



April/May 2024

*The latest news from Ukraine is depressing. Stories of Russian advances and shell shortages, an 'army of amputees' and full cemeteries but we keep hope alive.*



Photo:  
Aleksii and  
co-workers

These are 'dark days' for Ukraine, but we are determined to do all we can to help the most vulnerable. Our partner, Aleksii writes: 'The ministers and members of our team try with all their might to lift the spirits of the people they visit.'

*'It was deeply humbling to hear the testimony of several of our partners about how the donations they have received from DHM have resulted in lives being saved - whether through the supply of life-saving medicines for a care home for sick and infirm residents or medical equipment that DHM has purchased in order to save the lives of those who have sustained life-threatening injuries as a result of this terrible and evil war.'*  
Joshua, co-founder of DHM and trustee on a recent visit to Ukraine.

*'Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.'*

Romans 12:12

<https://www.dniprohopemission.org/>

## Report from Ukraine Trip February 2024

A DHM team, led by Joshua, (co-founder of DHM with his wife Varduyi), recently visited Ukraine to offer prayers and a visible display of solidarity to our Ukrainian ministry partners who are working tirelessly to serve war-torn communities suffering as a result of the Russian invasion. The members of the DHM team came from different countries: Henk Stenvers from the Netherlands, President of the Mennonite World Conference; Rodger and Margaret Murchison from the USA, who serve on the Board of DHM; Liliya Melkonian from Ukraine, who volunteers as DHM's Administrative Coordinator in Ukraine; Max Zimmermann from Germany, who serves on the faculty of the Theologische Hochschule Elstal and Joshua originally from the UK, now serving alongside Max on the Faculty at the Baptist university in Germany as Professor of Mission Studies.



Max Zimmermann from Germany, who serves on the faculty of the Theologische Hochschule Elstal.



Henk Stenvers from the Netherlands, President of the Mennonite World Conference.

*Throughout the visit, it became evident that our Ukrainian ministry partners were experiencing profound exhaustion and trauma from the effects of the war. They shared harrowing accounts of ministering to people affected by the conflict, highlighting the grim realities they face daily...For our Ukrainian friends, the last two years have been an enduring nightmare. They are experiencing profound exhaustion of body, mind and spirit as they live through the daily horror of war. For them there has been no respite. They have lived with the constant fear of missiles raining down on them and their families. They have had to attend countless funerals of cherished friends and family members. All our ministry partners had at least one relative or close friend who had been killed by the Russians. Several of our partners had narrowly avoided being killed themselves.' Joshua*

Joshua's report on the February 2024 Dnipro Hope Mission Trip to Ukraine has been published in the Baptist Times:

[https://baptist.org.uk/Articles/685565/We\\_cannot\\_walk.aspx](https://baptist.org.uk/Articles/685565/We_cannot_walk.aspx)

### Please pray for:

- The new wave of refugees following the recent Russian advances.
- The sadness, depression and pessimism across Ukraine - that each person would find reasons to hope.
- All those who are grief-stricken, bearing the pain of war, displacement and life-changing injuries.

*'Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.' 1 Thess. 5:11*

## Pastor Vasyl and the Bread and Water Ministry

Pastor Vasyl and the Rock of Salvation Church provide life-saving humanitarian relief in the community and to IDPs in Pokrovsk, in the war-torn Donetsk region - running a bakery and a water filtration unit. DHM funds have enabled Pastor Vasyl and his team to bake thousands of loaves of bread every week to distribute to civilians caught up in the fighting. This church has a well and the water filtration unit provides safe drinking water, given free to all in need. They have given away 1,800,000 litres in the last year.

We mentioned in our last newsletter that the situation in Pokrovsk has become more difficult. On March 7th, James Waterhouse, BBC Ukraine correspondent in the Donetsk region reported that: *'People in cities like Pokrovsk, Kostyantynivka and Kramatorsk are now facing a fast-approaching front line, and even occupation.'* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-68493215>

Vasyl and those in the church want to continue their ministries and serve those who are unable to leave but they may be risking death or Russian occupation. Russian occupying forces have closed and destroyed churches and abducted and killed pastors.



