



The Buyko family

4th Quarter Report, 2018

October

Holiday for Widows

Eighty-year-old widow Lidia Lavrenchuk dreamed of attending the holiday for widows, which was held on October 24 in the church in Bilogorodka. This is precisely the event that unites elderly lonely people, gives them joy, and fills their hearts with gratitude that people remember them and care about them.



In advance of that day, she had memorized a poem in order to participate in the service and to praise the Lord. However, since she is sick with cancer and had undergone an intensive course of chemotherapy, on that day she had no strength to get out of bed.

On the day after the holiday for widows, the wife of Pastor Eugene visited 80-year-old Lidia. Sofia brought a gift – a bag of groceries that had been specially prepared by American friends for this ministry. This elderly woman cried tears of joy. She hadn't expected anyone to visit her. For her, that visit became an answer to prayer.

Lidia wasn't the only one who shed tears of happiness. At the same holiday there were many blessings. Sister Olya from Bobritsa, who regularly visits worship services in our church, had prayed for years that her biological sisters and girlfriends would come to church and meet with God. But their hearts had been closed. They wouldn't so much as step over the doorstep of the church building. Therefore, as the choir sang (guests from the Temple of Salvation Church), sister Olga was wiping tears from her eyes, because her sisters and friends listened as the name of the Creator was glorified. After the service, they said they liked it very much and were sincerely grateful for the holiday and the presents.

That evening, every seat in the auditorium was filled. There were dear guests from America, and a choir from the Temple of Salvation Church, and over 60 widows who live in our village and the surrounding area. After the worship service, we invited everyone to a holiday dinner. And when they departed, each widow and widower received a big sack of groceries.

Dear brothers and sisters! For many widows and widowers, this service became the first time they visited our church. So we ask that you join us in praying that the Gospel seed sown at

this holiday will grow in their hearts. May the Spirit of the Lord change their lives and send His salvation.

Thank you for your prayerful and financial support for holding this event for widows. May the Lord reward you for what you do for our church.

November

Praise God for the camp that was held in our church back in August. In the invitations, we invited children from age 7 and up. However, there were 15 children who were quite small. Several were brought by older brothers and sisters; others came with their mothers.

I want to share about one family, who were in a Christian camp for the first time. They brought their older son Makar to the camp. He is 7. This school year, he entered first grade. Makar is a very active and restless boy. His parents were looking after him and also were watching their 4-year-old daughter. For the first two days, they attentively observed everything. Each morning, Eugene prepared coffee for them and witnessed a little bit. Alyona, the mother of these two children, works as a professional makeup artist. She had a mind to lend a hand with something or other in the camp. On the day before the last day we planned to have for the children special face painting using hypoallergenic cream. Alyona was very glad to participate in the camp. After camp, this family began to attend worship services. Their little daughter loves to come to Sunday school, and more than anything else she likes to sing songs.



Alyona and her husband Sergei and their kids came to help us pack groceries for the ministry to widows. They did this task with joy. What else is interesting is that Sergei baked two pies for the meal that followed the service for widows, and he actively helped with preparing the tables and then afterward, during cleanup. Praise God for this family! We ask that you pray for them, that the seed that has

been sown in them will bring forth its fruit.

Another interesting story happened. On one Sunday (during the seminary) Sergei Skripnik was in our church. He shared from the Word of God and talked about where he's from. During the meal time, Sergei (the local one, the husband of Alyona) said that his aunt also lives in Borshev. Bit by bit in the conversation we came to understand that they live in the same building—the Skripnik family on the first floor, and this aunt a couple floors above them. What's more, this aunt is



apparently the mistress of the local Orthodox priest, and everybody there knows it. Therefore, Sergei always has many questions concerning believers and their way of life. We ask that you pray for this family, that everything they have heard will bring for the fruit of repentance!

In addition, I want to request prayer for two sisters who are twins, along with their children. These women came to our church the first time as a result of our camp. The kids really enjoyed being in our camp. We invited the kids to our Sunday school, and the mothers to our church services. As it turns out, these boys and the girl are in second grade and are classmates of Alonya and Sergei's son Makar. Oksana and Sveta (those are the names of the twin mothers) joyfully came to help prepare packages of groceries and gifts for the orphanage. They were glad to help with whatever they could. They even invited another widowed mother to the evening for widows. They were glad and thanked everyone very much for these packages. Their elderly grandmother also received a package.

