

## *Sharing Christ's Compassion for Ukraine*

*"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.  
I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

Mark 2:17

September 10, 2017

Dear Prayer Partners:

This verse really speaks to me as a physician. **Only the sick come to see me in my village clinics.** They have a physical need and seek help. I love giving them comfort and medical treatment, but **most of all, I want to point them to The Great Physician** Who calls sinners to repentance. Sometimes the needs are overwhelming, and I leave a village clinic totally exhausted. But the opportunities to share the hope of eternal life with my patients renews my strength and gives such joy! Recently **in the Krasnosyolka clinic I had several unusual open doors** to share the Good News with patients. *Please pray for these desperate souls who need Jesus most of all! **Pray for wisdom, strength and good health for a medical team, including 3 optometrists giving out eyeglasses, who will serve in my village clinics September 23-30.***

**Thank you** to many of you who gave generously to the **Krasnosyolka church** where Lonya is pastor. **God provided all the funds requested for the purchase of the adjacent property!** Pastor Lonya and his flock are amazed at this outpouring of love that will enable them to expand their ministry. This will increase their total property to 0.6 acre and give them a playground for children's ministry and parking. **Pray for the purchase process to go smoothly next week.** They will be renovating the two old buildings, that will be used for children's and youth ministries.

**God abundantly blessed the camp ministry in July led by a team of 22 from Johnston Chapel!** With **60 children** from destitute villages and the war zone, translators, Krasnosyolka leaders, we had about 105 people at the campground perched on a hill overlooking the Black Sea. God's Creation was on display as every kind of weather pattern rippled over the sea in multiple colors, waves, rain, lightning, bright sunshine, soothing moonbeams. Most of all, **God's love was displayed by the youth of two cultures united to serve these needy children!** They played games, swam in the sea, did crazy skits, sang, taught Bible stories, laughed, prayed and cried together. Many of the refugee children carried hurt, fear and loss, hardening them against belief in God. We watched them blossom into smiles, prayers and hugs, embracing the message of "The Lamb", Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross for their personal sins. **At least 6 children came to Christ** that week. We had the books printed in full color in Russian for the kids to take home. I have already heard from two moms who have read the books themselves! **Pray for these seeds to bear fruit.**

Our **Ukraine Crisis Fund** advisory council met August 30 to consider requests for financial help for ministries to refugees, hospitalized soldiers, chaplains on the front lines, those suffering in the rebel-occupied zone, others on the front lines of the battle struggling to survive despite strafing. **One ministry carries fresh bread every week to villages on the front line** where people feel they have nowhere to go and keep hoping the war will end. Many still live in basements to avoid the bombs and gunfire. Children go to school, so this ministry started a Bible club for them. They also bought a village house to use for worship services. A church in another city in **the occupied zone** has been providing hot lunches twice a week, grocery packets, medicines, clothes, school supplies. **They baptized 12 people in August!** Some were injured fighting as rebels, and were disillusioned. Others were hungry, and seeking physical bread, they found the Bread of Life! My heart is stirred by these **brave pastors who continue to serve the Lord in tough circumstances.**

**My colleague, Holly Friesen, left Odessa August 30 for a year of furlough.** Pray this year will be a blessing and encouragement to her as she shares her ministry and seeks additional financial support. Pray for me as I shoulder a heavier load in her absence. Pray for wisdom for **Luba Abramova** who became director of the **Women's Center** upon Holly's departure. They have seen three clients come to Christ since the Center opened 3 years ago! **Ira Lupanova** directs "**Forgiven and Set Free**", the post-abortion ministry. I will be meeting with them September 16 to make plans for the next round of Bible study groups and training new leaders. We are also finishing the revision of the FSF leaders' manual, so pray this will be a great help to leaders throughout the Russian-speaking world. I wrote a lot of new material for this manual as well as directing the project so it has been very time-intensive for me over the last year. To God be the glory!

*Grateful for your prayers and Clinging to The Rock, Miriam Wheeler, MD*