*Distribution of life-saving loaves of bread.*



*Several people have come to faith and discovered a new hope and purpose in life after witnessing the brave and unstinting service of Pastor Vasyl and his team.*



*Pastor Vasyl, pictured with DHM team members, Liliya and Marika, on the recent retreat for pastors/partners, Ukraine, February 2024.*

**Please pray for all our friends in eastern Ukraine near the front lines:**

- That Russian advances could be stopped.
- That all in eastern Ukraine make wise choices. Many want to stay in their homes for as long as possible.
- That funding is renewed for the water filtration unit to enable the church to continue giving away water free of charge.
- For safety of Pastor Vasyl, his family, his co-workers and all in the city of Pokrovsk.

*'...but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'* John 4.14

## Pastor Aleksei - serving the most vulnerable

Pastor Aleksei has been delivering more humanitarian aid (food and incontinence products) and comforting the 'forgotten' and 'left behind' - those who are elderly and vulnerable. Most are bedridden and unable to leave the front line areas. He writes: *'...our recent trips, we are dealing with elderly people more and more often, mostly lying and sick. In areas close to the frontier areas, these people do not often receive humanitarian support, the roads here are very difficult to pass through ... . But it is this part of the population that is less secure and protected now..... It is a huge blessing for them'*



Winter is not over in Ukraine - Aleksei's team have been distributing firewood too.



Older people in Ukraine are dying earlier than they would have done in times of peace as Russian missiles have destroyed health care facilities and there is a lack of medicines. Many older people are suffering from untreated urinary tract infections, concussion, reduced hearing because of shockwaves and explosions, poor mobility because of prolonged periods of isolation at home or amputations following limb damage, and severe bronchitis and pneumonia after spending days without physical exercise in an unheated apartment without windows. Sadly, for some elderly people, this is not their first war and they have suffered physically and emotionally during the Second World War and/or the first Russian invasion of 2014 and/or the ongoing war in Donbass 2014-2022.

*Thanks to everyone who supported our 'Operation Warm Embrace' during the winter of 2022/23. With the recent attacks on power infrastructure, the generators that you provided continue to provide vital back up to keep affected communities running.*

### Please pray for:

- ◆ Pastor Aleksei and his team as they take humanitarian aid and provide comfort to those who have been unable to leave the front lines areas.
- ◆ All those in the church in Vinnysia led by Aleksei and serving IDP's from occupied territories of Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson Oblasts - in addition to humanitarian aid may they find comfort, peace and blessing.



*'Father to the fatherless, defender of widows - this is God, whose dwelling is holy.' Psalm 68.5*

## Pastor Serhii and Salvation Baptist Church, Poltava

There are so many internally displaced people in Poltava, that Pastor Serhii and the church have a food van parked in their car park to provide hot meals to those in need each day. Rents have soared and people have no money left over for food. The ministry is non-stop as evacuations continue from cities further east which are under heavy attack from the Russians. There are regular support groups to support over 400 IDPs. Here are some stories from those being



Olena with IDP's in Salvation Baptist Church

helped by the church:

Tatiana, 40ys old, left with a husband, two children and her mother from the city of Kharkiv. *'We left the city of Kharkiv due to huge explosions - we were afraid for our lives and did not know, when we left, if we would be able to find a comfortable place to stay. In Kharkiv we sat in the basement, it was cold, the kids got sick. We were very*



Serhii with IDP's in Salvation Baptist Church

*scared, slept a lot and cried. There was no communication in the city, we did not know what was going on around and where it was safe. When we were leaving town everything around was destroyed and there were hardly any people around. We thank God we walked out alive.*

*Thanks to these meetings, we distract ourselves from worries, it's warm, cosy, interesting, you can drink tea or coffee, talk. Help is very important for us, because there is not enough money, we need to rent housing, we spend a lot on medication and rehabilitation of a disabled child. We have a big family, grandma often has blood pressure, children are often sick, and still need food and household things. Our home is destroyed and we have nowhere to return to.'*

Svetlana, 43 years old, left with her mother and her son from the city of Soledar, Donetsk region. *'At the beginning of the full-scale war, since February 24, we were able to live in the basements, when there were strikes on Severodonetsk. But since May there have been air strikes in our city. Living was definitely not possible anymore. It was difficult to leave the city because there was no transport. The meetings in the church are good for us emotionally. I have discovered many interesting things about God. I am very pleased with your help. In my family, only I work, my mother is old, and my son is a teenager. Renting a home is very difficult these days. The world is not without good people and you are proof of this. Thanks to your selfless work, sensitivity and solidarity, you managed to reach out a helping hand.'*

Church leaders Serhii and his wife Olena were given a respite from the war in January when they visited Guildford Baptist Church. A huge thank you to Guildford Baptist Church for hosting Serhii and Olena and thank you for the generosity of those in the church - over £5000 was raised for the work of the church in Poltava.

