

Sharing Christ's Compassion for Ukraine

*We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;
Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love,
and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Thes. 1: 2-3

December 3, 2016

Dear Prayer Partners:

What a blessing you are—those who pray and give to make the ministry in Ukraine possible! I do remember your work of faith, labor of love, and hope in Jesus. On **Thanksgiving** Day, while I was home sick, I wrote a long list of things for which I thank the Lord, including prayer and financial partners, sending church, family and friends, and all the spiritual riches we have through salvation in Jesus Christ. I appreciate so much those of you who wrote to ask about my visa. Odessa's Immigration Office annulled the visa I had gotten in October, since I left Ukraine during its effective period. But in God's mercy they promised a new governor's letter free of charge (saving \$150) and a discount on the 2nd visa (total cost for the 1st one was \$190). So I must return to Moldova in the next couple of weeks to secure **another visa** which is necessary to apply for my **residency permit** in January after the holidays. **Pray for God to facilitate the process.**

I would appreciate your **prayers for my health**. Since my return to Odessa Nov 4, I have been sick frequently, a cold turned into sinusitis, which revved up my **vertigo**. This surely throws me on God's grace to accomplish His goals with the strength He gives. I had to cancel a meeting today for the revision of the Russian version of the **leadership manual for "Forgiven and Set Free"**. **Pray that we can finish this project by the end of the year.**

I did get the accounting done and agenda written for our **Crisis Fund** council meeting Nov 17. How heartbreaking to read of the ongoing struggles in Donbas, where **the war continues**. Many are already suffering of **cold**, having no money to buy wood or coal to heat their homes. Many continue to go **hungry**, especially in the occupied zone. **Praise the Lord for the pastors and churches who remain faithful in their commitment to care for those in need with the help of money from the Crisis Fund.** Thank you to those who have given to make this possible! One pastor wrote that he baptized seven in October, all of whom were adults who had never been to church in their lives before the war. Many churches are planning Christmas programs and asked for help to give small gifts to children, who otherwise would receive nothing.

"Smokin' in Ukraine": what is that about? No I have not started smoking! Last Tuesday we traveled the rutted dirt roads to the village of **Shamanovka** for clinic. One of our believers there lets us use an old house for Sunday services and clinics. Lonya and some of the guys from Krasnosyolka repaired the outhouse to make it one of the nicest in any of the villages we visit. Maria started a fire in the woodstove a couple of hours before our arrival. When we got there, **the house was full of smoke!** So where could we hold clinic? We used to have clinic in the village "club", the small auditorium built many years ago for the Soviet collective farm. It has no heat, so not a good option in the winter. But we had to use one small room for the pharmacy with no electricity, and I sat in our van with the motor running to see patients. My clinic assistants worked in their winter coats. I was comfortable, but I didn't do any extensive physical exams! Pastor Lonya talked to people in the **freezing** cold anteroom of the club. There were several new patients, and we had some wonderful opportunities to **share the Gospel**. We moved on to Vasilivka after lunch, where five patients awaited us in this tiny dying village. The house next door has no windows left, and the roof is falling in. It is so sad to see **these forgotten villages, but God remembers these destitute people!** A new patient requested a Bible to read at home. Then on to the 3rd small village of the day, New Kubanka, where about 20 were waiting in that club. They had heated it a bit to take the chill off. One mom brought 4 of her kids with colds. Sadly she drinks heavily, and her kids suffer for it. She can't afford to buy cough syrup, and even if she could, the nearest

pharmacy is a 45-minute drive away. Only a couple of people in the village have cars. The combined population of these three villages is less than 200, and we saw 35 in clinic. They are very grateful for our help! **A few of these villagers have accepted Christ as Savior, but many more need the Lord.**

Thursday, we were in **Krasnosyolka**, where more and more patients have been coming as the war has driven the economy into the ground. I am thankful that more people get to see God's love in action as they receive compassionate medical care and free medicines. **We took care of 103 patients that day!** They had started lining up at 6am, so Lonya got to preach to about 40 who were waiting when we arrived. Such a large volume is quite stressful for my small staff, but the Lord gave us strength for the day. I had several open doors to share the Gospel. One lady especially touched my heart who brought her two children for the first time, ages 3 and 5. She was under the stress of an alcoholic husband who periodically beats her. She didn't have a Bible at home, but promised to read the one I gave her plus a booklet on God's answer for stress. **Please pray for the Lord Jesus to draw her and other village patients to Himself.**

In 2013 we averaged 291 patients per month in all our village clinics; this year 430! This has strained my staff and my ministry fund budget, but it has been wonderful to experience God's supply! **Thank you** for the extra gifts that have cared for these new patients and all my needs.

*Clinging to The Rock with thanksgiving and joy,
Miriam Wheeler, MD*