their national conference in August. What a privilege!

Thank you for your inquiries about my health. I did have more problems with vertigo during the holidays and totally missed all the Christmas celebrations, both Dec 25 and Jan 7. I didn't even put up a tree. I did pull out a Nativity scene and just focused on Jesus. So really, I did not miss Christmas! I didn't miss any clinics in January, but I did miss clinic Tuesday after having several days of vertigo again. Our Father knows. **Pray that I accomplish His purpose each day and show His love and the fruit of His Spirit despite the stresses of health issues and war just 350 miles away.** My plate is full as I lead the village clinic ministry, chair the Board of "Choose Life", direct the post-abortion ministry, coordinate the Ukraine Crisis Fund, and administer several sister church relationships between North America and Ukraine. God's words to Paul encourage me: "*My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness*" (2 Cor. 12:9).

In clinics, patients are showing a lot of anxiety and fear as the conflict heats up again, and the rumors fly that Odessa will be attacked in a few months. (*Don't worry—I am safe and these are just rumors so far. We do monitor the situation closely.*) Blood pressures are elevated, stomachs are hurting, insomnia is rampant, hearts are racing, women are weeping, prices are rising while wages are not as the economy shrinks. The conflict is impacting everyone. This gives me many open doors in clinic to share the hope and peace that only Jesus can give. **Many are listening intently to the Gospel.** Pray that they will accept Christ and find eternal life! Julia came to see me in Shamanovka last week. A couple of months ago, she told me, "God cannot forgive me because I had 15 abortions!" She cried as I shared the depth of God's forgiveness and the assurance that He forgets our sin when we repent. Pastor Lonya talked to her then visited her at home a few weeks later. **She prayed to ask Jesus to become her Savior!** Thursday her face radiated peace as she told me about that and how she was delving into God's Word. Praise the Lord! **Pray for physical endurance for my clinic staff and me,** as patient numbers have increased by 25% in the past four months. This means 12-14 hour clinic days in difficult conditions, including travel on terrible roads. God's grace is sufficient!

Thank you for interceding for us before the Throne of Grace.

*Holding fast to The Rock and delighting to be God's ambassador in Ukraine,
Miriam Wheeler, MD*