### Please pray for the church in Poltava:

- That God would give each team the strength for service.
- That everyone would be protected against rockets and missiles.
- That the Lord would give the necessary resources to care for the refugees.
- For resilience for all those serving internally displaced people and especially for strength for Serhii as he visits 60 wounded soldiers each week.



Paster Serhii and his wife, Olena, ministered to refugees from Ukraine in Guildford Baptist Church during their visit.

*'Even when I walk through the valley of death, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.' Ps 23.4*

## Pastor Sasha and the House of Hope

Pastor Sasha continues his quiet service, day after day, week after week. He and his wife Irina have chosen to stay in Vasylykivka while, due to their proximity to the frontline, many of the church members have fled to the relatively safer west of the country or overseas. Once a thriving church of over 100 people, now just 12 or so elderly ladies remain.

Sasha takes food supplies and food baked and grown by the local communities to the front line communities each week. He supports an incredible Volunteer Centre which specialises in sourcing and despatching medical supplies at the cheapest possible costs.

He also visits 224 residents in a care home for adults with a learning disability bringing with him food gifts. **The Director of this home has asked for help with training, either via Western training manuals or online courses, and preferably through a visit of a trainer who could train them.** A definition of the training needed was, 'Exactly how, where and in what condition the wards live and are run (management), how everyday life is organised, how the boarders themselves live in their care, the medical needs and the best structures.' If any of our supporters can help with this please contact [melanie@dniprohopemission.com](mailto:melanie@dniprohopemission.com).

Incredibly, building on the House of Hope continues. Mischa, an IDP builder, has been working on this with other volunteers for the last two years.



*Pastor Sasha pictured in Ukraine, February 2024 with Board members, Rev. Dr. Rodger Murchison, author of 'Guide for Grief' and his wife, Margaret. DHM trustees are incredibly grateful to Rodger for raising the funds for the DHM Ministry trip to Ukraine and to all those in the churches in Augusta, Georgia, USA who gave so generously in response to his appeals.*



*'House of Hope' 2019*



*'House of Hope' 2024*

### Please pray for:

- ◆ The 'House of Hope' - a centre for the community where everyone is welcomed, helped, involved, and where the heart of the gospel can be seen lived out in practice.
- ◆ For the health and safety of Pastor Sasha and his family. That Iryna recovers fully from an operation on her back.
- ◆ For peace, that the war would end and Ukrainians would be able to return to their towns and villages.
- ◆ For those living in towns and villages without water and electricity.

## Join us as we pray for peace

Every month, on the first Thursday, we pause and pray for justice and peace. Please join us, if you can, on April 4th and/ or May 2nd from 3-4 BST as we pray for a just end to this terrible war and an end to the anguish of the Ukrainian people. Please know that we are grateful for you all as we stand with Ukraine.

**Please contact the prayer convenor for the Zoom link: [melanie@dniprohopemission.org](mailto:melanie@dniprohopemission.org)**

*'Your children will rebuild the deserted ruins of your cities.' Isa.58.12*

## Pastor Oleksandr and the Tsarichanka Care Home School



Pastor Oleksandr and his wife Ulia, with our other ministry partners and volunteers from DHM in Ukraine, February 2024

*'It is very hard to pray. Inhuman people have done evil and continue to commit atrocities against the people of Ukraine'.*

*Message from our partner, Pastor Oleksandr*



Oleksandr with one of the residents of Tsarichanka Care Home. Thanks to your donations, we will be able to bless each resident with gifts this Easter.

## The School House Project

Pastor Oleksandr and his community have developed a project called 'School House'. It is a pioneering response to the challenges facing this community from school education going online three days each week, due to the invasion. Many of the parents love this project as they have to be at work and cannot stay at home to take the children through the online classes. It is a lifeline for single parents. For some children too, the family/home circumstances are just not conducive to studying at home. For children who have already endured loss, displacement and violence the School House is a place of routine and safety, a chance to build friendships and to get help from trusted adults.

