

Family Time

by Andrii Bilokonnyi

Now in Ukraine we are going through such a difficult time that it is hard to be ungrateful to God and all those people who take part in supporting our society on this path of trials. It is impossible to underestimate, or overestimate, the contribution of each person to this good cause of support. Whatever it is from your side, for us it is a confirmation of hope for the future. I am sure that these thoughts of mine, expressed here in the text, are read by people whom God has placed in their hearts to express love in action. I express great gratitude for this.

Every evening, my mother and I text each other with wishes for a good night and a good sleep. Although we do not write about it directly, each of us has a constant real concern for the life of a loved one. The war has sharpened these feelings. Constant destruction and death exhausts our mental and physical condition, and it is increasingly difficult to remain adequate.

In Zaporizhzhia, in the Domik facility, over the past few months we have provided humanitarian aid to more than a thousand people. We had the opportunity to communicate with each of them, sometimes in two or three sentences, and sometimes it turned out to be quite a long conversation. Looking into people's eyes, it is difficult to simply listen to information from them, because what they say is the feelings of their hearts expressed in words, which are no less difficult for us to share with you.

Here, I will give you the tops of communication (if you can call it that way). From time to time you think how will you learn about the death of a person close to you, or how will your relatives recognize that you are no longer alive? You can read the Bible aloud, even memorize some Psalms, constantly proclaim the victory of Christ over death, but the brain remains a part of the flesh that lives under the pressure of events and the information field.

Sometimes at night, already falling asleep during an air alarm, or while waiting for it, a thought appears about the district, city and the whole country where you live. You begin to think that there are other people in the same house with you who have the same feelings. That there may be half a million people (or many more) in this area and throughout the city right now who think that this very night a destructive missile will bring death to them. It seems crazy when you understand the size of the country and the number of people with such thoughts, but it is the reality of our time.

When you see eyes filled with tears, hear how a person's voice trembles, you understand that now you are giving a person more than just a package of help, you are giving an opportunity to be heard and share fears, worries, and hopes. There are people who because of the war seven or eight years ago left their home for the first time to another place, tried to rebuild their lives, and now they had to leave again, and again lost everything they had. There are those who did not have any belongings and even food when they left their homes, there are those who went through filtration points, captivity, torture, long life in basements, and many other terrible things.

Almost all of them hoped for a short-term absence from home and a quick return, but many cannot even have hope because the war has already destroyed everything they had. When they say that their children ask to go home for at least one night to sleep in their room in their own bed, and the house has been destroyed for a long time, you don't know what advice will be right. When during a conversation people simply fall silent, and cannot say anything more, because tears and bitterness do not give you the opportunity to breathe, you start to cry first because of your impotence, but with all your might you keep your emotions inside.

When you hear words of thanks, which are not just said for cultural relations, but said out of a sense of support and understanding it inspires further service. When a young mother, holding a very small child with one hand, and taking the packages of help with the other, and at the same time apologizing for causing us inconvenience, you think about the meaning of your actions. When such war-weary parents begin to smile when it comes to their children. When elderly people, tired of mental stress, begin to understand your jokes and maintain a conversation you understand that there is still faith and hope in humanity and the future among us.

P.S. As I was finishing writing this story, a large-scale air alert started across the country in Ukraine with more than 50 Russian missiles being fired at critical infrastructure sites. In Zaporizhzhia, rockets hit the distribution points of electrical energy from the Dnipro hydroelectric power station. The lights, communication and the Internet disappeared. I still had time to take a photo of the map of our country with marks of falling rockets in various regions.

- **Andrii Bilokonnyi**,
PHA Director of Ukrainian Operations

KAMIANSKE

by Ilya and Zina Parkhomuk

The story of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Gulyaipole...

Every person who has a calling to serve God and people want to see the results of their work. We don't always get what we hope for. We help children, teenagers, multiple kids families, internally displaced people (IDPs), military personnel and their families... the list can be continued. It is never possible to know in advance who exactly needs to hear about Christ. I thank God that He inspired Paul to say other words that put everything in its place: "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow" 1 Cor. 3:6 (NIV)

At the end of August, a family of IDPs came to a prayer meeting. Volodymyr and Natalya. They did not want to get help, they just wanted to communicate and build relationships with the locals, because they moved to Kamianske in July. After meeting at Domik, they came to the church service on Sunday. We had an individual meeting where they talked about their lives. All the time they lived in a village near Gulyaipole. They were engaged in farming, had a lot of livestock and land. At the age of 60, they planned a different, quiet retirement life. But frequent hostilities forced them to move first to Zaporizhzhia, and then to us. A terrible story, how they were left homeless, the husband was injured, the son was taken to the Armed Forces (where he was seriously injured). I'm sharing with you only a part of this story.

