



Ivano-Frankivsk Church of Christ Update – January 2025

Hello there!

Somehow we have woken up and it is one year since I arrived in Ivano-Frankivsk. A lot has happened since then, and more will happen soon! We are grateful that we finally have the authority to distribute humanitarian aid in the name of the church after a year-long battle with government offices constantly sending us in circles. Our first mission for 2025 was to begin emptying our warehouse here! We have hundreds of bags of unsorted clothes that the church members came and separated over a weekend to great success. These clothes are first being distributed to our church members in need and then will be used to help refugees and those in the community. As we hand out bags, we will be working to open doors to teach and invite people to see the true light of the church.

I am very pleased with the initiative that we have seen from the members over the last several weeks. One of the problems we had to deal with in the past year was the mindset that the preacher is the priest and should do everything for the church. After breaking that down and reteaching the importance of every single part of the body, we are now seeing the results: members who are volunteering to open their homes for Bible studies, coming up with ideas to reach their friends and family, hosting Sunday lunches after worship, and inviting their friends. This past Sunday, we had



Two local university students; both have visited our worship services.

four visitors, three of whom were attending for the first time!

We are also of course so pleased to have Perry Baker with us for the next few months. He has been a vital part of the work here for nearly three years now, and he adds a spark that ignites everyone in the church. We are working together to begin addressing biblical questions that the congregation has, as well as focusing on passages such as the Sermon on the Mount and the book of James to give some practical lessons for life.

I've also been offered the opportunity to begin teaching Greek to several church members through the Bear Valley Bible Institute. We had our first meeting this week and about 13 students! Of course, we are all indebted to Oksana Pazyi for interpreting these classes so that all Ukrainian members can take part. I'm excited about the potential depth of study that we can experience through this and really looking forward to the next several weeks!

I'll let Perry take over from here. He's excited to get to relay his experience!

-Gif



Inna doing her main job and making me sound smart.



Our first "English Club" meeting in the North part of town.



Coffee with students from the Physical and Mathematical Lyceum.

From Perry Baker

Before I start with the report, I want to thank the congregations and the individuals who made this trip possible. My journey began on January 7 in Montgomery and arrived in Warsaw on January 8. I was so happy to see the smiley face of Gif as greeted me at the airport. We took the train to Lviv Ukraine and spent the night and arrived in Ivano-Frankvisk Saturday the 11th. I was so excited to see my Ukraine brothers and sisters again. Our brother Mykola led the singing, Vova preached, Gif did the Lord's supper and I did the prayer. It was wonderful to have Ola a university student visiting as she speaks English very well and was able to interpret for us. Our other guest was a friend of Vova and Natalie. Following the service the ladies prepared special Ukraine dishes and sweets. Hum! Hum!

We spent most of the first week discussing plans for the rest of January through the end of March, specifically working out preaching and Wednesday Bible schedules, and started working on lessons. We also met Sergiy, the head of Smart Solutions, who helps get supplies and technical equipment to the front-line military. He and Gif have been building a relationship over the past few months and we discussed some plans to collaborate over the next few months, specifically with his English club. We have another opportunity with Ola's English club which is mostly students aged between 8 to 14. We also spent some time with other students who were returning from their Christmas breaks. It was so wonderful to meet and have a visit which they would like to continue.

In our second week, we began preparing lessons from Matthew 5,6 7 the sermon on the mount. I will have the privilege to bring a lesson from God's word this coming Sunday and Wed to finish chapter 6. We had our first English club at Sergiy's office with 8 adults and two young people. We spent most of this time introducing ourselves and a little about each of us. A few days later, Gif and I transferred 300 plus bags of clothes from the storage area to the church building that the congregation sorted on a Saturday. There were 14 that came to help sort the clothes ranging from infants to adults. It was wonderful to see the positive attitude and experience the beautiful fellowship.

Although everyone was tired Sunday it was a great Lord's Day with 18 present. It was great to see Maria, who opened her home for the IDPs (internally displaced people). Ivan who was one of the displaced with such a happy and positive attitude passed away this past week with cancer. He will be missed. Neither he nor Maria are Christians but have been coming regularly ever since the church has helped with food and humanitarian needs.

These first weeks whizzed by so fast!



Recent Worship Assemblies



Clothes Sorting Day

