

„Amen, I say unto you, whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto me.” Mt. 25, 40

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
INTERNATIONAL

Ukraine Up date.

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Driven into Homelessness
Oksana Drachkovska 2022

Up date from the Ukraine

DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES,

It is the 23rd day of the war and I find it more and more difficult to write about this war. I wanted to write almost every day, but events are rushing in, painful and dumbfounding. To cope at some extent with death and destruction, many Ukrainians living abroad are trying to help on all possible fronts. They are not alone in this work. There is a lot of help going on right now: donations, searching for shelter and school places for children, collecting medical and therapeutic aid, transporting medicine and food to the Polish border, and from there picking up people on the run. You can meet so many wonderful people these days! We cannot thank them enough for their work. Many of our communities and also the Waldorf schools already have families with children from the Ukraine with them, accompanying them and becoming a little piece of home for them. In Poland alone there are 200,000 thousand people who have all found a place to stay in families alone!

The large family from the Waldorf School in Dnipro has finally arrived in the Düsseldorfer community after more than a week of hardship: the smallest child is eight months old, the oldest, who was allowed to come along, is sixteen. In total there are nine children. The two older boys (19 and 21 years old) were not allowed to leave the country according to wartime law. A half-blind, former Waldorf student from Kyiv, is finally safe in Cologne after several sleepless nights in the train stations of Lviv, Warsaw and collapsing in the train station in Berlin. My good friend brought her 17 year old son, also a Waldorf student from Kyiv, to us and then went straight back. She has her elderly parents to care for and her husband is indispensable on the ground. Many I know take their children to safety in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Switzerland, France, Netherlands and then return to maintain the lives of those left behind on various fronts. Many know that if they leave the country, everything will collapse. That's why everyone who can is working to provide humanitarian care: bringing water, bread, clothes and bringing people from bombed-out areas; sewing sleeping bags, tents and protective vests. This cohesion gives much hope. But many people in the country are angry that the Russian army is explicitly bombing hospitals, schools, kindergartens, museums and theatres - like yesterday in Mariupol with hundreds of women and children in the basement. On these buildings were written especially in large letters in Russian: Children! This makes people angry. This is very hard to take even in war. What becomes of this anger? Can we ask a mother who carries her dead child from the ruins, screaming and cursing to the heavens, to forgive? Can we discuss gas prices when across the border an 11-year-old child walks alone, crying and dragging a plastic bag of his belongings behind him? These days I often think of the little nephew of a friend who wanted so much to feed the pigeons instead of sitting in the cellar. Quite childlike, he asked, "I wonder who will feed the pigeons if I stay here forever?"

I sincerely hope that we all stay strong so that we can do something to heal and console. Preferably with deeds, or warmth. Your donations will help the exhausted people here to cope first and to get the most necessary things need. It also helps refugees at the collection points in Poland, also to support the concrete needs for families who have fled with children within the Ukraine itself. This is also very important that not all are fleeing, in the western cities of the

country much is being done. This includes not only food and medicine, but also Art therapy, Music therapy, Adventure education or simple activities with children who are without parents. In our communities in Kyiv and in Odessa, many also find comfort. Tatyana has now moved to the community with her elderly mother. Because it is becoming more and more difficult to get from one side of the city to the other, also because of the many Checkpoints on the way. People are stopped and have to identify themselves. Some roads are closed and people have to make long detours. But all hardships are borne without a murmur, because everyone hopes only for one thing: Kyiv must stand firm. Kyiv must not fall. An old Jewish lady in a Kyiv bunker said: "I have already survived the siege of this city by the German Nazis; I saw my family murdered in front of *Babyn Jar*. The same thing is happening now, but by our neighbours. And that is much more painful."

Odessa also lives daily in anticipation of an attack from the sea and is ready to defend the beautiful musical city. Our colleague Andrei went to the sea today for the first time in three weeks. During the call could be heard the sound of the Black Sea and human bustle. It sounded almost peaceful at that moment. What will happen next, nobody knows. How long will Odessa be besieged by sea, not getting supplies and support this way? How long will the sirens wail and the houses tremble and shake from the shelling? In the community, people not only find comfort, but they have become very active and help where they can, from providing supplies for the soldiers to offering Eurythmy courses online for the areas where things are even worse. Daily services are held: alternately in Ukrainian and Russian. On Saturdays the service for the dead is celebrated and in the conversations afterwards the stories of these people are remembered. Everyone who knows something about them and their fate share it in the circle. It is difficult to hear about the destiny of a 96 year old woman who survived the war blockade in Kyiv during the Second World War, but the present one - not. She could not be saved from the besieged city of Irpin in time. It is hard to hear about a young girl of 22 who brought food to Ukrainian soldiers and was brutally killed on the street; about a world-famous athlete, about a world-famous ballet dancer, about a world-famous fashion designer, and about thousands of unknown people who died in the cellars, or on the run. For all these people, and also the young Russian soldiers are prayed for in Odessa.

In the east of the country, where we have many dear friends who are very much connected with us, it is just horrific. It is a real nightmare from which we will not easily wake up from. One can write endlessly about the individual stories of these people. But there are so very many. I hope that after the war we will write down some of them, remember some of them. I also hope that once the wounds can heal, we will all work on reconciliation. They are real and deep. And they are bleeding.

People pray. They hope that from these prayers a strong spiritual shield can be formed over the Ukraine, because NATO will not close the sky. And who knows, maybe it is these prayers that will save us all in the end.

Grateful for the support worldwide, for all your prayers and your work.

YAROSLAVA BLACK

In pictures



Irpin 12th of March





A high-rise building burns in Kyiv



Church in Bobryk destroyed on the 7th of March



Everyday life of war



Maternity Award in Mariupol bombed on the 12th of March



Kharkiv city centre on the 16th of March (above) - Industrial city Dnipro on the 12th of March (below)





Kyiv



City theatre in Mariupol on the 16th of March. In the basement
1000-1500 people sought shelter from the bombing.



Chess during the breaks (above) - Art on concrete blocks (below)





Civilians prepare a protective wall in Odessa



Faces of war: Young female soldier and firefighters



A child in Kyiv paints Archangel Michael protecting the sky over the Ukraine.

Donations to support refugees and humanitarian aid in connection with the war can please be transferred to the account of the West German Region of the Christian Community with a corresponding reference in the purpose of use:

Bank account holder: Die Christengemeinschaft

IBAN: DE96 3702 0500 0008 2597 00; BIC: BFSWDE33XXX; BLZ: 37020500

Oder:

Bank account holder: Die Christengemeinschaft in Deutschland (Foundation)

IBAN: DE16 8502 0500 0003 6204 00; BIC: BFSWDE33DER; BLZ: 85020500

Thank you for all your support, good thoughts and prayers!

Black & Black Production