### Please pray for:

- ◆ All the children in Ukraine - so many are deeply distressed and suffering mental trauma; they are without safe places to live and learn; some have spent months in basements unable to leave their homes due to ongoing shelling and the ever-present threat of hidden landmines.
- ◆ Those children who have been displaced; children in institutions; children with disabilities and those who have been orphaned by war.

*Children meeting together in the 'School House'*

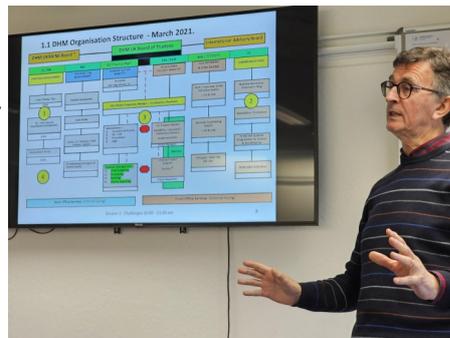


*'I am grateful to the many DHM supporters who were praying for us while we were in Ukraine. I'm also incredibly grateful to every individual person and every church and organisation that has donated to Dnipro Hope Mission. We rely on your generosity in order to support the life-saving ministries of our mission partners in Ukraine.'* Joshua

*Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! ....he took the children into his arms....and blessed them' Mark 10 .14-16*

## A message from the trustees

DHM trustees work on an entirely voluntary basis so that any donations that we receive are given straight to our ministry partners, who are literally saving countless lives in Eastern Ukraine. We usually meet on Zoom but recently self-funded an in-person get together in Elstal, Berlin where Joshua, together with fellow trustee Margaret and her husband Rodger and Joshua's colleague Max were able to report on their ministry visit to Ukraine. DHM volunteer and supporter, Mr H, spoke about his two ministry trips to DHM partners in Ukraine (he spent approximately 4 months between September and February visiting our partners and projects). Finally, with the help of our advisory board member, Bob Thomas, (pictured) we spent a day planning for the year ahead. It was not easy - our Chair of Trustees, Mark, said: 'Our hearts are bigger than the resources we have.'



The number of people needing humanitarian assistance, spiritual, emotional and social support and rehabilitation is staggeringly high. To continue supporting our partners, we need to recruit to our Board. We are looking for people with a heart for Ukraine and a calling to the 'forgotten' - those who are elderly, people who are disabled, those who are homeless, **If you feel called to join our team please contact our Chair of Trustees: [mark@dniprohopemission.org](mailto:mark@dniprohopemission.org) for a chat.** If you would like to find out more about DHM trustees, you can find our bios here: <https://www.dniprohopemission.org/about/>

We are hugely grateful to Madeleine, her friends and all at Stoneleigh Baptist Church. Madeleine organised an Easter 'table top' sale to raise funds for DHM. (pictured right). Every penny will help us make a difference to those suffering in Ukraine.



**Visiting speakers:** One of our trustees may be available to visit your church or group to tell you more about Dnipro Hope Mission, our partners and their life-saving work in Ukraine. Please contact DHM chair of trustees: [mark@dniprohopemission.org](mailto:mark@dniprohopemission.org)

## Giving



DHM is an organisation comprised of volunteers and local ministry partners, we don't have any paid staff and 100% of your donations go directly to where they are most needed in Ukraine. Please donate either through Stewardship or through a standing order or one-off payment to the DHM account: Sort Code: **30-90-91** / Account Number: **68149860**  
Account Name: Dnipro Hope Mission; Bank Name: Lloyds Bank  
Please contact [gill@dniprohopemission.org](mailto:gill@dniprohopemission.org) for a gift aid form or download it from our website <https://www.dniprohopemission.org/donate/>  
If you would like an acknowledgement, please email trustees Gill or Melanie and we would be very happy to thank you personally for your gift.

**Every penny will help and 100% of your donations will go directly to our trusted local partners who are already working in Eastern Ukraine**

**Account name: Dnipro Hope Mission  
Account Number: 68149860**

*'My health may fail and my spirit may grow weak but God remains the strength of my heart...' Ps 73.26*