

Merry Christmas from Holly December 2016



“Long lay the world in sin and error pining, till He appeared and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope- the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new & glorious morn!” – J.S. Dwight (O Holy Night)

These are words from one of my favorite Christmas songs. When we feel more deeply the weight of our sin and sins effect on the world, we also feel more deeply the thrill of hope that Christ’s coming to earth brought. I have experienced afresh that thrill of hope and wonder at God’s amazing grace as I have had the privilege of sharing it with one of our Women’s Center clients who, Lord willing, will complete the Story of Hope Bible study this week. It is clear that she feels the weight of her sin and understands how her sin contributed to Christ’s suffering on the cross. Pray that this week as we tie it all together with the key points of the gospel message, she will understand and accept God’s gift of salvation from sin for her.



I also experienced the thrill of hope even in the midst of heartbreaking sorrow and tragedy this past month. On Thanksgiving Day, Pastor Valentine, an assistant pastor at my church, was suddenly ushered into the presence of the Lord at the age of 43 leaving behind a wife and four children. He had not been ill so this was a shock to us all. His love for people quickly endeared him to our hearts during the few years that he served at our church. He was an evangelist and would also travel to other churches to preach and minister through music with his rich bass voice. He will be missed by many. He was also a highly respected professor at the Odessa conservatory. It was clear through the words spoken at his funeral that he faithfully shared his faith with students and colleagues. While I grieve for our loss, I cannot help but smile when I think of him adding his voice to the heavenly choir!

A week later we lost a dear sister and friend, Anya, who was the accountant for our pro-life ministry. She died in an apartment fire along with her 5 children ages 2-11 years. Only her husband survived. He was recently released from the hospital and is still recovering from the damage to his lungs. There are no words adequate to express the sorrow of seeing those six caskets lined up in a row, watching the parents/grandparents say their good-byes, and knowing that Victor (father/husband) was in the hospital fighting for his life unaware of what had happened to his family. However, in the midst of the aching sorrow there is still that thrill of hope! Anya loved and served the Lord and taught her children to do the same. I have no doubt that they are rejoicing together in the presence of their Savior. I came away from that funeral with a fresh consciousness of the brevity of life and the need to live each day for the glory of my Savior and with eternity in view. Please continue to pray for Victor as he heals physically and as he deals with this tragedy emotionally.



Thank you for continuing to uphold us in prayer. I have been especially blessed these past few weeks by those who have been praying for me, for our missionary team, and for those we serve with. The body of Christ is a wonderful thing!

Rejoicing in Hope!

Holly Friesen

Contact Info: Mailing address: Holly Friesen a/ya 117 Odessa, Ukraine 65069

e-mail: esperanza@abwe.cc or hollyfriesen79@gmail.com

Internet phone: 316-243-0602 (dial like U.S. number but rings in Ukraine) [website: www.ukrainemedical.abwe.org](http://www.ukrainemedical.abwe.org)

Donation Info: Gifts can be sent to ABWE, PO Box 8585, Harrisburg PA 17105-8585 or online www.abwe.org

- Holly’s ministry account # 0139523
- Pro-Life in Ukraine, account # 0757353
- Ukraine Crisis Fund, account #0717401