Sveta and Oksana are seamstresses. We as a church had purchased fabric for tablecloths for our white plastic tables, and they offered to sew them for free. These young mothers are glad that we let them do things for the church, that they can do something for God. We ask that you pray that they will be reconciled with God and that their kids will come to know God in Sunday school!

December

The camp that we held back in the summer is still bearing fruit. The older girls' Sunday school group is continuing to fill up with girls from the camp. Katya, the girl that we have already told you about earlier, still attends regularly even though her parents are against it. After a time, three other girls from the older group also began attending. One of them has a Christian grandmother. Her parents are not believers, but her parents happily allow their daughter to attend all worship services.

Here's an interesting event that happened to Masha, another girl from that group. Following camp, she never showed up for church even though she had sincerely expressed that she wanted to come. At first she got sick. Then she became timid, and later she couldn't come. However, one time she showed up unexpectedly and continues to come. All of her family members are also unbelievers, yet they always permit her to come. Whenever one of her parents calls when she's here, she always says calmly, "No, Mom. I'm still at church. Everything is fine. Okay, bye." She also told us that the Christian camp she attended here last summer was the first Christian camp she had ever attended in her life, and in general was the first function she had attended in



connection with a church. She very much regretted that she had not come on the first day of camp but came only later.

All of these girls joyfully learn new songs. They say that they really like to sing even though they didn't sing in the past. After church, they never hurry home. They always linger to chat and to help out. These same girls gladly helped out when we were putting together gift packages for the children in the orphanage.

Younger children who were in camp also come for Sunday school. The number of these children causes us to rejoice, and we're also gladdened by the fact there are many of them coming so regularly.

We want to express again our great gratitude to those of you who shared of your finances for us to hold a camp, and who pray for us. Praise God for this year's camp, which has drawn so many hearts to Sunday school and to the church!

Christmas 2018

Praise God, our church had a terrific Christmas celebration for children, and all the kids from the Sunday school took part in it.



This year, thanks to the fact that many more kids have been coming to Sunday school, we decided to hold a Christmas celebration using only our own resources. Children camp to rehearsal, and everyone decorated the auditorium and the tree.

We ourselves wrote the script for a play, and we presented it in two parts. In the first part all the teens from our church got involved. It was an interesting situation when I told the teen girls that I needed help with the Christmas play, and four of them knew absolutely nothing about the Christmas story. After all, they had only begun attending church after our summer camp. The evening of that day

when I asked for help, when I got online to where we girls talk, and I discovered hundreds of comments from these girls who had read the Christmas story from the Bible and were writing back and forth among themselves with ideas for the Christmas play.

By means of this play, we tried to show everyone what is the true meaning of Christmas. People from various professions (played by the teens) were presented and asked the question, "What for you is the meaning of Christmas?" The answers were all diverse. The president of a décor firm thought the meaning was money, since the holiday brought more demand for her products, and the profits grew accordingly. For children and teens, Christmas represented gifts. For singers, it meant concerts. For mothers of many children, it represented a chance to get away with her husband to rest. But not a one of them was able to retell the actual Christmas story.



The narrator invited everyone to remain and to watch a presentation of the Christmas story, to see the meaning and how everything transpired. Even the very tiniest children got involved. Some were in the choir of angels singing “Glory to God in the Highest.” Others were little lambs. Shepherds, wise men, Mary and Joseph in the stable... All the kids worried; they wanted to do a good job playing their roles. (For nearly all of them, this was their first time to take part in a church play.) It turned out well for them. It concluded with all the children dressed in identical blue outfits (great thanks to the mission for them!!!), they walked out holding artificial candles and singing “What Child Is This?” while Mary, Joseph, and the wise men stood with the baby Jesus.



After this, the children’s choir sang several more songs, praising Christ and finishing with the song “Christmas Evening.” Another interesting thing was that this was the first time that the father of the boy named Vadim came to church. This is the Vadim who started attending our Sunday school after attending the first camp, and we’ve



written about him more than once.

There was someone else who visited this children’s holiday—a representative of the village administration. He wished the church a merry Christmas, and later he wrote to Eugene that he now had rethought the Christmas story for himself.

Great thanks to the mission for the finances supplied for the gifts, and for the choir outfits that came in the container, and for your prayers!

In conclusion I will say that we joyfully received from you the Christmas decorations and trimmings for the tree.

Praise God for everything!

Christmas report by Angelica Buyko.