After our individual meeting, I offered them to come to separate lessons on studying the Word of God. They are Orthodox people, and sometimes they read the Bible. I taught lessons for more than a month, I did not have time to tell about the whole plan of God's salvation, when Natalya herself began to say that she needed Christ. Human life is strange. A person who lived most of their life without the meaning of life, everything they relied on disappeared... Finally, they found faith, hope, love, and most importantly- salvation through Christ.



It was on October 15 that the baptism took place. I did not hear great words after the baptism, but I saw a joyful face that was in tears, now they were not caused by pain, but caused by the joy of salvation.

We pray, we communicate, we continue to help, we strive for peace!!! But we see that sometimes war can be a way to save souls.

- Ilya and Zina Parkhomuk

PHA Ukrainian Ministry Partners: Kamianske

WINTER

Hello PHA Family! We want to thank you for the outpouring of compassion, support, and prayers you've shown PHA and those we minister to in Ukraine. Everyday people are fed, clothed, and sheltered by your love and the resources you provide.

Winter has come to Ukraine. Here in Texas, December means that we may still not have put away our shorts yet, but in Ukraine it has already begun to get very cold. You have probably seen that the Russian military has been specifically targeting critical utilities infrastructure. As of the writing of this article as much as 40% of Ukraine's power grid has been damaged leaving more than 4.5 million Ukrainians without electricity or dealing with rolling blackouts. Many areas are without water and natural gas as well. We know that this will be a cold winter in Ukraine for many no matter the forecast.

We thank you for your past support that has allowed us to lift up many in Ukraine during these challenging times. We also ask you for support going forward, especially through the long cold winter months.

Please pray for our Ukrainian staff, graduates, and friends that are still serving in Eastern Ukraine. They have had many sleepless nights and dangerously close calls, yet they are choosing to stay where they can help most. Please join us in praying for their safety and for peace to return to Ukraine. Thank you for shining the light and love of Christ on so many.

Sincerely,

Chris and Christy Hill

Co-Executive Directors, PHA

FROM THE DOMIK KITCHEN

by Maryna Bilokonna

Palyanytsia (bread loaf)

Palyanitsa is a round flat bread that was baked not inside the oven, but in a pan, using the method of frying the dough without grease. The peculiarity is that such bread is often prepared without yeast, or baking soda. Also, the palyanytsia wasn't cut with a knife, but was broken (plucked off) into pieces.

The word "Palyanytsia" became the password during the war, with the help of which you can differentiate a Ukrainian from an occupier. Ukrainian and Russian languages both use versions of the Cyrillic alphabet but have different vocabularies and pronunciations. Thus, Ukrainian soldiers can quickly determine whether a Russian captive is a friend or foe by asking him to pronounce the word palianytsia, which when pronounced by a Russian rather than Ukrainian, immediately identifies an enemy.

In addition, the recipe is more relevant now than ever, because it can be easily prepared in a pan, without yeast, from the simplest products, which is important in wartime.

I remember that my grandmother and mother used to bake pancakes with baking soda and sour milk if there was no yeast. They were cooked in a pan without oil, frying on both sides. Then they were piled up and covered with a towel to "rest". It was so delicious!

The loaves were 2-3 cm thick. There were many options on how to eat palyanytsia, it was smeared with honey, butter, sour cream, or rubbed with garlic.

This is really a very tasty old Ukrainian dish!

INGREDIENTS FOR 5 pcs., diameter 15 cm

kefir - 2 cups (500 ml)

sugar - 1 tbsp

salt - 1 tsp

spices - as desired

baking soda - 1 teaspoon with top

vinegar - 1 tbsp

flour - 800 g (~24 tbsp)

Mix all the ingredients in a bowl. It will be dense and you can put it under a towel for 30 minutes. Then, divide the dough into four or five parts. Roll each one to a thickness of 2 cm and put it in a frying pan greased with oil. Fry on medium heat on each side until golden under a closed lid.

Enjoy your meal!

-Maryna Bilokonna,

PHA Ukrainian Ministry Partner: Zaporizhzhia





DNIPRO

by Maryna Flehontova

When we first started to work with the internally displaced families in Ukraine due to the war that unfortunately is still going on, all our efforts were aimed at helping people with most of their basic immediate needs like food, hygienic items, bedding, and medicine. We also helped mothers with babies, people at the hospitals, the elderly and the handicapped. It was very sporadic and very demanding, taking up all of our time and strength. We've had hundreds of families go through the church receiving different kinds of help. Many would willingly take the Bibles and other Christian books for themselves, their kids, and friends.

With time, God blessed us with a wonderful team of volunteers, many of whom are internally displaced people themselves, who lost their homes and jobs. Therefore, besides providing humanitarian relief to many, we also didn't want to lose the opportunity to teach God to those we were in touch with daily. That's how we started our regular Bible classes during the week. At first it would be a small group of 3 to 5 people, all non-

Christians. With God working not only outwardly but also with people's hearts we had 7 baptisms. Our Bible group during the week grew to 15-17 people on a regular basis. We are continuing our prayers for those who became our guests and friends and soon we hope will also become our Brothers and Sisters in Christ. We'll be glad to have everyone else join us in this prayer.

Of course, we also pray daily for the war to cease. We continue to see new faces of devastation and ruin that it brings, and I honestly cannot imagine how people cope with this reality without God. I'm forever grateful for the eternal hope I have, and I pray others come to know it too. May God continue being our comfort and strength, peace and joy, especially when this world has less and less of those to offer.

- Maryna Flehontova,
PHA Ukrainian Ministry Partner: Dnipro



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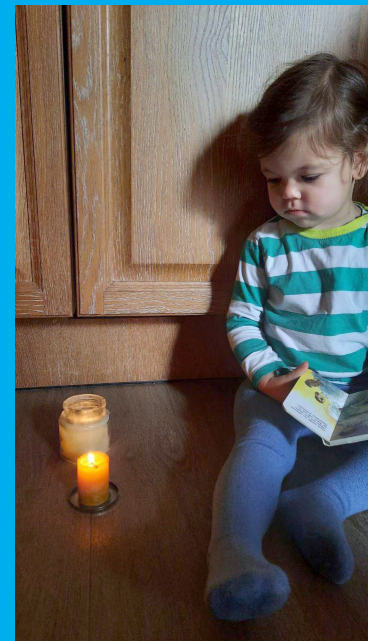
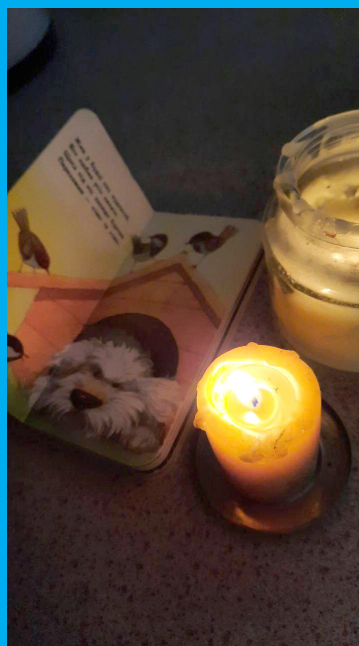
by Tetiana Ilmeyer

'No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it'
-1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV)

My great grandma, who was born in 1924 , with every trouble or at every family holiday when we all gathered said: "I wish there will be no war." Going through this battle we came to understand that all things are bearable enough when there's no war. Everybody has their own level of endurance and God for sure doesn't test us over our abilities.

Ukrainians are exhausted with this war physically, morally, and mentally but we have no other way except for fighting. Armed forces are doing their job at the frontline, our borders, and in and out of the cities. Medical workers and emergency services, energy system workers, volunteers, and civilians are overloaded with the tests and trials in the forms of rocket shelling, air raids, and electricity blackouts but we're still fighting and trying to support each other.

Today the government says that our energy system was hit for 40% and for example Kyiv region has 2-3 blackouts per day each lasting for approximately 4 hours and not all of them are planned. It's getting colder every day. Just imagine that in 2022 we have to think of how to alternatively heat our home and cook food as we don't have electricity and water in our homes. So much stress, pain and destruction.



But we're still fighting to win and thank everybody for all the support that is provided in so many ways. We're praying for God's victory and peace in Ukraine, and we believe the day will come when all Ukrainians sigh with relief and at family gatherings would say: 'I wish there will be no war again'.

- **Tetiana Ilmeyer**

PHA Ukrainian Ministry Partner: Kyiv



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DECEMBER 2022

- Blackouts
- Winter
- Words of Thanks
- Baptisms
- Recipe: Palyanytsia
(bread loaf and password)

